

Chapter II: The Role of Culture in EFL Classes

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Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a review of the developing role of culture in foreign language teaching.

To achieve this aim, the chapter is divided into three main sections:

The first explores the concept of communicative competence, its components and its implementation in foreign language classes.

The second explores the development of culture teaching in the different foreign language approaches and methods, it also attempts to identify the goals for teaching culture as well as the challenges and limits of classroom instruction.

The third and final section outlines what is understood under the term "intercultural communicative competence" and explores how this concept is being developed in foreign language classes by reviewing the various approaches as well as the role of textbooks, different sources and activities for teaching culture.

II-1-Communicative Competence and foreign Language Teaching

II-1-1The Concept of Communicative Competence

The concept of communicative competence was introduced into discussion to second and foreign language teaching /learning literature in the early 1970's. (Savirgnon, 2002)

It was thanks to the works of the American sociolinguist Dell Hymes that this concept was developed and made popular. Hymes proposed the concept of "*communicative competence*" as an alternative to the concept of "*Linguistic competence*", as first proposed by Chomsky.(Hall, 2002)

Hymes begins his justification for his new theory by criticizing the following quotation from Chomsky about Linguistic theory,

“Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker hearer, in a completely homogenous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristics) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.” (Chomsky, 1965:3 quoted in Hymes,1987:6).

Therefore, according to Chomsky 's theory of language, a native speakers' knowledge of his mother tongue, technically known as "*linguistic competence* " is the knowledge that enables him to form and interpret an infinite number of words, phrases and statements in his native language .

Hymes regarded this view of language as too restrictive in that it could not account for the knowledge and skills that individuals must have to understand and produce utterances appropriate to the particular cultural contexts in which they occur. As a result, he used the term "*communicative competence*" to refer to *“both the knowledge and ability that individuals needs to understand and use linguistic resources in ways that are structurally well formed, socially and contextually appropriate, and culturally feasible in communicative contexts constitutive of the different groups and communities of which the individuals are members,”* (Hall,2002:105).

Indeed, Hymes aimed to establish what a speaker needs to know in order to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings.

II-1-2 Definition of communicative competence

Communicative competence is defined by Richards & Schmidt in the Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied linguistics (2002) as: *“knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in a language, but also the knowledge of whether it is feasible, appropriate, or done in a particular speech community.”* p.90

Although this is a simplified definition, it presents the main characteristics of the concept which is the focus on the importance of context in communication.

Saville Troike (1996:363) discussed what communicative competence involves in the following terms,

“Communicative competence entails knowing not only the language code or the form of language, but also what to say and how to say it appropriately in any given situation . It deals with the social and cultural knowledge that speakers are presumed to have which enables them to use and interpret linguistic forms .It also includes knowledge of who may speak or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, how to talk to persons in different statuses and roles ,what non verbal behaviours are appropriate in various contexts ,what the routines for turn taking in conversation, how to ask for and give information ,how to request, how to offer or decline assistance or cooperation, how to give commands and the like . ”

According to Richards (2003:4) communicative competence includes the following aspects of language knowledge :

- 1- Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions .
- 2- Knowing how to vary our use of language according to the participants (e.g. knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication.)
- 3- Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g. narrative, reports, interviews, conversation) .
- 4- Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g. . through using different kinds of communication strategies).

Dubin and Olshtain (2000) came to the conclusion that communicative competence includes knowledge of what to say, when, how, where, and to whom .

II-1-3- Components of Communicative Competence

According Richards & Schmidt (2002:90) in their definition of communicative competence mentioned earlier, it is stated that communicative competence is made up of four major components: Grammatical competence, sociolinguistic/sociocultural competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence .This definition represents Hymes view (1972).

According to him the acquisition of communicative competence should enable a person to use language appropriately according to :

- 1- Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible.
- 2- Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available.
- 3- Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated.
- 4- Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails. (Hymes 1987 :19)

Although Hymes (1972) notion of communicative competence was extremely important, it was examined by a number of applied linguists most importantly Canale and Swain (1980) who were among the first to use Hymes' notion to design a framework for second and foreign language curriculum, which was later refined by Canale (1983). (Hall,2002:106)

According to the same author Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence consists of four areas of competence:

- 1- Grammatical competence** which includes knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology ,syntax ,semantics and phonology .
- 2- Sociolinguistic competence** which includes knowledge and ability to use the language appropriately in social contexts.

3- Strategic competence which includes knowledge of both verbal and non verbal strategies that are used to compensate for breakdown in communication or enhance the effectiveness of communication.

4- Discourse competence which includes knowledge of combining grammatical forms and meanings in order to obtain a coherent spoken or written text.

Since its appearance in the field of applied linguistics the concept of communicative competence has been interpreted by different authors in an attempts to use it to construct frameworks for the design of classroom models. (e.g. Savignon, 2002; Bachman,1990; Celce – Murcia et all , 1996)

Savignon (1972) was one of the first authors to use the term of communicative competence to characterize, " *The ability of classroom learners to interact with other speakers, to make meaning, as distinct from their ability to recite dialogues or perform on test of grammatical knowledge* ". She has investigated and written extensively on communicative competence, not far from Canale and Swain's frame work (Savignon, 2002:10) proposes a new model made up of four interrelated components:

-Grammatical competence; refers to the sentence level grammatical forms, the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactical, and phonological features of a language and to make use of those feature to interpret and form words and sentences. Savignon insists on the importance of using this competence in concrete situations she mentions: "*one demonstrates grammatical competence not by stating rules but by using a rule in the interpretation ,expression,or negotiation of meaning* " (ibid)

-Discourse competence, concerns the interconnectedness of a series of utterances or written words or phrases to form a text, a meaningful whole. The text might be a poem, an e-mail message, a sports cast, a telephone conversation ,or a novel .

-Identification of isolated sounds or words contributes to interpretation of the overall meaning of the text which is referred to as "*bottom up processing*". In contrast, "*top down processing*" involves understanding the theme of the text, which in turn helps in the interrelation of isolated sounds or words. Both kinds

of processing as essential for communicative competence. Two other concepts related to 'Discourse competence' are : Text coherence .i.e. "*the relation of all sentences or utterances in a text to a single global proposition which makes possible the interpretation of the individual sentences that make up a text*" p.9. and Text cohesion .i.e. "*local corrections or structural links between individual sentences*" (*ibid*) -**Sociocultural competence** , is a broader view of what Canale and Swain (1980) identified as "*sociolinguistic competence* ". It extends well beyond linguistic forms to the social rules of language use. Savignon mentions that "*sociocultural competence*" "*requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used , the roles of the participant , the information they share ,and the function of the interaction*"p.10. She further argues that social conventions such as turn taking, appropriateness of context, nonverbal language, and tone influence communication and their interpretation depends on the cultural knowledge , the thing that requires a general empathy and openness towards other cultures. Savignon mentions that, "*sociocultural competence includes a willingness to engage in the active negotiations of meaning along with a willingness to suspend judgment and take into consideration the possibility of cultural differences in conventions of use. These features might be subsumed under the term of "cultural flexibility "* or "*cultural awareness* " (*ibid*).

-**Strategic competence**, refers to the coping strategies used in unfamiliar contexts, with constraints arising from imperfect knowledge of rules " (*ibid*). Savignon mentions that the importance of strategic competence decreases along with practice since we gain competence in grammar, discourse, and sociocultural adaptability. With all that comprehensive work, Savignon (2002) comes to the conclusion that communicative competence is always relative . The "ideal native speaker " someone who knows the language perfectly and uses it appropriately in all social interactions, exists in theory only .

As can be seen Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence has undergone some modifications . One of the more comprehensive frameworks can be found in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995).

Their model, depicted in **'Figure 2'** consists of five interrelated areas of competence:

Discourse, linguistic, act ional or rhetorical , sociocultural and strategic competence. The authors put "*discourse competence*" as the core of communicative competence. It includes not only knowledge of and ability to use linguistic resources to create cohesion and coherence in both oral and written texts. It includes also knowledge of and ability to use conversational conventions for taking turns and providing 'listener feedback' cues such as 'u m m ' and ' u h ' (Hall 2002 :107).

According to the same author, '*discourse competence*' is linked to three additional components :

First , *linguistic competence* which consists of the basic elements of the linguistic system that are used to interpret and construct grammatically accurate utterances and texts .

It also includes knowledge of and ability to use syntax , in addition to morphology , phonology, vocabulary and orthography .

Second , *act ional or rhetorical competence* which is the knowledge of how to use language to perform certain functions, such as making a promise, giving orders, complaining and so on . It also involves knowledge of how to combine individual acts into larger sets of actions to create an appropriate communicative activity such as making a purchase ,setting up on appointment etc.

Celce –Murcia et al., use the parallel term '*rhetorical competence*' when discussing written texts to refer to the knowledge of the speech acts conventionally associated with particular written genres.

Third, *Sociocultural competence* which comprises the non-linguistic contextual knowledge that communicators rely on to understand and contribute to a given communicative activity .

The final component of Celce –Murcia et al's model is *strategic competence*, which includes the ability to resolve communicative difficulties and enhance communicative effectiveness.

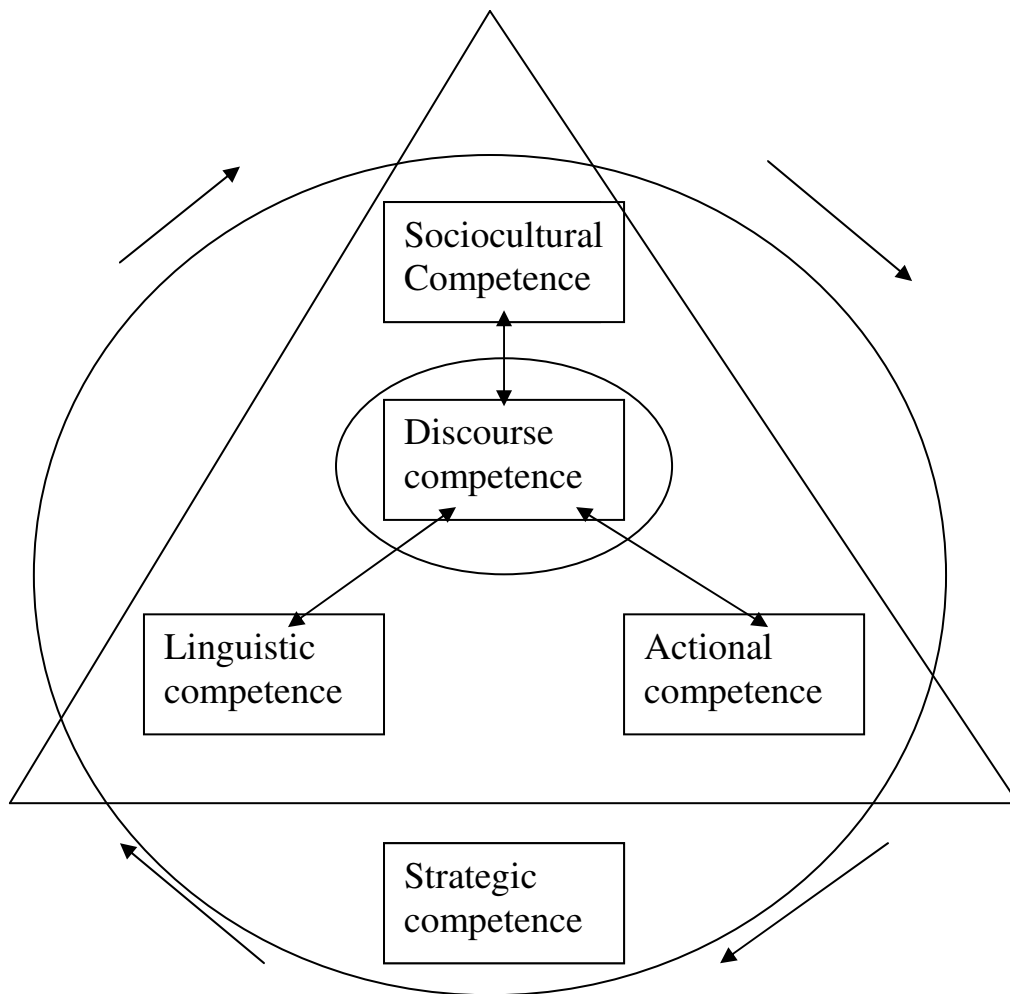


Figure 2 Model of Communicative Competence (Celce –Murcia et al., 1995:10 quoted in Hall 2002 :107)

II-1-4. Communicative Language Teaching

The communicative approach or communicative language teaching (CLT) was developed in the 1970's as a reaction to grammar based approaches such as grammar translation and the audio-lingual methods. (Richards et al., 2003). At that time, there was a growing dissatisfaction with these predominant approaches. The problem was that students who have received several years of formal English teaching, frequently remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language.

In other words, students need to distinguish between knowing various grammatical rules and being able to use these rules effectively and appropriately when communicating . In that context of re-evaluation, that CLT was born . Applied linguists decided that it was time for language teaching to change, i.e. to focus on communicative ability rather than on the mastery of structures .The new approach led to a re-examination of language learning and teaching goals, syllabuses, materials, and classroom activities and has been a major cause of changes in language teaching worldwide (Richards et al ., 2003:90).

Since its introduction in the early 1970's, CLT has been a topic of discussion among many scholars in the field of language teaching. However, no matter how one defines CLT the approach gained popularity, it has emerged as a prevailing point of view as attested by its widespread use in book titles, conference papers, and lectures. (Dubin and Olschtaim, 2000)

Thus, CLT becomes a generalized 'umbrella' term to describe learning sequences which aim to improve the students' ability to communicate in contrast to learning language structures without focusing on their use in communication. (Harmer, 2001: 86).

II-1-5 Definition of Communicative Language Teaching

CLT is defined by Richards and Schmidt (2003) in the dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics as “ *an approach to foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes that the goal of language teaching is*

communicative competence and which seeks to make meaningful "communication and language use a focus of all classroom activities".(p.90).

This definition presents the main aim of CLT which is the focus on developing communicative competence among learners .

Other authors in the field have defined and characterized CLT in various ways. Savignon (2002:1) mentions that CLT refers to both processes and goals in classroom learning and the central theoretical concept in CLT is communicative competence . She further explains that, *"CLT derives form a multidisciplinary perspective that includes at least, linguistics ,psychology, philosophy, sociology and educational research .The focus has been the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learners participation in communicative events"* p.04

CLT advocates going beyond teaching grammatical rules of the target language, and proposes that, by using the target language in meaningful ways, learners will develop communicative competence.

Generally speaking, according to (Richards et al. 2003:90) the major principles of the CLT can be summarized as follows :

- 1- Learners use a language through using it to communicate.
- 2- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities .
- 3- Fluency and accuracy are both important goals in language learning .
- 4- Communication involves the integration of different language skills .
- 5- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

Berns (1990:104) cited in Savignon (2002:6) suggests that CLT has eight major principles:

1- Language teaching is based on a view of language as communication that is, language is seen as a social tool that speakers use to make meaning; speakers communicate about something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in writing .

2- Diversity is recognized and accepted as part of language development and use in second language learners and users ; as it is with first language users .

3- A learner's competence is considered in relative, not in absolute terms .

4- More than one variety of language is recognized as a vital model for learning and teaching .

5- Culture is recognized as instrumental in shaping speakers ' communicative competence, in both their first and subsequent languages .

6- No single methodology or fixed set of techniques is prescribed.

7- Language use is recognized as serving ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions and is related to the development of learners' competence in each.

8- It is essential that learners be engaged in doing things with the language that is, they use language for a variety of purposes in all phases of teaching.

II-1-6 Classroom Activities in CLT

Within the framework for CLT, new methodology of work was adopted . It was argued that learners learn a language through the process of communicating in it . Therefore , there is a movement from traditional lesson plans where the focus was on mastery of different items of grammar and practice through controlled activities such as memorization of dialogues and drills, towards the use of pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and project work (Richards 2003).

CLT Methodology Aims to:

- Make real communication the focus of language learning .
- Provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know.
- Be tolerant of learners ' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or her communicative competence .
- Provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency.
- Link the different skills such as speaking, reading and listening together, since they usually occur so in the real world .(ibid:11-12).

Consequently, new classroom techniques and activities were needed to apply the above principles in the classroom .

II-1-7- Activities in CLT

Information gap activities, an important aspect of communication in CLT is the notion of information –gap- This refers to the fact that in real communication people normally communicate in order to get information they do not possess. This is known as an information gap . Harmer (2001:85) illustrates this point by saying,

“A traditional classroom exchange in which one student asks where 's the library ? and another student answers It's on Green street ,opposite the bank when they can both see it and both know the answer, is not much like real communication . If ,however ,the first student has a map which does not have the bank listed on it, while the other student has a different map with post office written on the correct building - but which the first student cannot see_- then there is a gap between the knowledge which the two participants have . In order for the first student to locate the bank on the map ,that information gap needs to be closed ”.

In doing such activities learners will draw available vocabulary, grammar and communication strategies to complete a task .(Richards 2003:17).

Many other activity types have been popular in CLT , among which are the following:

- **Role -plays and simulation activities**, in which students are assigned roles, they may simulate a television program or a scene at an airport. (Harmer:2001).

Richards (2003:18), provides a list of useful activities among which are :

- **Task completion activities** , puzzles, games , map-reading , and other kinds of classroom tasks in which the focus was on using one's language resources to complete the task .
- **Information gathering activities** , students conduct surveys , interviews, and searches in which they are required to use their linguistic resources to collect information .
- **Opinion sharing activities**, activities where students compare values, opinions, beliefs, such as a ranking task in which students list six

qualities in order of importance which they might consider in choosing a date .

- **Information transfer activities**, these require learners to take information that is presented in one form ,and represent it in a different form. For example they may read instruction on how to get from A to B, and then draw a map showing the sequence, or they may read information about a subject and then represent it as a graph.
- **Reasoning gap activities**, these involve deriving some new information from given information through the process of working out a teacher's time table on the basis of given class time tables .

Activities in CLT typically involve students in all real communication where the accuracy of the language they use is less important than successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing (Harmer, 2001).

Two important features for successful CLT methodology are:

1-The focus on pair work and group work : according to (Richards 2003:18) pair and small group work activities have several benefits to learners :

- They can learn from hearing the language used by other members of the group.
- They will produce a greater amount of language than they would use in teacher -fronted activities .
- Their motivational level is likely to increase .
- They will have the chance to develop fluency .

Hence, most activities listed above are designed to be carried out in pairs or small groups.

2-The focus on authenticity: since activities in CLT require learners to involve in real communication, the language classroom is intended as a preparation for survival in the real world . This raised an issue which was the relationship between classroom activities and real life (Richards 2003).

Clark and Silberstein (1977:51) argued that:

“classroom activities should parallel the 'real world ' as closely as possible . Since language is a tool of communication ,methods and materials should concentrate on the message and not the medium . The purpose of reading should be the same in classroom in real life ” .(quoted in ibid :19).

Thus , authentic sources are vital for classroom learning .

II-1-7. The Roles of Teachers and Learners in the Classroom

Savignon (2002:4) maintains that by definition, CLT puts the focus on the learner. Learners' communicative needs provide a framework for elaborating program goals.

Therefore, within the methodology proposed in CLT new roles in the classroom for teachers and learners are required.

Learners had to participate in classroom activities that are based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning .Students had to become comfortable with listening to their peers in group work or pair work tasks, rather than relying on the teacher as a model .They are expected to take on greater degree of responsibility for their own learning (Richards 2003:05).

On the other hand teachers are required to be facilitators of language learning.

In this respect Larsen-Freeman (1986:131) cited in Beale (2002) argues, *“In strong versions of CLT the teacher is required to take a less dominant role and the learners are encouraged to be more responsible managers of their own learning ”.*

The teacher then, had to assume the role of facilitator, rather than being a model for correct speech and writing.

II.2. Teaching Culture in EFL Classes

II.2.1. Historical Background of the Role of Culture in Language Teaching Approaches and Methods

The cultural dimension in language learning is nothing new, throughout the history of language teaching there have been different links between language and cultural instruction. (Byram and Fleming 1998)

However, in the historical development of methods of foreign language teaching the treatment of culture has not resulted in a fixed way, it has undergone remarkable changes. (Neuner, 1997)

The way how culture and language have been linked has depended on the general goals of foreign language education and on how the concept of culture has been interpreted .

II.2.1.1. The Grammar Translation Method

This method prevailed the teaching of foreign languages in the nineteenth and early twentieth Centuries, at a time where the only academically respectable languages taught were Latin and Greek (Kramsch, 1996). Its main concern was the presentation and analysis of correct linguistic forms, appropriate translation and the reading of literature. The main reason for learning a foreign languages was to gain access to its literature as Allen (1995:198) has summarized it,

“prior to 1960's the lines between language and culture were carefully drawn, the primary reason for second language study in the earlier part of this century was access to the great literary masterpieces of civilization ”.

(cited in Lessard Clouston ,1997:1 .

This is confirmed by Flewelling (1993:339) by saying , *“it was through reading that students learned of civilization associated with the target languages ”(ibid.)*

As a consequence, the cultural aspect of the target language in the *grammar translation method* emphasized the selection and presentation of cultural achievements which is referred to as ("big C" art and literature) and great

events in the history of the target country .Topics such as Pilgrim Fathers or The Boston Tea Party may be included . (Neuner, 1997)

According to Kramsch (1996) this method rarely gave student an understanding of the ways Romans and Greeks actually spoke or thought, yet; nine years of Latin were the best entrance ticket to the universal culture of the European educational elite . Neuner (1997) joins her to confirm that the lasting dominance of this method was due to the fact that institutional foreign languages teaching for a long time was limited to an elite group of pupils characterized as the " ideal educated and refined gentleman ".p19

II.2-1-2. The Audio Lingual Method

This method was developed in the 1940's and reached its height in the 1960's. In an attempt meet the pragmatic needs of specific groups (such as interrogators in the US army) . It was further developed to meet the needs of "*the ordinary learners*" . (Neuner ,1997 :20)

Since the rise of this method there was a shift to a more pragmatic concept of foreign language teaching .

As a result, there was a shift from topics concentrating on "big C" culture to aspects of every day life ("little c") which are presented in typical situation often deal with the encounters of tourists with the natives of the target country (ibid). This view to culture was also backed by the growth of social sciences, especially anthropology and sociology ,which resulted in a more understanding of culture and communication (Clouston 1997) ,as Brooks (1986) emphasized , "*the importance of culture not for the study of literature but for language learning*" (cited in Lessord Clouston ,1997) and as Steele (1989:155) has observed "*communication begun to take centre stage, along with spoken rather than written language , and what is often termed small 'c' culture*" (cited in ibid).

Within the audio-lingual method to foreign language teaching and learning, culture was often taught within the framework of situations and setting of the dialogues in the foreign country, and is subordinated to the memorization of

useful phrases and the reproduction of typical social roles. This may include topics such as, shopping in the supermarket, asking the way, in the restaurant , etc. (Neuner ,1997 :20)

II.2.1.3.The Communicative Approach

Developments in the field of sociolinguistics in 1970's , which was concerned with language as it is used in society ; resulted in greater emphasis on communication within the cultural context and situations where the foreign language could be used . This view of language as communication led to a more focus on training students in communicative skills from the very beginning of the foreign language program . (Savignon, 1972) .

The communicative approach then, replaced the audio-lingual method, and the role of culture in foreign language curriculum grew as influential works by Canale and Swain (1980:31) confirmed that,

“ a more natural integration of language and claimed culture takes place through a more communicative approach than through a more grammatically based approach ” .
(quoted in Clouston ,1997:3)

The link between culture and language in communicative framework was qualified by Kramsch (1996:4) as the *“ local link ”*

The cultural component of language teaching came to be seen as the pragmatic and semantic functions expressed through language in every day ways of speaking and acting .

According to Neuner (1997)cultural topics within communicative syllabus concentrate on speech acts of every day communication and the use of authentic texts according to every day life experiences of ordinary people (how they work, how they live, spend their leisure time, travel etc.).

II.2-1-4.Current Perspectives

As understanding of language and communication has evolved, the importance of culture in foreign language teaching has increased. This is reflected in current perspectives presented in recent works in the field.

All eminent researchers in the field of foreign language education (see for example Byram 1997, Byram & Fleming 1998 Kramsch 1996, Seelye 1997, Cortazzi & Jin 1999, etc.) agree that learning a foreign language for whatever purposes can not take place without introducing the culture of the community where it is used. (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999).

Michael Byram points out that “ *communicative competence involves appropriate language use which, in part at least, is culture specific* ” (Byram, 1989:61 cited in Hinkel 1999:6). Cortazzi and Jin (1999) join him, they stress the inevitable integration of culture in real communication, they explain that :

“communication in real situations is never out of context, and because culture is part of most contexts communication is rarely culture-free. Thus, it is now increasingly recognized that language learning and teaching about target cultures can not realistically be separated” p.197

Byram and Morgan (1994:5) state that “*it is axiomatic in our view that cultural learning has to take place as an integral part of language learning and vice versa* ” (cited in Hinkel 1999:7).

The work of Byram has played a prominent role in better understanding the place of culture in the language classroom. He approached the teaching of language and culture as integrated and advocated intercultural mediation. Hence, the native culture of the learner is also advocated. Byram and Morgan (1994:43) state, “*learners are committed to their culture and to deny any part of it is to deny something within their own being*”(cited *ibid*).

As a result, in the current language teaching perspective today, there is a great interest in the intercultural perspective and in both similarities and dissimilarities between the target countries and the learners' country (Risager, 1998:245).

II.2.2. Cultural Awareness

Pulverness (2003) claims that the foreign language classroom offers an ideal arena for developing cultural awareness and it should be the responsibility of language teachers to encourage learners to develop awareness of language and a parallel awareness of culture.

The term "cultural awareness" is referred to as an important goal in foreign language teaching today (Fenner 2000)

However, a question worth asking is what is meant by "*cultural awareness*"? and how can learners be encouraged in moving towards this goal ?.

According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999:217) cultural awareness means:

"Being aware of members of another cultural group : their expedition, their perspectives and values .It also means attempting to understand their reasons for their actions and beliefs ".

On his perspective Byram (1998:4) stresses the importance of the learners' own culture in developing cultural awareness.

According to him "*cultural awareness*" may be seen as an ability to reflect on one's own cultural identity, question taken for granted values and beliefs and compare one's own culture with that of the interlocutor's.

This statement highlights the importance of comparison .Byram sees that comparison forms a basis for understanding and helps learners to perceive and cope with the differences .(ibid).

The importance of the learners' own culture in developing "*cultural awareness*" is largely agreed on .Since any comparisons should be build on the learners' background knowledge.

Fenner (2000) makes the claim that, "*cultural awareness is based on knowledge of the foreign culture, but also on the knowledge of one's own culture. And that any process of comparison or contrasting has its starting point in the learner' s pre-knowledge "* P.144-145. She adds that the learner's perception of his or her own culture as well as of the foreign culture are important factors in the development of cultural awareness of the individual.

Therefore, cultural awareness is based on both knowledge of the foreign culture as well as one's own culture and the ability for understanding differences through comparison and contrast.

Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) explain more thoroughly what qualities are involved in "cultural awareness":

- Awareness of one's own culturally - induced behaviour.
- Awareness of culturally -induced behaviour of others
- Ability to explain one's own cultural stand point. (quoted in Camilleri 2002:12)

Tomalin and Stempleski (1993:5) define cultural awareness as, "*sensitivity to the impact of culturally induced behaviour on language use and communication*"(cited in Lazar 2001:16).

II.2.3. Communicative Competence and Cultural Awareness

Nowadays, it is widely recognized in the language teaching profession that the major innovation brought by "communicative language teaching" is that learners need not just knowledge in the grammar of a language but also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

In fact communicative language teaching thanks to advances in the field of sociolinguistics, more than any approach focuses on the cultural aspects of language use.

Pulverness (2003) argues that, "*what enables people to communicate effectively is not simply reduced to linguistic items ,but the pragmatic knowledge that dictates the choice of appropriate forms. This knowledge , if not culturally determined, is at least culturally conditioned .It includes such factors as forms of address , the expression of politeness , etc.*"

Saville Troike (1996) makes it clear that the concept of communicative competence requires reference to the notion of cultural competence, because interpreting the cultural meaning of linguistic behaviour requires knowing the cultural meaning of the context in which it occurs.

On that basis Pulverness (2003) stresses the relevance of cultural instruction on developing the learners' communicative competence .In fact he states,

“ In teaching English for communication and neglecting culture ,we way actually be giving learners access to an impoverished means of communication effective for survival and for routine transactions ,but lacking of the cultural resonance that makes it fully meaningful for native speakers”.

Byram (2002) has gone so far as to argue that language teaching should have as one of its principal aims the development of learners' ability to communicate with those who speak another language and to introduce learners to a different way of life, the cultural products of speakers of another language.

Indeed Fenner (2000:142) claims that if education is regarded as: "*development and personal growth* ", the aim of foreign language education should be to give the learners opportunity to develop *cultural knowledge, competence and awareness* in such a way that might lead to a better understanding of the foreign culture, the " other ", as well as the learner' s own culture.

In the context of such an arguments, it seems that the need to bring culture into the language classroom is essential to the development of the learners' communicative competence. This makes language teaching/ learning more demanding than ever and presents language teachers with new challenges. (Byram and Fleming 1998).

II.2.4. Goals of Teaching Culture

As described earlier in this chapter, culture was present in a way or another in the different approaches and methods for language teaching. The thing that makes it evident that the study of language can not be divorced from the study of culture.

Kramsch (1993) stresses that cultural awareness and the learning of a second culture can only aid the attaining of second language proficiency (Hinkel 1999:6).

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) add that, : “It is crucial that foreign language learners should become aware of differing cultural frameworks, both their own and those of others ;otherwise they will use their own cultural system to interpret target language messages whose intended meaning many well be predicated on quite different cultural assumptions ”. p197

Seelye (1988) has suggested six instructional goals for teaching culture based communicative competence. According to him culture teaching should have the following goals :

Goal 1- Interest : The student shows curiosity about another culture (or another segment or subculture of one's own culture) and empathy toward its members.

Goal 2- Who : The student recognizes that role expectations and other social variables such as age, sex, social class, religion, ethnicity, and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave .

Goal 3 - What : The student realizes that effective communication requires discovering the culturally conditioned images that are evoked in the minds of people when they think ,act, and react to the world around them .

Goal 4 –Where and When : The student realizes that situational variables and conventions shape behaviour in important ways .

Goal 5- Why : the student understands that people generally act the way they do because they are using options their society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs.

Goal 6 – Exploration : The student can evaluate a generalization about a given culture in terms of the amount of evidence substantiating it , and have the skills needed to locate and organize information about a culture from the library, the mass media, people, and personal information.(Seelye 1997:25).

Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) have modified these goals according to them cultural instruction should help students to:

- Develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally conditioned behaviours.
- Develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.
- Become more aware of conventional behaviour in common situations in the target culture.
- Increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.
- Develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.
- Stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture ,and to encourage empathy towards its people.

All in all these goals set by several scholars, despite the differences in terminology, and broadly speaking, most educators would agree that the goal of teaching culture is to increase students awareness and to develop their curiosity towards the target culture and their own , helping them to make comparisons among culture.

Camilleri 's observation (2002) seems to summarize what Seelye and Tomalin & Stempleski have previously said, She states,

“ Learners realize that their culturally -bound ways of thinking and behaving are not universally shared .They learn different ways of responding to the environment , from very simple comportment such as expressing gratitude to a friend to more complex social interaction such as developing and maintaining an intimate relationship with a member of a different cultural and linguistic community ” p 48.

II.2.5. Challenges and Limits of Classroom Instructions

The transmission of cultural information by means of language teaching is an issue of wide interest among theorists and practitioners in the field of foreign language teaching. Incorporating culture learning activities for language education programs means much more than just adding them to a lesson plan .

As Damen (1987:216) states, “ *Because [culture learning] is so deeply concerned with norms, values ,beliefs ,worldviews , and other aspects of subjective culture, it is a type of learning subject to the action of many variables and often accompanied by feelings of discomfort and even shock .*” (quoted in Ryffel 1997 : 28)

This statement may discourage language teachers to deal with culture related activities and make it uncomfortable area to teach.

Brown (1987:209) , expresses a similar view in claiming that the expression of culture is so bound up in the non-verbal communication that the barriers to culture learning are non- verbal rather than verbal. (cited in Lazar 2001).

In fact, this concern has generated some debates and controversy as to question the effectiveness of classroom instruction.

According to Kramsch (1996), “ *the intercultural approach to teaching foreign languages and to writing foreign language textbooks is not without raising some controversy among politicians and library scholars alike. Who feel that language teachers should be responsible for teaching «only language » not culture nor politics.Instead culture can not and should be taught in classrooms ,they say ,but rather ,learners should be sent abroad to experience the culture.*” p.6

Such a statement seems to make language teaching and learning more challenging and puts language teachers in real dilemma.

For Byram (1997) most difficult of all is to assess whether students have changes their attitudes, become more tolerant of differences and the unfamiliar. Whereas for example with vocabulary or grammar, we can easily check whether the impute has been effective, with culture we are primary dealing with awareness of context that is not open to a quantitative type of assessment (ibid).

Yet, it seems on the surface not difficult to assess learners, acquisition of information, there can be tests of facts about the target country .But the real difficulty for the teachers is to decide which facts are important, and which country 's culture should be dealt with .

Byram (1991) suggests that the goal of culture instruction can not be to adopt another identity which might entail a rejection of one 's own.

Instead teachers should develop intercultural understanding. (Lantof 1999:29)

According to Lazar (2001), in the foreign language context teachers should not be surprised when tolerance and understanding is not the immediate result of the students learning a foreign culture. Since sometimes the reverse happens: learners experience, culture shock, or see the other culture in a stereotyped way which are the result of evaluative overgeneralisations.

II.3. Intercultural Communicative Competence and Foreign Language Teaching

II.3.1 The Concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Despite the interconnectedness between the fields of language education and intercultural communication, they are often treated as separate fields.

Fantini (1997) indicates that even language educators who commonly express interest in culture as part of the language experience, they often treat culture as supplemental or incidental to the real task. He goes further to say that,

"Language educators who demonstrate interest in "culture" often ignore "intercultural" concerns –that is, the contrast between target and native languages and cultures and the dynamic tension between them." (ibid p IV)

The efforts made by eminent researchers in both fields of language education and Intercultural Communication (IC) have resulted in a shared goal, that is the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

A concept made popular by Byram (1997) and his colleagues (Byram and Zarate, 1997; Byram and Fleming, 1998). This concept was developed as an expansion of communicative competence. (Hall 2002: 109).

Broadly speaking, Intercultural Communication is a term referring to communication between people from different cultural backgrounds. (Samovar et al. quoted in Lazar 2001)

Beneke states that, *"Intercultural communication in the wider sense of the word involves the use of significantly different linguistic codes contacts between people holding significantly different statements of values and models of the world ([.....]) intercultural competence is to a large extent the ability to cope with one's own*

cultural background in interaction with others" (Beneke 2000:108 -109 quoted in Lazar 2001 :19)

In foreign language teaching /learning intercultural competence has been described as :

"The ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures" (Meyer 1991 quoted in Cortazzi and Jin 1999 :198)

"The ability to enter other cultures and communicate effectively and appropriately, establish and maintain relationships ,and carry out tasks with people of these cultures" (Moran 2001:5 quoted in Lazar 2003:41) .

In sum, communicative competence is usually divided into four aspects *grammatical competence, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence* . This list is extended to include *intercultural communicative competence* . They all form the *Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)*.

However, the acquisition of intercultural competence is never complete and perfect, but to be a successful intercultural speaker and mediator does not require complete and perfect competence. (Byram, 2002)

II.3.2 Components of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

According to Byram (2002:7) the components of intercultural competence are *knowledge, skills* and *attitudes*, complemented by the values one holds because of one's belonging to a number of social group. These values are part of one's social identities. Intercultural competence involves five elements:

1-*Attitudes (Savoir être)*: This refers curiosity and openness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and beliefs about one's own . This means a willingness to relativise one's own values, beliefs and behaviours, not to assume that they are the only possible and naturally correct ones, and to be able to see how they might look from an outsider's perspective; who has a different set of values, beliefs and behaviours. This can be called the ability to '*decentre*' .

2- Knowledge (Savoirs) : includes knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.

3- Skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre) : this refers to ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own.

4- Skills of Discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre / faire) : this refers to the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture, and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

5- Critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager) : this refers to an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

As a consequence, Byram (ibid:9) indicates that the role of the teacher is to develop skills, attitudes and awareness of values just as much as to develop a knowledge of a particular culture or country.

Hence, the 'best' teacher is neither native nor the non-native speaker, but the person who can help students to acquire interest in and curiosity about otherness, and people's perspectives. He concludes:

“developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching involves recognizing that the aims are : to give learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence ; to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures ; to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals other distinctive perspectives ,values and behaviours ;and to help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience .”p6.

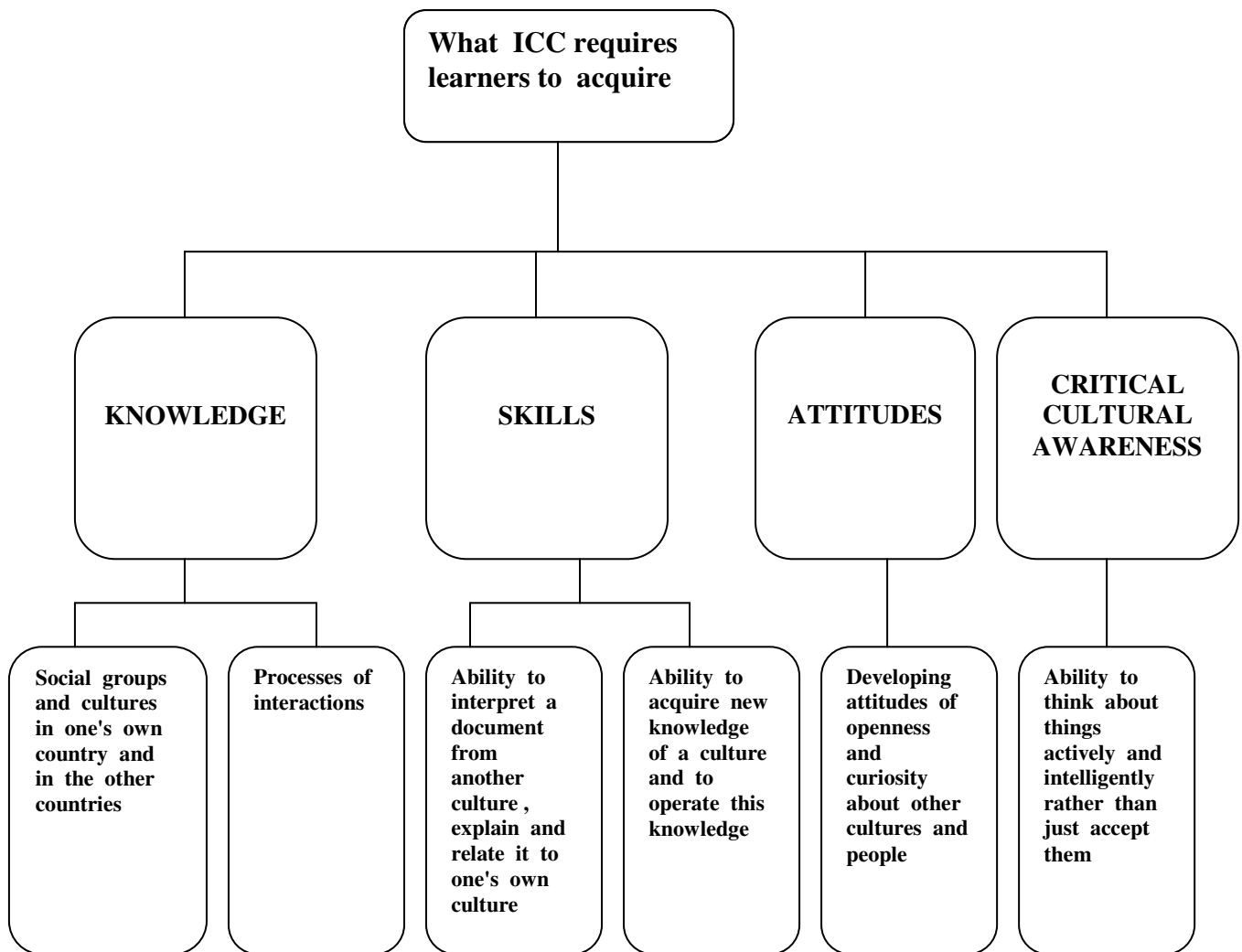


Figure 3 : Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. X, No. 12.

II.3.3. The Most Common Approaches to Teaching Culture

According to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and applied Linguistics, An approach in language teaching refers to:

« the theory, philosophy, and principles underlying a particular statement of teaching practices » p 29 .

This definition seems to be broad when dealing with culture teaching. Since only few of the so called approaches can constitute a theory or a philosophy.

Risager (1998:242-252) describes four different approaches to teaching culture:

-The foreign cultural approach , is based on the concept of the single culture , associated with a specific people, with a specific language .This approach focuses on the culture of the country or countries where the language is spoken (target countries), and does not deal with the learners' own country, nor with relation between the target countries and the learners ' own .

In this approach the target language is taught only as if it were the first language for the population. The teaching aim is to develop in learners a native speaker communicative and cultural competence,i.e. a competence that approaches as much as possible the competence of the

«native speaker » .This approach was dominant until the 1980' s and is criticized nowadays because of the lack of comparison between cultures.

-The intercultural approach is based on the concept of comparison. Culture is better learned through comparison, the intercultural approach deals with both the target culture and the learners' one . The aim is to develops an intercultural and communicative competence, a competence that enables the learner to function as a mediator between the two cultures.

Since 1980's, language teaching has become increasingly influenced by the intercultural perspective as it looks at the learners understanding of their own country.

-The multicultural approach is based on the idea that several cultures may coexist within the same society thus the multicultural approach includes a specific focus on the cultural and linguistic diversity of the target country / countries as well as learners own and the relation between the target countries and learners' own . As in the intercultural approach, comparison is included and the teaching reflects wishes for a balanced and anti-racist view of the cultures involved. The aim here also is to develop the mediator's competence : intercultural and communicative competence, but this time at a partly different level . It is a competence enabling learners to use the target language as a lingua franca, speaking with people who on the one hand belong to the society where the target language is spoken e-g France, but on the other hand belong

to another culture , e.g. Moroccan culture, and who may speak another language as their first language, e.g. Moroccan Arabic. (Risager 1998:247). This approach is increasingly gaining popularity. The last approach suggested by Risager is **-Trans cultural approach:** It takes as its point of departure that cultures in the modern world are interwoven by virtue of extensive migration and tourism, world wide communication systems, economic interdependence and globalization. It is also reflected by the fact that many people speak foreign languages as lingua franca (i.e. used in situations where none of the speakers has the language in question as his or her first language). The Trans cultural approach; thus, deals with the foreign language as an international language .Its main aim is to teach learners to use it for international communication. Hence, it could be argued that it is not necessary at all to link the foreign language to any specific culture.

Broadly speaking, and from the approaches discussed above, these latter can be classified into two different views .

First the so- called *mono-cultural approaches* (Murphy 1988) which focus only or mostly on the target culture and are considered inadequate nowadays because they do not take into account the learners' understanding of their own culture.

Second the *comparative approach*, on the other hand, emphasizes that foreign culture should be related to the learners' own . Byram(1994) claims that learners can not rid themselves of their own culture and simply step into another .For learners to deny their own culture is to deny their own being (Byram 1994: 43 cited in Hinkel, 1999)

Byram and Planet (2000) stress that the essence of the comparative approach is to provide a double perspective but not to evaluate, to see which is better . This means that learners can see that their own way of doing and interpreting things is not the only possible one.

To use Byram and Planet's words, *“so the comparative approach does involve evaluation but not in terms of improving what is all too familiar .comparison makes the strange , the other ,familiar , and makes the familiar , the self , strange -and therefore easier to re-consider ”* p189.

II.3.4. Material for Teaching Culture

Many sources such as textbooks, stories, interviews, maps, songs, music, etc. are used in foreign language teaching. These materials are primary designed to facilitate language teaching.

Many documents analyzed by Byram (1993 cited in Corttazi and Jin:197) highlight three broads aims of foreign language instructions:

- The development of communicative competence for use in situations the learners might expect to encounter.
- The development of an awareness of the nature of language and language learning.
- The development of insight into the foreign culture and positive attitudes towards foreign.

Byram stresses that these three aims should be integrated. For that reason, and when bearing in mind that foreign language classroom offers good opportunities for culture learning . Teaching materials (textbook, teachers' book ...) should include elements of the target culture.

Moreover, Corttazi and Jin (1999:198) maintain that EFL and ESL (English for specific purposes) textbooks are expected to reflect a range of cultural contexts and to include intercultural elements, besides these materials are expected to raise learner's awareness of intercultural issues and enable them to communicate effectively and appropriately in a variety of communicative contexts. Surprisingly, none of these are necessarily what happens, in most textbooks the focus is still on developing the four language skills and cultural elements are often given as background or supplementary information.

II.3.4.1. The Cultural Content within EFL Textbooks

Although, there is usually a cultural content within textbooks (via photographs, texts, biographies etc), these latter vary in their approach to culture; depending on their cultural content, textbooks can be classified according to how language and culture are related to each other.

According to Dannets, Dubin, and Lezberg (1986, cited in Skopinskaja, 2003:41-42) .Foreign language textbooks can be classified in terms of their cultural content into two different types :*One dimensional* and *two dimensional* textbooks.

To the first group, belong textbooks that focus on the target culture and leave few possibilities for comparison, unless the teacher asks a question, such as, « this is what Americans do . What do you do ? »

On the other hand *two dimensional textbooks* encourage intercultural understanding. They treat cultural related themes from two different perspectives; thus, simulating both comparison and contrast between the target and source culture.

On their view, Corttazi and Jin (1999:204.210) distinguish further between three types of textbooks depending on the cultural information presented:

- Textbooks based on the source culture.
- Textbooks based on the target culture.
- Textbooks aimed at international target cultures.
- The First category includes textbooks which are produced at a national level for particular countries, that focus on the learners' own culture, rather than target cultures . Students are expected to learn English to talk to visitors to their country, rather than prepared to encounter other cultures .In such textbooks ,learners see members of their own culture, in their own context, who are not different from themselves, except that they all speak English . Such textbooks help students to become aware of their own cultural identity. However, they do not develop students' intercultural awareness.

- The Second category includes textbooks that focus on target cultures (e.g., the United Kingdom, the United States ...). It is easy to assume that textbooks should reflect the target culture, however, such textbooks are considered to be commercial .

- The Third category includes textbooks that include a wide variety of cultures set in English speaking countries or in other countries where English is not a first or second language, but is used as an international language. The rationale for such international target cultures is that English is frequently used in international situations by speakers who do not speak it as a first language (Cortazzi and Jin 1999:209).

Broadly speaking, in order for foreign language textbooks to be efficient, the cultural information included in them should be correct and recent. It shouldn't be biased and should reflect background cultures of English speaking countries, it should also include visual aids to help students understand the cultural information.

Dubin and Olshtain (2000) highlight that,

“ No textbook which purports to represent how the language is actually used in communicative contexts can be produced without a sociolinguistic dimension .The choices which writers make regarding the characters ,settings ,and events all need to accurately reflect how the speakers use the language .With only a handful of models to follow , writers have an immense frontier to explore when they decide to deal realistically with the sociocultural component. ”p.124

However, if textbooks fail in providing material for teaching culture, educators have proposed a varied range of resources and activities for both inside and outside the classroom which can support culture learning.

II.3-4.2. Other Sources and Activities for Teaching Culture

The culture associated with language cannot be learned in a few lessons about celebrations, folk songs, or costumes of the countries in which the language is spoken. Kramersch (1991) emphasizes that the impact of culture on language learning and use is far more complex than «the four Fs» (i.e. Foods, Fairs, Folklore, statistical facts) (Kramersch 1991:236 cited in Hinkel 1999:5)

Therefore, in order to get comprehensive picture of the target culture from many angles, teachers should vary their sources.

They need to present students with different kinds of information. Cullen (2000) suggests a list of possible sources of information which can be used as material for teaching culture.

The list includes : Video, CDs, TV, readings , Internet, stories, students' own information, songs, newspapers, interviews, guest speakers, anecdotes, souvenirs, photographs, surveys, illustrations, literature, kinesics, and body language, (non verbal behaviour).

Peterson and Coltrane (2003) provides some useful ideas for presenting culture in the class . They claim that cultural activities should be carefully organized and incorporated into lesson plans to enrich the teaching content .

Authentic Material

Authentic sources from the native speech community helps to engage students in authentic cultural experiences .Sources can include films, news broadcasts, and television shows, websites; and photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochure. Teachers can adapt the use of these materials to suit the age and language proficiency level of the students. For example, even beginners can watch and listen to video clips taken from a TV show in the target language and focus on such cultural conventions as greetings.

The teacher might supply students with a detailed translation or give them a chart to complete. After the class viewed the segments ,the teacher can engage the students in discussion of the cultural norms presented in the segments and what these norms might say about the values of the culture. Discussion topics

might include non-verbal behaviour (e.g., the physical distance between speakers, gestures, eye contact, societal roles, and how people in different social roles, relate to each other). Student might describe the behaviours they observe and discuss which of them are similar to their native culture and which are not and determine strategies for effective communication in the target language.

Proverbs: Discussions of common proverbs in the target language could focus on how the proverbs are different from or similar to proverbs in the students' native language. Using proverbs as a way to exposure culture provides a way to analyze the stereotypes about and misperceptions of the culture, represented in the proverbs of their native culture.

Role plays : Role play activities are advocated by many teachers in the language classroom. In teaching culture, Peterson and Coltrane (2003) suggest that students can act out a miscommunication that is based on cultural differences. For example, often learning about ways of addressing different groups of people in the target culture, such as people of the same age and older people, students could role play a situation in which an inappropriate greeting is used. Other students observe the role play and try to identify the reason for the miscommunication. Then, they do the same activity using a culturally appropriate form of address.

Literature : (drama, fiction, poetry) Literary texts are often replete with cultural information and evoke memorable reactions for readers.

Peterson and Coltrane (2003) claim that texts should be selected carefully for the given group of students and with specific goals in mind, so that they can be helpful to acquire insight into the target culture

Fenner (2001:16,20) shares the same opinion and adds that literary texts are richer and more diverse than factual texts.

Cultural Capsule : (developed by Taylor and Sorenson ,1961)

Cultural capsules are one of the best established and well- known activities for teaching culture. Essentials for this technique is a brief description of some aspects of the target culture (e.g., what is customarily eaten for meals and when these meals are eaten, marriage, etc), followed by contrasting information from the students ' native language culture. The contrasting information can be provided by the teacher, but is usually more effective to have students themselves point out the contrast. Peterson and Coltrane (2003)Suggest that students can be presented with objects like tools, jewellery or images from the target culture. The students are then responsible for finding information about the item in question either by conducting research or being given clues to investigate. They can either write a brief summery or make oral presentation to the class about the cultural relevance of the item. According to Peterson and Coltrane (ibid), such activities can also serve as a foundation from which students can go on to discuss larger cultural , historical ,and linguistic factors that are linked to the objects.

Student research (Cullen 2000): Is considered as one of the most powerful tools that can be used with more advanced students because it combines their interest with classroom activities .For the first session the teacher might ask learners to search the internet or library and find information on any aspect of the target culture that interests them .In the following session, learners explain to their group what they have found out and answers any questions about it .This can lead to long -term interest in the target - culture . Research enables learners to find out things for themselves.

Conclusion

In the light of the issues highlighted in the present chapter, it seems that the need to integrate culture and its teaching into EFL classes is not a new debate . The early 1970's had witnessed the reform of structural methodologies such as the Grammar translation Method and audiolingualism, because within the communicative approach framework it became important that the acquisition of the target language communicative competence entails the integration of both language and its culture. Since then, few if any educators would claim that culture should not play a role in the foreign language classroom. However, there are many differing interpretations as to how this should happen and to what exactly culture learning actually means.

For this reason, this chapter attempted to clarify the main issues related to the role of culture in EFL classes. Firstly, it aimed to account for the rise of communicative competence, its components and its implementation in EFL classes. Secondly, it reviewed the developing role of culture in different EFL teaching methodologies, goals of teaching culture as well as the challenges and limits of classroom instructions. Finally, The attempt was to investigate, the concept intercultural communicative competence, and how this concept could be put into practice in the classroom by reviewing the various approaches to teaching culture, the role of textbooks, the different material and activities for teaching culture .

A point worth mentioning here, is, while it is clear from the literature review that the role of culture has increased its status in foreign language education, it is important to investigate this issue within the current situation of the Algerian EFL classes.

The following chapter looks at the teaching of English in the Algerian secondary schools.