Culture in Language Learning: Background, Issues and Implications

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at presenting the historical background of the emergence of culture in language learning and how it can be correlated with the language learners. In fact, by providing various definitions of culture and the role it might play in the process of language learning, whether directly or indirectly, this research provides a clear-cut overview of culture and its application among the people as well as their communication in the society. Moreover, the relationship between culture and language learning is also taken into account. To this end, basic definitions of culture in different research studies are investigated moving toward finding a path to make a connection between language and culture. Therefore, a review of studies on the relationship between language learning and culture is provided to account for the possible effectiveness of benefiting from culture in the language learning process in that the learning context (i.e. foreign or second language) can be affected by the culture of the teachers as well as the learners. This demands that both teachers and learners should be aware of cultural issues surrounding the language and the fact that it can be beneficial for the process of language learning. If learner are consciously involved in the culture of the language they are learning, they certainly can have better performance and understand the language more tangibly.

1. Introduction

According to Kramsch (1993), culture refers to 'membership in a discourse community that shares a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and action' (p. 127). This is through the cultural learning, one comes to understand and believe whatever one has to do for the purpose of operating in a manner which is acceptable to other members in that society. In fact, cultural knowledge is socially acquired and appropriate behaviors are learned. Thus, culture can be defined as acceptable interaction within the social group and what makes the group, involving a way of life, a set of social practices, a system of beliefs and a shared history or set of experiences (Yassine, 2006). To put it in other way, culture consists of shared characteristics of behavior and social interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding; patterns that are acquired through a process of socialization and transmitted to future generations; an ongoing meaning-making process within a context. Under this process, culture lies in human interaction (Gurney, 2005).

An interaction generally involves communication between people and it is through verbal and non-verbal language that people share their messages, knowledge, emotions and values. Moreover, culture learning takes place through symbolic integration, a kind of communication in which language or gestures are used. As mentioned above, language as a means of communication is, to a very large extent, interrelated with culture. This relationship between language and culture is discussed below.

Language and culture are closely related and interactive. Damen (1987) argues that culture is transmitted and meant in great part through language; cultural patterns in turn are reflected and applied in language. As to the definitions of culture elaborated above, language has been seen as a part of culture and a form of accumulated knowledge in the culture. Language is a means to develop and transmit the culture as well as to communicate within the culture. In describing the relationship between language and culture, Kramsch (1993) asserts that-
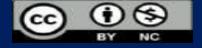
Language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways (p.3).

The language people use for every day communication is proved in the culture where the language is shaped by and at the same time shapes the culture. To communicate within a social group means not only to speak and exchange thoughts but also to learn, think and believe in a given way of interacting in a cultural context. Therefore, learning a language involves not only gaining knowledge about the language but also being aware of beliefs and values that frame the language to be in line with the culture. Learning and speaking another language is like thinking in a different way from the one that speakers have learned in their home or familiar community or society. Language is a medium of communication that expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultural reality (Kramsch, 1993). Thus, as Kramsch argues, through language reflecting ones' perceptions, perspectives and attitudes toward the world, people share their experiences, create meanings, and situate and locate their social identity. Such sharing and meaning creating is to be understandable and communicable to members of a community or social group, which in turn helps people to identify them as insiders of the culture and distinguish outsiders from other social groups.

Byram (1997) proposed the concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) at a core of foreign language teaching (FLT) and a way to improve the quality of language learners while considering the role of cultural issues in language learning and teaching. FLT is concerned with 'the experience of otherness' since learners are required to engage with both familiar and unfamiliar experiences through the medium of another language as well as another culture in which the language is applied. Therefore, FLT is directly related to communication.

In language learning, culture plays a critical role because language makes the communication possible, allowing members of a society to engage in social and interactive activities that help them be as an active participants within the academic society. Many scholars have emphasized that language learning and teaching should focus on communicative purpose and the importance of cultural aspects in language (Kramsch, 1993; Byram, 1988). To use language

appropriately and to communicate successfully, language learners are required to be aware of the cultural aspects of the language community as well as the linguistic ones. Language learning, as Swiderski (1993) pointed out, is the starting point and the focus but culture learning is the aim.

Language teachers and learners should be aware of the culturally appropriate ways and behaviors as well as thoughts in the target language speech community, for example, to address people, express gratitude, make requests, and (dis)agree with someone. Hence, the target-language culture in a second and foreign language program has been regarded as an essential feature of every stage of foreign language learning in that teaching the foreign language is not possible without an understanding and awareness of its cultural context (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). Without a cultural understanding, language learners cannot master language as its native speakers do (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003).

2. Language and Culture: Review of Background and Issues

Murdock (1941) asserted that there exist three basic factors to a comprehension of human social interaction including the individual, society, and culture. Further, he defined culture as a "corpus of habitual and traditional norms of behavior" (p.142) and divided its elements into techniques, relationships, and ideas. Techniques refer to the external world of nature which involve exploitative activities (e.g. in the acquisition of food and other want-satisfying materials), technological process (in that materials are transformed into artifacts and consumption goods), and a variety of mystical and religious practices. Relationships are the responses of the members who are acting within the society. They yield social structures in all forms of organizations (e.g. economic, domestic, and political, etc.) and culturally defined relationships can be maintained based upon a society's system of interpersonal relationships. The third factor of a culture is ideas which "consist not of habits of overt behavior but of patterned verbal habits, often sub-vocal but capable of expression in speech" (p. 143). These include technological and scientific knowledge, beliefs, and a conceptual formation of normal behaviors involved in both techniques and relationships.

The concept of culture is extricated from behavior or human activity, and the

focus is on abstract dimensions of culture than the visible ones. Unlike the trichotomy of techniques, relationships and ideas in the pre-World War II era, definitions of culture are now explained under six subdivided categories (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963), i.e. descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural, genetic, and incomplete definitions. The element, techniques, in Murdock's (1941) definitions are seen in the categories of descriptive, historical and genetic while the categories of normative or structural contain the concept of relationships, and Murdock's third element of ideas, can be found in the categories of normative or genetic.

In the same time period, Hall and Trager (1953) introduced a new horizon of viewing culture, arguing that cultural analysis is possible by discovering a biological base, and that there are many levels of complexity in a list on the subject matter of culture. They proposed ten focal bases for the analysis of culture including interaction, association, subsistence, bi-sexuality, temporality, territoriality, learning, play, defense, and exploitation. These categories deal with more complicated dimensions of culture than existed before the 50s. Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1963) terms of norm, structure, genetic and psychology could be linked with the categories, association, subsistence and learning in Hall and Trager's (1953) terms but the other categories are newer, more explicit and broader ways to define culture.

In their original publication, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1963) mentioned a comprehensive review of cultural concepts and definitions. The definitions of culture were detected and enumerated into seven groups of categories: descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural, genetic and incomplete definitions. For the components of culture, they draw upon the work of many authors ranging from writings in the late 20s to the early 50s and show an overall picture for the classification of culture. They also argued that the relation of culture and language should be taken into account, and drawing upon discussions of anthropologists and linguists. In their concluding comments, language and culture are understood as separable parts from one another.

It is clear that culture has been used in two senses, each usually implicit in its context and validated there: culture including language, and culture excluding language. It is also clear that language is the most easily separable part or aspect of total culture, which "its processes are the most distinctive and that the methods of linguistics are also the most distinctive as well as the best defined in the social sciences" (Kroeber &Kluckhohn, 1963, p.244).

In the 60s, culture was investigated within the field of language learning and teaching by scholars such as Taylor and Sorenson (1961) and Brooks (1968) who also made an attempt to develop culture teaching for foreign language learning.

Taylor and Sorenson (1961) proposed a model based on culture factors and assumed that a failure to consider any sector of a culture may cause a rather different worldview of other cultures to students. The categories of their outline of culture included subculture, technology, economy, social organization, political organization, world view, esthetics and education. Each category is distinguished with subcategories based on Mexican culture. Taylor and Sorenson's cultural categories described themes of Mexican culture in detail for use in learning Spanish. The categories of subculture, technology, and esthetics point to the descriptive or historical or genetic ones of the 50s. Structural culture in the 50s is divided into the four categories of economic, social, political and education in their description. The authors' notion of World view is akin to what was found in the categories of normative, or genetic in the 50s.

In another research on culture, Brooks (1968) pointed out that although there was general agreement about culture teaching in language classrooms, there was uncertainty about what the word 'culture' meant. Asserting that the concept of culture should be useful and applicable to language learners as well as teachers, he defined culture in five areas:

Culture1-biological growth, Culture2-personal refinement, Culture3-literature and the fine arts, Culture4-patterns for living and Culture5-the sum total of a way of life. He thought the first three meanings and the last one were all in general use and familiar so he focused on the fourth category, noting that it was "the least well understood, yet the most important in the early phase of language instruction (p.210).

He defined the fourth culture as:

Culture refers to the individual's role in the unending kaleidoscope of life situations of every kind and the rules and models for attitude and conduct in them. By

reference to these models, every human being, from infancy onward, justifies the world to himself as best he can, associates with those around him, and relates to the social order to which he is attached (p. 210).

From the point of view of language instruction, Brooks (1968) divided Culture4 into *formal* and *deep* culture. Formal culture refers to the individual's relationship to the refinement in thought, action, and surroundings of culture, and to the wide range of aesthetic expressions of culture (poetry and prose, the theatre, painting, the dance, architecture and artistry). Culture, as he points out, also relates to "the multiple and interrelated structures of social organization, economic effort, and professional discipline, and to the outward manifestations of politics and religion of culture5 (p.211)". On the other hand, deep culture is a slow, persistent, lifelong process and there is no or little understanding regarding its process. However, "through continued association with others the individual gradually accommodated his way of observing, speaking, eating, dressing, gesturing, thinking, believing, living, and valuing to that of those around him (Brooks, 1968, p.212)". In comparisons with Taylor & Sorenson's(1961) work, Brooks (1968)'s 'patterns for living' reveals the categories of economic, social, political, world view and education, and biological growth, personal refinement, and literature and fine arts, which are associated with sub-cultural, technological and aesthetics respectively. Later, Brooks developed the concept of 'patterns for living' into a list for culture analysis in language learning.

Following the 60s, research on culture in language learning evolved. Unlike in the previous era, in 70s practical goals or objectives for culture learning to be achieved in the language classroom were proposed, and culture learning began to be understood as process as well as learning about cultural products of a target culture.

As an example of extensive model for the analysis of culture, the cultural classification proposed by Murdock, Ford, Hudson, Kennedy, Simmons, and Whiting (1971) is based on the assumption that any element of culture may be classified into one of the following seven facets:

a) a patterned activity (a customary norm of motor, verbal or implicit (covert or ideational) behavior), b) the appropriateness of such an activity under certain circumstances such as time or place, c) the particular subject of the behavior, d) the object toward which the behavior is directed, e)some means external to both the subject and the object of the behavior, f) the purpose of the activity and g) the result of the activity. Under these facets, there are 80 categories for examining a culture (p. 131).

Among them, the category, total culture, is subcategorized into ethos, function, norms, cultural participation, cultural goals, and ethnocentrism. These subcategories contain descriptive and interpretive materials which accommodate entire culture or which override a number of more specific categories (Murdock et al., 1971).

In describing the goals of culture teaching, Nostrand (197) pointed out six objectives to help students to become culturally competent, which include reacting appropriately in social situation; describing or ascribing to the proper part of the population a pattern in the cultural or social behavior; recognizing a pattern when it is illustrated; explaining a pattern; predicting how a pattern is likely to apply to a given situation and describing or manifesting an attitude important for making one acceptable in the foreign society.

His process-oriented 'Emergent Model' was developed as an inventory for storing data in a sociocultural system grouped into six subsystems: (a) the culture, (b) the society, (c) conflicts, (d) the ecology, (e) the individual and (f) the cross-cultural environment. For Nostrand, culture is close to Brooks' (1997) 'personal' concept of culture and society to civilization-institutional. The other four categories are separated into independent topics in cultural data. Under the first subheading, the culture, he inventoried seven topics: main themes, traits, world-picture, verifiable knowledge, art forms, language, and paralanguage and kinesics. The first three topics construct "the culture's "ground of meaning": the basis of what makes sense to bearers of the culture; and for the outsider, a vantage ground from which to understand the meaning which an act or event takes on in that culture (p.2)." Under the society category, he proposed the following topics: the family (or the communal milieu); religious; economic-occupational; political and judicial; educational; and intellectual-esthetic and humanitarian institutions; leisure and recreation; the mass media; stratification and mobility; social proprieties; status by age group and sex; ethnic, religious and other minorities; and interpersonal and intergroup conflict. Conflicts cover intra-/inter-personal and inter-group conflicts. The ecology and

technology topics refer to the relationship of the population to its physical and biological environment, and measures for control of pollution and integration of the efforts in this section. The fifth category functions at the individual level, and the sixth category is the cross-cultural environment.

As to the deep systematization of teaching culture, Seelye (1976) identified seven goals in culture study. He believes that culture is a very broad concept involving all aspects of human life but, in the language classroom, it has been defined narrowly as the fine arts, geography, and history. As a result, it does not prepare a student to understand the wide range of behavior found within a culture. In order to help students understand the ways of life of foreign people, Seelye (1976) introduced seven instructional goals for teaching culture in the language classroom. His goal statements link language and culture in more practical ways. While Nostrand's (1975) approach shows much more attention to what aspects of culture should be included in culture study, Seelye's (1976) instructional goals for the language classroom seem to be very specific and function as a transition to the approach in the next period that emphasizes process-oriented culture teaching. Seelye's (1976) seven goals of culture instructions included-

1. *The sense, or functionality, of culturally conditioned behavior*. The students should gainthe understanding that people generally act the way they do because they are using options the society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs.

2. *Interaction of language and social variables*. The student should understand the fact that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave.

3. *Conventional behavior in common situations*. The student should demonstrate an awareness of the role convention and norm play in shaping behavior by demonstrating how people act in common mundane and crisis situations in the target culture.

4. *Cultural connotations of words and phrases*. The student should indicate awareness that culturally conditioned images are linked to the most common target words and phrases.

5. *Evaluating statements about a culture*. The student should have the ability to make, evaluate, and refine generalities concerning the target culture.

6. *Researching another culture*. The student should prove that she has developed the skills needed to locate and organize information about the target culture from the any available sources such as media.

7. *Attitudes toward other societies*. The student should indicate intellectual curiosity about the target culture and empathy toward its people.

Seelye (1976) assumed a procedure for classroom cultural activities that is in line with his goal, structure and specified performance objectives, expected terminal behaviors, conditions under which the behavior is to be performed and the criteria for the evaluation of behavioral competence.

In the 60s and 70s, culture in foreign language learning was based on the emotional and physical needs (Thanasoulas, 2001). Also, due to the efforts of the above mentioned scholars and many others, daily culture compared to formal culture and the goal of teaching culture in language classes attracted lots of attention and became more visible. However, the culture seems to have been presented through the eyes of the mother country of the learners and little attention was paid to culture abroad or through the eyes of natives according to Lafayette (1975). *The Cultural Revolution in foreign language teaching* (Lafayette, 1975) recognized the importance of balance between culture at home and culture abroad.

In the 80s, culture in language learning was understood in a variety of ways. It was investigated from teachable facts to a dynamic and variable process, thus suggesting that it should be taught as process (Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1987). The earlier models by Brooks (1975) and Nostrand (1975) viewed culture "as a relatively invariate and static entity made up of accumulated, classifiable, observable, thus eminently teachable and learnable *facts*" (Paige, Helen, Jorstad, Klein, and Colby, 2003, p.176).This view, which focus on surface level behavior, did not look at the underlying values nor the participative roles of individuals in shaping culture, or the relationship between language and culture in the making of meaning. The more recent models of the 1980's (Seelye, 1993; Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1987) present culture as constantly evolving; as behaviors of members as being variable; and as being constructed through human interaction and communication (Byram, 1988).

Jostard (1981) introduced a seven-step process, known as hypothesis refinement, to enable students to achieve the outcomes of cultural learning. Crawford-Lange and Lange (1987)

highlighted this process in culture learning because culture is in the act of becoming of participants not the collection of facts. Understanding culture as process results changes in the language classroom in line with the development of goals such as making the learning of culture a requirement, integrating language learning and culture learning, allowing for the identification of learners' proficiency levels, addressing the affective as well as the cognitive domains, considering culture as a changing variable rather than a static property, relating to the native culture, relieving the teacher the burden of being the cultural authority, and therefore learners acquiring the skills to reform perceptions of culture and the ability to interact successfully in novel and well-organized cultural situations.

Robinson (1985) looked into teacher definitions of culture among over 300 foreign language, bilingual, English as a second language (ESL), and special educators. The common responses from the participants to the question, "What does culture mean to you?" formed the following categories:

Ideas (beliefs, values, and institutions), behaviors (language, gestures, customs/habits and foods) and products (literature, folklore, art, music and artifacts). These were the examples taught in the name of culture. Robinson distinguished the above three categories into two (a) *culture as observable phenomena* including two categories of behaviors and products and (b) *culture as not observable* corresponding to ideas (p. 15).

Damen (1987) mentioned several notable characteristics of culture. Culture is learned, changes and is a universal fact of human life. Cultures play an important role in providing life support systems for those who interact within sets of values and beliefs and functions as a preventive device between its bearers and the great range of stimuli presented by the environment. Language and culture are closely related and interactive.

He listed the components of culture as variations of human life styles; "dress, systems of rewards and punishments, uses of time and space, fashions of eating, means of communication, family relationships and beliefs and values, or societal systems such as kinship, education, economy, government, association and health" (p.89).

Lafayette (1988) proposed a number of goals for integrating the teaching of culture into the foreign language classroom. According to his lists, students will be able to express and understand major a) geographical monuments, b) historical events, c) institutions (administrative, political, religious, educational, etc.), d) artistic monuments (architecture, arts, literature), e) active everyday cultural patterns (eating, shopping, greeting people, etc.), f) passive everyday cultural patterns (social stratification, marriage, work, etc.), g) culture of target language-related ethnic groups in the United States, h) culture of non-European peoples speaking target language (Canada, Africa, South America, etc.), i) act appropriately in common everyday situations, j) use appropriate common gestures, k) value different peoples and societies, l) evaluate validity of statements about culture, and m) develop skills needed to locate and organize information about culture.

The discussions on language and culture and the need to teach culture in language classes reached its climax in the 90s (Genc & Bada, 2005). There is no doubt that culture is now acknowledged and recognized as a key element in education but how the word 'culture' is perceived seems to vary from one 'culture' to another thus making the implementation of culture teaching in the classroom an additional dispute among scholars.

Pesola (1991) proposed cultural elements for the elementary school foreign language classroom under the three headings of cultural symbols, cultural products, and cultural practices. Cultural symbols were identified with flags, good and bad luck symbols, heroes from history or myth, etc.; cultural products included the visual, musical arts and artists, currency and coins, stamps, traditional and holiday foods, etc.; and cultural practices were concerned with forms of greeting, use of gestures, meals and eating practices, home and school life, etc.

Cultural understanding aims to understand different value orientations between different cultural groups. To identify key concepts to represent fundamental principles of culture, Hofstede (1991) examines the emotional and psychological characteristics of people from different cultural groups. He defined culture as a 'software of the mind' that guides us in our daily interactions.

Hofstede (1991) also describes culture as:

A collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly shared with people who live or lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learned.

Culture consists of the unwritten rules of a social game. It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another (p.6).

Byram & Morgan (1994) suggested analytical categories for the content of cultural teaching with themes and topics served as a checklist for the evaluation of courses for teaching German in Britain at lower secondary level. For the selection of cultural contexts, they reviewed the kinds of knowledge required by a learner, and considered two kinds of knowledge: 'recipe' knowledge and conscious knowledge. On the other hand, the first kind of knowledge is internalized and unconscious to native speakers and needs to be explicit to language learners. Through this knowledge learners had the ability to learn how to conduct social transactions appropriately. On the other hand, the second kind of knowledge is acquired through formal education and a variety of social interactions, and is also most prominent in textbooks and teaching (Byram & Morgan, 1994). The learners in the language classroom need to learn both kinds of knowledge. Thus, the categories proposed in the checklist for the analysis of culture courses show important criteria in culture learning in terms of what learners need to learn in terms of culture in language learning. According to Stufflebeam (2009) and Scriven (2007), a checklist acts for evaluators, or teachers, or learners as a way not to forget important elements of culture, but to help to understand and assess background theories, consider appropriate judgment on each dimension. In fact, the checklist will improve validity, reliability and credibility of an evaluation and knowledge about a particular domain regarding the understanding of specific culture.

Paige et al. (2003) identifies the culture learning in second language learning as:

The process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively (p.177).

Therefore, culture learning is viewed not as the memorization of cultural facts but the acquisition of interactional competence and learning how to learn about culture.

3. Culture in Language Learning: Implications

Language is a main component of culture along with values, beliefs, and norms as well as customs; language is a product of culture, transmitted from one generation to the next in the socialization process (Hamers & Blanc, 1989). Language is considered as the main tool an individual uses to internalize culture and the major vehicle for cultural transmission (Hamers & Blanc, 1989; Seeyle, 1993).

Language educators have pointed out that learning a language inevitably introduces students to a given culture, since "language doesn't exist outside a cultural context" (Perkins, 1988, p. 25). There must be a place in today's language classes for the study and understanding of culture.

In the second/foreign language context, one might need culture in addition to the language itself in order to think like a native speaker of that language (Lafayette, 1975). However, there seems to be a lack of studies that focus on the role that culture plays in the learning of a foreign language in study-abroad contexts. The majority of the research done in second/foreign contexts has been limited to the study of isolated language skills (Bialystok, 1978; Johnson, 1986, 1988), language aptitude (Gardner, 1980; Pimsleur, 1966), or attitudes toward culture (Gardner, 1985) and not the students' expectations of the language process itself and their subsequent views after the experience. Nostrand (1975) states that research on second/foreign language has ignored important components in culture and language learning, and thus he calls for research to uncover to what extent cultural issues can have effect on the students' motivation to learn a second/foreign language.

In an attempt to account for the importance and influence of cultural aspects on language learning, Schumann (1978) constructed a model called 'acculturation'. This model is the clustering of both social and affective variables which, according to Schumann, takes into account the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language group. Ellis (1985) defines acculturation as "the process of adapting to a new culture" (p. 292). This process of adaptation requires understanding of the systems of thoughts, beliefs, and emotions of the target culture.

Among the social variables, Schumann emphasizes how the learner

group relates to the target language group. Among the affective variables, he attributes importance to the affective reaction of the learner to the language and culture of the target language group (Stern, 1983). While social variables are related to a group phenomenon, affective variables are associated with individuals.

According to the acculturation model, second/foreign language learners need to acculturate in order to learn a language (Ellis, 1985). Schumann (1978) assumes that "the degree to which learners acculturate into the target language group will control the degree to which they acquire the second language" (p. 374).

Other aspects of Schumann's acculturation model are the implications for second/foreign language learning. Allwright and Bailey (1991) claim that the second/foreign language learners' receptivity or defensiveness to the target language and the target language group can be highly affected by characteristics that learners bring with them as a result of their cultural background (Schumann's social variables), and by their psychological characteristics (Schumann's affective variables).

Cultural (social) and affective (personal) variables are of importance to language learning. Goodman (1988) claims that learning a language is both a social convention and a personal invention. According to Goodman (1996), human beings invent language for the purpose of communication with each other (social construction of language), but since language is "made up of people, it is also a personal invention" (p. 120). In Goodman's (1988) own words:

> Each human being creates language, a means of representing the world and his or her experiences with it. But each human being does that within a social context and makes use of linguistic resources in that social environment. Eventually the personal language of each individual comes safely within the social language: the symbols, the grammar, the ways of representing the world for the individual are those of the society in which that individual functions (p. 3).

In a naturalistic second-language setting, the learners are constantly exposed to the L2, and there seems to exist optimal conditions for language and culture learning (Spolsky, 1989). However, if for social or affective reasons, the learner rejects the target culture and doesn't adapt to it, the opportunities for linguistic and culture input, output, and interaction will be considerably minimized. This, in turn, will result in hindering the second language process.

Language is one of "the most observable expressions of culture" (Ellis, 1985, p. 251). In naturalistic second language settings (e.g., a study-abroad context), the ways second language learners adopt the target culture are crucial for their language learning. That is, if learners acculturate, they will learn; if learners do not acculturate, they will not learn (Gass&Selinker, 1994).

Schumann's acculturation model gives an explanation regarding why second language learners often fail to achieve a native-like competence; they may be cut off from the necessary input as a result of social or affective (psychological) distance. Social and affective distance affects the amount of contact learners can have with the target language.

Some researchers (Hoeh & Spuck, 1975; Klink, 1980) have recognized that the best way to learn culture while learning language is to experience culture learning initially. These researchers have recognized immersion programs abroad as the best experience second language students can have if they want to become acculturated and communicatively competent in the second language. Klink (1980) points out that "research on second language learning suggests that students learn better in contact with the target language and culture. Classroom experiences alone cannot fulfill this need" (p. 4). Educators need to implement study-abroad programs so that L2 students have the opportunity of being in contact with both the target language and the culture.

In fact, it seems that not only is the quality of language interwoven to the role culture plays in its development within a course of time, it can also be inferred that culture and particularly the cultural identity of culture is evidently distinguished with its culture, demanding raising the learners' awareness of the interrelatedness of language and culture and how they explicitly and implicitly affect each other.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, based on the above discussion about culture and the relationship between culture and language learning as well as cultural teaching in the language classroom, several trends can be seen.

Definitions of culture from pre-World War II to 2000s are not limited only to language teaching and learning but account for interdisciplinary and

Cite this article as: Pourkalhor, O. & Esfandiari, N. (2017). Culture in Language Learning: Background, Issues and Implications. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies. 5(1), 23-32*

Page | 30

multidisciplinary concepts of culture from anthropology, sociology, psychology, economy, linguistics and sociocultural viewpoints.

Definitions of culture in second language education moved from being descriptions of phenomenon in the cultural context where the SL was spoken to values, beliefs and perspectives about the people in those contexts to processes that described how learners might learn, accept and adapt to the differences in a specific period.

Cultural needs of the learners should be addressed in language classrooms. In fact, culture scholars can effectively benefit from culture as a social phenomenon in language learning by focusing their attention on ways and means to approach culture in the classroom.

Language learners should be provided with various activities which assist them to locate themselves, as well as others, in the language learning process so that they can develop adequate and coherent understandings of their cultural experiences.

Material developers and syllabus designers can raise the learners as well as teachers' awareness of the importance of culture in language learning through the provision of suitable and applicable cultural issues to be employed in the language classroom, leading to suggesting teaching culture as a separate skill in the language classroom.

It seems that by arming the language learners with ethnographic techniques, they can develop the ability to process and look for personal themes in the target culture, which might result in better communication in the target culture related to their personal circumstances.

Last but not least, productive attempts should be made concerning holding workshops for teacher training to appropriately and consciously familiarize teachers with developments in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, semiology, and social and cross-cultural psychology, and more importantly the urgent need for actual studies that address how in practice this could be done for better and touchable understanding of the significant role of culture in language learning.

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