

ENHANCING CULTURAL AWARENESS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Panjiyeva Rushana Sherali qizi
Student of Karshi State University

Anotation

In today's globalized world, learning a language is not only about knowing grammar and vocabulary, but also about understanding the cultural background behind it. This is especially important in teaching English as a foreign or second language, because English is used worldwide and connects different nations and cultures. In this situation, cultural awareness plays a very important role in English language teaching. It helps students understand the deeper meaning of language and how it is used in real contexts, especially in communication with people from different cultures. It also builds a strong basis for successful intercultural communication. By improving cultural awareness, students can not only develop their language skills but also become more open-minded and respectful towards other cultures. Therefore, teachers should focus on developing cultural awareness so that learners can use English effectively in both daily life and professional situations.

Keywords

Cultural awereness, teaching culture, language and culture, teaching methods, social integration, adaptation, connections, global community.

In today's globalized world, people from different countries and cultures travel frequently and experience new traditions and lifestyles. Because of this, cultural awareness has become very important, especially in the tourism and hospitality industry. Modern travelers do not only want to visit places, but they also want to have real and meaningful cultural experiences.

Cross-cultural awareness means the ability and willingness to understand and adapt to cultures that are different from one's own. When tourists learn about local traditions, customs, and ways of communication, they can better enjoy their trips and build positive relationships with people from other cultures. Cultural differences strongly influence communication and social interaction.

Moreover, cross-cultural awareness encourages individuals to understand both their own culture and others. It helps people develop respect and tolerance for cultural diversity and prepares them to deal with differences more effectively. It also motivates people to explore other countries and cultures through travel. As tourism continues to grow, people's preferences are changing. Instead of passive and repetitive activities, tourists now prefer unique and authentic experiences.

Therefore, travelers should respect local cultures and traditions. They can do this by trying traditional food, dressing appropriately, and following social norms. Understanding and appreciating cultural differences not only improves travel experiences but also helps individuals grow and see the world from different perspectives. Cultural awareness extends far beyond a basic knowledge of customs and traditions. It involves a deeper ability to understand and appreciate the complexity of diverse cultural backgrounds, including their values, beliefs, viewpoints, and lived experiences. Developing cultural awareness in students enables them to acquire several essential competencies.

Firstly, it strengthens critical thinking skills, as learners are encouraged to question and reflect on their own assumptions and biases, leading to a more sophisticated understanding of cultural diversity. Secondly, it enhances communication abilities. By engaging with people from various cultural backgrounds, students learn to adjust their language and communication styles in ways that promote mutual understanding.

In addition, cultural awareness contributes to effective problem-solving. Students become capable of examining issues from multiple perspectives and generating creative solutions that take into account different cultural values and needs. It also fosters empathy, as exposure to diverse perspectives helps learners develop sensitivity and a deeper appreciation of shared human experiences.

Furthermore, it promotes global citizenship by broadening students' worldview. Learners begin to recognize the interconnected nature of cultures and their role in building a more inclusive and equitable society.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) provides a highly effective framework for developing cultural awareness, as it focuses on real-life challenges and encourages active student participation and collaboration. One of the key strengths of PBL lies in its use of authentic projects, which are based on real-world issues relevant to students' lives and communities. Such projects allow learners to explore cultural diversity through global themes such as climate change, poverty, human rights, and access to education, all of which can be examined from different cultural perspectives.

According to Michael Byram, successful language learning is not only about mastering grammar and vocabulary, but also about developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC). This means that learners should be able to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Byram explains that intercultural competence includes several important elements.⁶ First, learners need knowledge about other cultures, such as traditions, values, and social norms. Second, they need skills, for example, the ability to interpret

⁶ Michael Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. UK. Multilingual Matters Ltd, January – 1997. P-58

and understand cultural differences and to interact respectfully with others. Third, learners should develop attitudes like openness, curiosity, and respect towards other cultures. In addition, Byram emphasizes that students should not only learn about foreign cultures but also reflect on their own culture. This helps them compare cultures and better understand differences and similarities. As a result, learners become more flexible and sensitive in communication. Therefore, Byram's idea shows that cultural awareness is a key part of English language teaching. Without it, students may know the language, but they may not be able to use it effectively in real-life communication. Developing intercultural competence helps learners become confident speakers and responsible global citizens.⁷

Critical cultural awareness, also referred to as *savoirs engager*, can be understood as the ability to critically evaluate perspectives, practices, and cultural products from both one's own culture and others, using clear and conscious criteria. It involves not only observation but also thoughtful judgment.

The aim of teaching is not to change learners' personal values, but rather to help them become more aware of these values and make them explicit when responding to different cultural viewpoints. In this way, learners can develop more informed and balanced opinions.

However, there is an essential value that language education should always promote: respect for human dignity and equality, which form the foundation of democratic interaction in society. These principles guide learners in developing ethical and respectful communication.

Therefore, the responsibility of the language teacher goes beyond simply teaching cultural knowledge. Teachers should also focus on developing learners' skills, attitudes, and awareness of values, enabling them to engage critically and respectfully in intercultural communication.

There is no single group that can be considered more or less important in terms of language use, as every social group creates its own temporary linguistic and cultural system with unique features and shared assumptions. It is essential to recognize the diversity and often superficial nature of our linguistic and cultural connections, rather than viewing language and culture as fixed and unchangeable entities.⁸

Education, more than any other social force, plays a key role in highlighting the dynamic nature of culture and language. Although individuals must operate within the language system they acquire in order to communicate, they are not limited by it. Instead, they have the ability to go beyond their current language and contribute to its

⁷ Michael Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. UK. Multilingual Matters Ltd, January – 1997. P-33

⁸ Tibble, J. W., *Teacher education and subject disciplines*. (Publisher details not fully specified), in 1966. P-88.

future development. Understanding this process requires placing language within its broader and richer context.

In the classroom context, language learning can be illustrated through real-life examples. For instance, when young learners collaborate on writing tasks, their work often reflects social patterns and experiences from their environment. Their stories may show how social expectations, relationships, and personal experiences influence communication. This demonstrates that language learning is not only about structure, but also about expressing social and cultural realities.⁹

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teachers have always needed strong language knowledge as part of their professional training. However, the situation in Britain regarding language education has been quite different until recently. During the expansion of teacher education in the 1960s, several academic disciplines—such as psychology, sociology, history, and philosophy—competed for a central role in teacher preparation.

At the same time, linguistics became a popular subject in education, but it remains unclear whether this development truly improved teacher training. There has long been dissatisfaction with the gap between academic disciplines and actual classroom practice. One possible solution is to focus more carefully on developing high-quality teacher education rather than trying to reorganize past systems.

As a result, teacher training programs were divided into different courses, none of which consistently placed language at the center or required a strong focus on it. In many cases, trainee teachers did not receive advanced preparation in linguistics. A survey conducted for the National Congress on Languages in Education, which included responses from nearly 150 institutions in the UK, showed that there is no guarantee teachers are fully aware of how important language is in their classrooms.¹⁰

Further studies also suggest that limited knowledge among trainee teachers is not simply due to ignorance but may reflect more general assumptions about language education.¹¹

In the 1980s, the most academically prepared teachers were usually found in secondary teacher education. However, in the 1990s, government policies encouraged simplified language-related training activities, often without proper consultation with linguists or education specialists before implementation.

Another important point is that, in Britain, language issues have mainly been seen as the responsibility of English language teachers. Interestingly, English teachers themselves have not always received direct or systematic training in language studies.

⁹ Brumfit, Ch. J., *Individual Freedom in Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press-2001.p-121

¹⁰ Brumfit Ch.J. & Falmer, *LANGUAGE IN TEACHER EDUCATION*, UK: The National Congress on Languages in Education, 1988. P-107

¹¹ Thomas Bloor & Meriel Bloor, *Languages for Specific Purposes: Practice and Theory*, Trinity College Dublin, 1986. P-22

Some degree programs include limited language study, but many do not cover key areas such as modern linguistics, sociolinguistics, or psycholinguistics—fields that are highly relevant to classroom teaching¹².

We believe that language and culture should always be studied and understood together. No matter which foreign language a learner studies, understanding its culture helps them learn the language more effectively. Culture represents the identity and values of a community and reflects its most beautiful aspects. Therefore, learners should try to develop an understanding of the culture of the language they are studying. In addition, they should not limit themselves to only one language. Instead, they should explore new languages and cultures. This will broaden their horizons and open up new opportunities.

REFERENCES:

1. Brumfit Ch.J. & Falmer, *LANGUAGE IN TEACHER EDUCATION*, UK: The National Congress on Languages in Education, 1988.
2. Brumfit, Ch. J., *Individual Freedom in Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press-2001.
3. Dod C. *Dinamics of intercultural communicatons*, 5-th ed, Mc-Graw Hill Publishing; New York , USA-1998.
4. Hirst, P. H., *Philosophy and educational theory*, University of London Press-1993.
5. Michael Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. UK. Multilingual Matters Ltd, January – 1997.
6. Tibble, J. W., Teacher education and subject disciplines. (Publisher details not fully specified), in 1966.
7. Thomas Bloor & Meriel Bloor, *Languages for Specific Purposes: Practice and Theory*, Trinity College Dublin, 1986.

¹² Brumfit, C. J., *Individual Freedom in Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press-2001. P- 77