

The Role of Culture in English Language Learning: An Analytical Study of Literature Graduates

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Abstract

This paper attempts to examine how culture affects English language learning among literature graduates. The study finds that culture plays a role in learning the English language for literature graduates who need to thoroughly grasp the language and its cultural background. It demonstrates how including cultural components in language instruction increases motivation and engagement. Language teachers should incorporate cultural components into lesson plans to give students a deeper understanding of language and its context. The field of literary studies is linked to the area of cultural studies and both contribute and affect one another. This will shed light on how language, as it operates through texts, organizes and permits a variety of ways of knowing and living. The study stresses how culture shapes learners' attitudes, beliefs, and values, all of which affect how they acquire languages.

Keywords: Culture, English, language, learning, literature

Introduction

Learning a language is an intricate procedure that involves more than simply picking up new vocabulary and grammar rules. It involves being aware of and respecting the cultural nuances and backgrounds that are woven into a language. The English language displays a rich tapestry of cultural variation. Exploring how culture affects English language acquisition is therefore crucial, especially for those seeking degrees in literature. This study intends to look into how culture affects English language acquisition among literature graduates. It explores the premise that fluency in languages and literary interpretation can both be considerably improved by having a deep awareness of culture. This study aims to shed light on the advantages and difficulties that literature graduates face in their quest for English language proficiency by examining the interaction between culture and language learning.

The importance of this study rests in its potential to offer insightful perspectives on language instruction and curriculum development. Teaching methods that build cultural sensitivity and competency can be improved by educators by recognizing the vital role of culture in language learning. Additionally, this research could provide literature graduates with a stronger understanding of the cultural elements that the English language has built in, enabling them to interact more deeply with literary works. These graduates acquire a sensitivity to cultural nuances, societal perspectives, historical circumstances, and linguistic styles through intensive literary study. Such information improves their capacity to use and comprehend the English language within its literary and cultural contexts.

Language is a dynamic expression of the communities that use it; it is not static in nature. Idiomatic expressions, humor, and implicit meanings may prove challenging to fully comprehend due to cultural differences, which can result in miscommunication or misinterpretations. The ability to cross cultural divides, adjust to new communicative norms, and cultivate cultural empathy may be necessary for the learning process. The findings of this research should contribute to the mass of knowledge currently available on cultural studies and language learning. This study seeks to close the knowledge gap between theory and implementation and to help make language learning more holistic in nature.

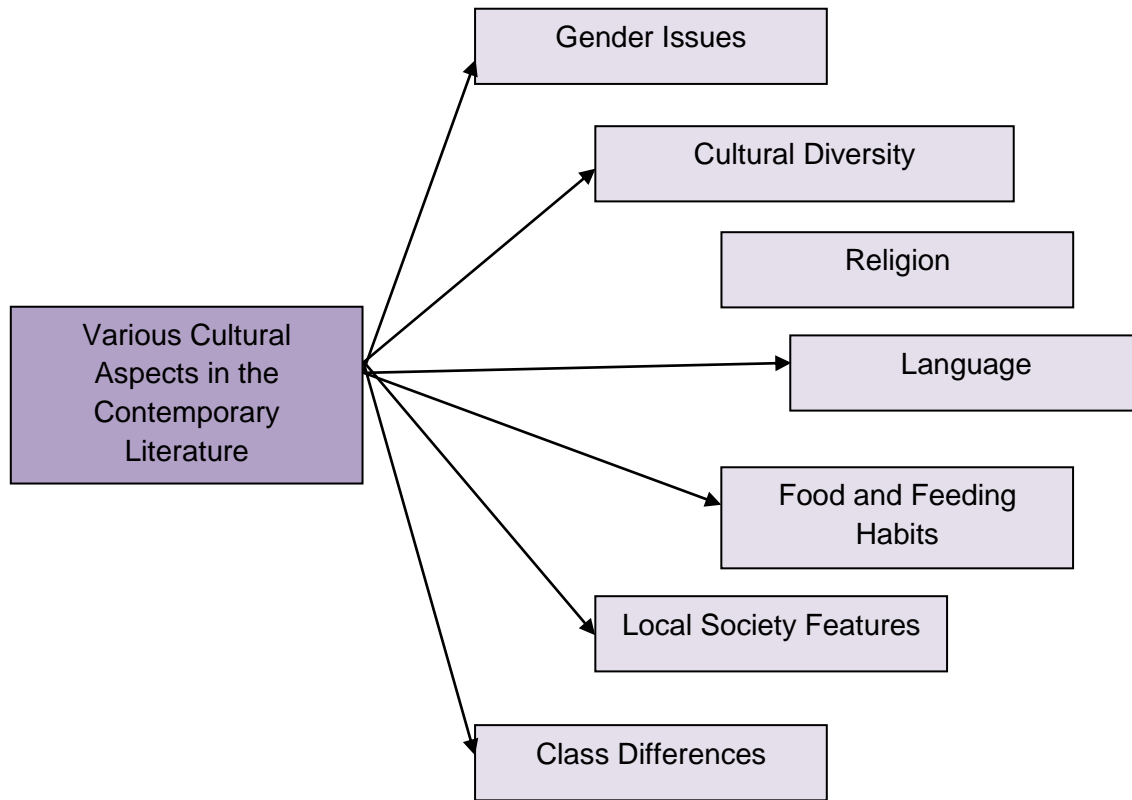
Literature Review

In the opinion of Kuo& Lai, "culture" embraces both cognitive as well as affective behavior. This has tremendous influence on the mindsets of individuals, and that in turn has an impact on the practical facets of their everyday lives, like their passions. In a nutshell, it is a practice that individuals continue given

that it is a component of their history. You will struggle to comprehend the world that is around you if you are unfamiliar with the culture. Culture serves an essential part in the development of our society and the cultivation of interpersonal ties. If we fail to appreciate it, we're going to lose it soon enough. Language and cultural identity go together hand in hand. They engage with one another and are linked. Success in as well as out of the classroom relies on cultural awareness and language proficiency (Kuo& Lai, 2006). Without question, culture performs a vital part in ESL and EFL instruction. In the field of language instruction, it continues to be an issue of intense discussion (Howatt& Widdowson, 2004). While research on the topic of cultural representation in instruction in languages was carried out, the discussion regarding culture in English language learning and teaching persisted. One critical function of culture for language training is the correct empowerment of cultural significance (Rodríguez&Espinar, 2015).

The knowledge, dressing, and habits of the inhabitants of a culture where a particular tongue is spoken are reflected in its linguistic attributes. Culture has an immense effect on how people speak and patterning. Understanding the target culture is therefore essential for pupils in order to acquire a foreign language (Zhan, 2016). The development of cultural knowledge and an understanding of how it affects communication are two goals of teaching a foreign language, so students learning English as a second language should be mindful of their culture to become proficient in the target language's cross-cultural communication. According to Jokikokko (2005), having the right level of intercultural competence enables students to recognize even nonverbal cues, like gestures and codes, that are used in the target language. As a result, learning English as a foreign language (EFL) enables speakers of other languages to interact with one another appropriately.

According to Gobel's (2010) research, Japanese EFL students seemed more interested in discovering how the English language and culture relate to one another. According to Gobel, EFL Japanese classes must cover topics related to the target language's culture, and EFL Japanese mentors must be well-versed in English language culture in order to use it effectively in their lessons. It has been reported that even when EFL students have a sufficient level of cultural awareness, they still struggle to apply their foreign language skills in precise ways in various contexts. This is a result of their inexperience with foreign cultures. In her 2014 study, Alsamani looked at the cultural elements that Saudi EFL schools should cover. In order to assess the attitudes of the pupils, Alsamani implemented a Culture-Awareness Diagnostic Test as well as a Culture-Awareness Needs Assessment Questionnaire. The research's conclusions demonstrated the critical need for pupils to gain knowledge about the targeted culture and that they were keen on doing so. In the end, it is advised that EFL education programs incorporate culture into their classes. Additionally, Brdari (2016) affirms that teaching culture must be included in EFL classes because Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is the ultimate objective of teaching a foreign language. The study looked into how culture was included in EFL classes and secondary school levels of the Croatian National Curriculum. It examined the textbooks, ascertained the opinions of English language teachers on the ICC in language instruction, and defined whether or not their instruction is consistent with the national curriculum of Croatia. The findings show that EFL instructors value teaching foreign languages, yet there is still a gap between what is recommended in the national curriculum of Croatia and what teachers really do inside the classroom. Figure 1 shows the various dimensions of the culture that are shown in contemporary literature.



It is harder the more culture is included in teaching and learning. The lack of a single national culture is one difficulty. People can be seen to belong to a variety of cultural groupings (for example, gender, social class, and employment position (Choudhury 2013). The difficulty for educators, according to Choudhury (2013), is figuring out how to avoid their pupils from becoming influenced by the culture they are targeting and sacrificing their own sense of self. To avert this kind of issue, instructors may motivate their students to investigate the commonalities between their own culture and the targeted culture. According to Kovacs (2017), more emphasis should be put on classroom activities that deal with culture, including TV shows, movies, newscasts, and other real resources that are helpful for introducing culture. Using a learner-centered and skills-oriented approach, teachers can integrate the study of culture and language. If they are about the customs and traditions of the second-language culture, presentations and role-playing exercises can also be utilized to teach culture. These methods of instruction shift the learning environment from one where learners study vocabulary and grammar to one that simulates how native speakers of the language really use the language (Dema & Möller, 2012).

The use of technology has an evident impact on how teaching and learning are done, in addition to its obvious impact on how our social lives have changed. With the aid of technology, educators can produce more useful tools for teaching language and cultural learning. Technology offers authentic communication in an interactive setting, which makes it easier to teach culture (Lee, 2009). This is one of the technology's appealing advantages. When observing the need to incorporate cultural studies in the coursework of literature graduates, Hall (1990) mentions how although holding a highly conservative viewpoint on culture and the intent of English studies with regard to the national culture, Leavis himself proved to be unlike the majority of humanities researchers. The reason he became despised at Oxford was the fact that he genuinely treated cultural studies with high seriousness. They felt that culture could endure on its own, however he cared about what happened to it. Our relationship with Leavis actually included respect for the seriousness with which he treated questions of language, culture, and national

identity. He recognized the significance of these questions for comprehending the national culture and the necessity for any serious academic to be concerned with the nature of language and what it means.

Shakespeare confronts Philip Henslow about his lack of interest in the writer's artistic process in John Madden's 1998 film *Shakespeare in Love* by saying, "Henslow, you have no soul. So how can you understand the emptiness that seeks a soulmate?" (0:05:27). Shakespeare was mindful of the difficulty of proving the fact that language is far more than simply words; language is a receptacle and acts as a instrument for the transmission of traditions, routines, customs and social context, among many others; and when developed through literature or poetry, it may reflect the soul of an individual. As they contextualize the world and facilitate the understanding of an intricate and inevitable connection between grammar and an anthropological dynamic area that evolves constantly due to its speakers' requirements and the circumstances in which it is employed, this method of learning a language with the backing of culture offers learners a greater chance to engage with English-speaking nations (Cruz, 2010).

Literature can be considered to be a rich source of "authentic material" since it involves two aspects in its written text: one of them is "language in use," or the real-life use of linguistics by individuals who are adept in it in a manner supposed for native speakers; the other aspect is an aesthetic description of the language that is that is being used intended to recover or signify language within an identified cultural context. There is a common theme among authors like Mark Twain, Irving Welsh, and Joseph Conrad in their efforts to portray how language is used in varying geographical contexts. These reconstructions give pupils a clear understanding of how a native Costaguanan sailor in the early 20th century, a contemporary low class kid in Edinburgh, or residents of the Mississippi shore in the late 19th century all employ language. It is crucial to emphasize to English language learners that these reconstructions are merely artistic recreations, occasionally including a critical analysis of language use, rather than actual samples of language from those circumstances (Cruz, 2010).

Conclusion

In summary, this analytical study has illuminated culture's crucial role in English language acquisition for literature graduates. The results show that culture is a significant factor in improving language ability, establishing intercultural competence, and fostering effective communication abilities. First, the study showed that culture offers an environment for language learning, allowing students to comprehend and appreciate the intricacies of the English language amid its cultural context. Second, the study showed that cultural awareness helps people become more interculturally competent, which empowers literature graduates to successfully navigate a variety of social and professional contexts. Empathy, tolerance, and respect for cultural diversity are fostered, which are necessary for good communication.

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