Teaching Turkish Vocabulary for Adults

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Abstract. This article is intended to discuss prominent issues in teaching culture to second and foreign Turkish language students. The concepts of language and culture will be defined, respectively. Next, the characteristics and components of culture will be presented. In addition, commonly used terms in language and culture including enculturation, acculturation, cultural awareness, cross-cultural awareness, cultural identity, culture shock, and culture bump will be discussed, compared and contrasted. The relationship between language and culture will also be pointed out. Moreover, factors such as teachers, curricula, and textbooks that have an impact on the success and failure of teaching culture to second and foreign language students will be examined. Besides, various views on culture in language learning will be explored. The hidden assumptions of culture learning and teaching when language teachers embrace the bandwagon of communicative language teaching approach will be addressed.

Key words: Teaching Turkish as a foreign language; linguistics; culture in foreign language teaching, vocabulary, vocabulary teaching, strategies.

Discussions of teaching in adult education often downplay the influence of situational, political, and social contexts even though these factors can strongly influence both teachers and their practices. Yet teachers' approaches and strategies are not established alone but built up and defined through regular interaction with others (Hargreaves, 1995), we can say in other words, teaching is a socially-embedded practice.

These cultures are created and shaped by a variety of factors, including the school's values and beliefs, the community's expectations, and the individual teacher's own experiences and beliefs. They are also influenced by external factors such as government policies and standardized testing. One of the key elements of classroom cultures is the teacher's role and authority. In many cultures, the teacher is seen as the ultimate authority figure, responsible for maintaining order and discipline in the classroom. This can lead to a top-down approach to teaching, where the teacher is the sole source of knowledge and students are expected to passively receive information.

Another aspect of classroom cultures is the emphasis on conformity and compliance. Many cultures value students who follow rules and behave in a certain way, rather than encouraging critical thinking and individual expression. This can create a stifling environment for students who may feel pressure to conform to societal norms rather than

explore their own interests and ideas.

Classroom cultures also play a role in student-teacher relationships. In some cultures, there is a strict divide between teacher and student, with little room for personal connections or understanding. This can create a barrier to effective communication and hinder students' ability to form meaningful relationships with their teachers.

However, not all classroom cultures are negative or limiting. Some cultures prioritize collaboration and student-centered learning, where students are encouraged to actively participate in their own education. These cultures value diversity and promote critical thinking and creativity.

It is important for teachers to be aware of the cultures in their classrooms and how they may be influencing their teaching practices. By understanding these cultures, teachers can make intentional choices about their pedagogy and create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment for their students.

Culture consists of a wide range of concepts, from education to daily life, and from personal development of individuals to institutional formation of societies. In its historical use, the concept of culture was associated with animal breeding, growing crops, and religious rituals, from which the word 'cult' was derived, however; from the 16th century to the 19th century, the term was used to define learning in a broad sense and the development of individual human mind and personal manners (Smith & Riley, 2016). Today, culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others and it is always a collective phenomenon, but it can be connected to different collectives (Hofstede, 2011).

More precisely, it suggests that social forces beyond teachers control also contribute to persistent and repetitive classroom practices—the "cultures" of teaching. These are not individually chosen but arise through tradition, from the "beliefs, values, habits, and assumed ways of doing things among communities of teachers who have had to deal with similar demands and constraints" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 165).

This is known as "cultural competence" and it is an essential part of language learning. The classroom culture in foreign language teaching can also vary greatly depending on the target language and the cultural background of the learners. For example, in some cultures, direct correction of errors may be seen as disrespectful or embarrassing, while in others it may be expected and necessary for improvement. Similarly, the level of formality and respect towards the teacher may differ among cultures.. In addition, covering cultural concepts in vocabulary teaching, an important component of language teaching, is important in terms of teaching the target culture. That is because the close connection between language and culture and the semantic level of the vocabulary of a language reflect the common culture of the speakers of that language (House, 2020). Besides, there is a positive relationship between vocabulary development and language achievement, and the development of vocabulary contributes to the language development of learners (Koizumi & In'nami, 2013). So, improving the vocabulary of learners can be considered as one of the main goals of language teaching.

Understanding culture is not merely about knowing how language and culture intersect, but also knowing conventions and norms of interaction for participation in discourse

communities (Michelson, 2018). As students learn a new language, they are also learning about the cultural values and norms associated with that language. By understanding and incorporating these cultural elements into language learning, teachers can help students become more culturally competent and better prepared for global citizenship. Sharifian (2011) defines conceptualization as the social product of human cognition. Throughout history, societies have transferred their knowledge and experience to new generations. It becomes possible to conceptualize the values, beliefs and traditions of societies in minds and transfer these concepts to new generations through language. Cultural concepts were formed as a result of the conceptualizations in this transfer process. The cultural concept fulfills functions such as the storing, accumulating, transferring, and comprehending cultural knowledge and is the smallest unit of the cultural consciousness of societies, reflecting the internal characteristics of a phenomenon or object (Alimjanova, 2016).

Over the past few decades, there has been a growing interest and emphasis upon a learner centred classroom, which led to an inevitable increase in research dedicated to finding insights concerning the use and impact of language learning strategies. The shift from a teacher based classroom to a learner based classroom with more emphasis on learners and learning is the natural consequence of the notion that values the significance of learners' engagement in the learning environment; and of the changes in the curriculum towards a more learner centred method of teaching (Thanasoulas, 2000).

The use of vocabulary strategies in learning words has been regarded as playing a prominent role by various theorists and researchers in the field. Vocabulary strategy instruction seems to be very important in equipping the students with the necessary strategies to expand their knowledge of vocabulary instead of giving the students only specific words to learn (Hulstjin, 1993; cited in Ghazal, 2007).

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