Summer 2012

Using L1 Culture to Acquire L2 Culture: ZPD framework

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Using L1 culture to acquire L2 culture: ZPD framework

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Teaching
degree at the SIT Graduate Institute, Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

June, 2012

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ERIC Descriptors

Teaching culture
Third space
Culture acquisition
L1 and L2 culture
Class activities

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Non English Speaking
Native Speakers
Acculturation
Biculturalism
Cross Cultural Studies
Cross Cultural Training
Cultural Awareness
Cultural Background
Cultural Context
Cultural Differences
Cultural Education

Abstract

Teaching the target language culture has been recently receiving much attention and focus in the fields of second/foreign language teaching. This paper examines the importance of using the learners' L1 culture as a tool to teach the target language culture. In addition, the paper stresses the idea that the learners develop a dynamic, hybrid identity and space that represents both their L1 and L2 culture. These

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manifestations are presented in a profound framework that shows the development stages that the learners go through in developing their third spaces by using their L1 culture.

This paper includes four main sections: an introduction, a literature review, a proposed framework and best practices. It also contains interviews with teachers reflecting on their experiences in teaching culture in the classroom in Saudi Arabia. Finally, examples of my personal experiences in the third space dimension are presented in the paper.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the field of language teaching, few would argue that you can teach language without teaching the culture that goes with it. Language and culture are interrelated and affect each other tremendously. The extent to which language and culture have influenced one another, and which is more dominant has been a controversial issue for many years among scholars such as Sapir, Whorf, et al. However, most have agreed that language and culture cannot operate independently.

Consequently, most of the language programs around the globe focus on enhancing the students' cultural awareness and knowledge of the target language culture as well as developing the students' linguistic competence and performance. Therefore, teaching the target language culture has been a popular research topic of many educational researchers and language teachers around the world. Many educators and language teachers have proposed numerous models, approaches and techniques to guide language teachers on how to deal with and teach the TL culture in

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their classrooms. One of the most prominent and valuable models is Schumann's

acculturation Model (1978), where he refers to the gradual adaptation to the target

language culture without necessarily forsaking one's own native culture and identity.

Later, Acton and de Felix (as cited in Valdes, 1986) proposed four stages of Schumann's

acculturation model that a learner of TL culture goes through: a) Tourist, where the new

culture is almost totally inaccessible and it entails some degree of culture shock; b)

Survivor, this stage exemplifies the functional language and functional understanding

of the culture; c) Immigrant, where it is expected that this stage is reached by most

literate and educated people who spend an extended period of time working and living

in a foreign culture; d) Citizen, this stage is almost at the level of the native speaker,

where one has been acculturated to the degree of becoming a native speaker. In

addition to Schumann's Model, there are many other models that are not less important

and do provide a profound understanding of teaching culture; therefore I will refer to

them later in my paper as I believe that they enhance the discussion, i.e. (Cummins,

1981), (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), (Guiora, 1972) and (Curran, 1976).

When discussing the teaching of TL culture, one cannot ignore the deep impact of

social interaction on cognition and its effect on moving learners from one stage to

another. The four stages of acculturation could simply be seen and placed in a Zone of

Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978), where the learners culturally and socially develop as a result of a sort of assistance from the more capable others. This phenomenon had been the core work of Vygotsky who introduced the relationship between the effects of social interaction and cognitive development. In his ZPD one goes through four stages of cognitive development: a) assistance provided by more capable others; b) assistance provided by self; c) automatization; d) deautomatization (Tharp and Gallimore, 1998).

In the process of acculturation it has been argued that learners develop a distinct persona and identity, (Guiora, 1972) and (Lazanov, 1978). In a number of studies (Kramsch et al. 1993) claimed that the presence of two languages and two ways of thinking in the L2 learners' minds affect their cognition and as a result their cultural cognition that would place them in a '' Third space'', where the learners do not totally belong to their L1 culture neither to the L2 culture, but they are in between. This means that students' L1 culture is essential to culture teaching and one should not be much concerned with forcing the L2 concepts and culture on the learner, however, the focus should be shifted to help the learners to create their own third space. In considering the Vygotskyan ZPD, I can see the L1, L2, C1, C2 in a zone where the third space develops and prospers.

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As a result we can notice that almost all of the models and frameworks on teaching culture have evolved around the theory that a native culture is as much of interference for language learners as is native language. Likewise, just as similarities and differences between native and target languages have proved to be useful in language teaching, so cultural similarities and differences between TL and NL can be used in the classroom to ease TL culture learning (Valdes, 1986).

Based on what has been presented earlier in this introduction this paper will propose a new framework to explain the importance of using the learners' native culture to help acquiring the TL culture. To achieve this goal, this paper is divided into three parts. The first part will concentrate on providing efficient review of the related literature. In the second part I will propose my framework; finally in the last part I will include best practices for teaching culture in the classroom.

Chapter 2

Review of related literature

A. <u>Language and culture</u>

The relationship between language and culture is so strong and interrelated that it is impossible to separate them from each other to the extent that the two influences one another in different ways (Valdes, 1986). Up until recently, it has been assumed that if one wants to learn an additional language he has also to learn the culture that goes with it. In other words, learning an additional language does not only involve learning the linguistic aspect of the language , but also involves learning the culture that symbolizes the understanding of the religion, habits, customs, economics, politics, traditions, etc. of the target language culture. Therefore, focusing on one aspect of the language over the other will result in producing incompetent learners in the target language. In their longitudinal study the National Standards for Foreign Language Education project (1996) concluded that students cannot totally master a new language until they master the cultural context of the new language (Cheng-Chieh & Kritsonis, 2007).

Understandably, the relationship between language and culture was and still occupies an important position in the field of language teaching research. Developed in the early twentieth century, the Sapir and Whorf hypothesis is considered one of the most prominent theories spelling out the interconnection between language and culture and the influence of language on the way we think and on the way we conceptualize things in our life. However, this strong version of the hypothesis did not receive much

attention in the research; instead, many researchers in the field of language education

have adopted the weak version of the hypothesis that assumes that speaking another

language only means taking on another world perspective in the learners' minds.

As a result of this view a more dynamic thinking of the relationship between

language and culture has been driven up into the field of language education. This

dynamic view suggests the use of the native culture of the learners in the process of

learning the target language culture as a primary source of knowledge that the learners

can make use of in the process of acquiring an additional language. (Lado, 1957)

reported that languages do have linguistic differences between them and this would

hinder the learning of a new language, however, whenever there are similarities

between the new language and the learner's native language the learning becomes

much easier and understandable. And since usually languages have differences in

syntax, pronunciation and structure, it is perhaps through cultural support and

understanding that the differences can be resolved and the students' anxiety can be

reduced. It has been noted that most of the recent research has concentrated on the idea

that there is not only NL interference and NL transfer, but also there is native culture

(NC) interference and NC transfer in the sense that the similarities and contrasts in the

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native and the target language cultures could be useful tools in language and culture study (Valdes 1986, Moran 2001, et al.).

And hence a large body of research has been devoted to the study of ''crosscultural'', ''intercultural'', and ''transcultural'' aimed at analyzing how the learners native culture can help in the process of acquiring the target language culture.

B. <u>The contexts of acquiring an additional culture</u>

Language is a culture-bound phenomenon, where there are a number of cultural conventions governing any communicative act, written or spoken and raising the students' awareness of these cultural conventions could ease and smooth language and culture learning. However, it is crucial to consider several different types of language learning contexts while tackling the relationship between language learning and culture learning: 1a) learning a second language within the culture of that second language 1b) learning a second language within one's native culture, where the second language is an accepted lingua franca used for education, government, business, etc, in the country; 2) learning a foreign language in one's own culture with few immediate and widespread opportunities to use the language within the environment of one's own culture like learning French in USA (Brown, 1980).

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Brown continues pointing out that the foreign language situation is more culturally loaded than the second language learning in the native culture (1b), since the language is always learned in a context of understanding the people of another culture. Therefore, most of the foreign language curricula try to deal with the cultural connotations of the foreign language. This could be further interpreted that the foreign language context is culturally loaded not only with the TL cultural exposure, but also with the enormous NL cultural exposure, too. Having said that, there would be no other escape, but to use the NL culture of the learners to help the learners acquire the TL culture. As it has been noted earlier, the NL culture of learners could be used as a useful tool in teaching the TL culture. However, it is very important to consider the *social distance* between the cultures as a way to use the NL culture of the learners. (Brown, 1980) describes the social distance as the cognitive and affective proximity (similarities and dissimilarities) of two cultures which come into contact within an individual. For example, American culture is culturally similar to the Canadian culture, while American and Saudi cultures are quite dissimilar. The awareness of these contexts and situations should therefore help the language teachers to well-develop their lesson plans and teaching models while teaching culture to the students.

C. <u>**Acculturation in the literature**</u>

Researchers from all over the world have dedicated most of their work and effort trying to explain the process of acquiring an additional culture. Usually academic discussions of this process cites the work of (Schumann, 1976), (Brown, 1980), and (Selinker, 1972). However, Schumman's Acculturation Model seems to be more relevant to the work of this paper and I will refer to it in many places in this paper. Acton and de Felix (as cited in Valdes, 1986) defined the acculturation process as the gradual adaptation to the target culture without forsaking one's native culture and identity. Similarly, (Hinkel *et al.* 1999) pointed out that in learning a second language, learners cannot completely separate themselves from their cultural context where they rely on the knowledge source constructed from their home society to interpret the meaning of linguistic information of the target language. In addition, (Moran, 2001) posited that the center of the culture learning experience is noticing the difference between L1 culture and L2 culture. Learners tend to view this difference through the lens of their own culture. Therefore, they react to the "different'' using what the already know (L1 culture). Learners describe, explain, act, and interact using their own culture and language as the frame of reference.

The acculturation process did in fact provide the researchers and scholars the opportunity to capture the issue of acquiring an additional culture from different

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perspectives and angles. Some researchers viewed the process as a result of a cognitive

development process merely existing in the minds of the learners (Cummins, 1981),

(Hamilton, 1983), (Wong-Fillmore, 1983). Others perceived it as an affect-oriented

process, in which learners with positive desire to be associated with the target culture

would be acculturated more (Gardner & Lamber, 1972). Yet others have thought of the

acculturation process in terms of personality development, where the learners of

another language develop and essentially add another personality and identity (Guiora,

1972), (Lazanov, 1979), (Curran, 1976). Similarly and more recently, researchers started

to flesh out that language and cognition are not static in L2 users, however, the

cognition of the learners are totally influenced by the presence of more than one

language, more than one way of thinking and more than one culture in their minds. The

fact of having two languages in their minds suggests that the thinking of the L2 users is

different from monolingual speakers. Their conceptualization neither falls in their L1

nor in the L2, however, it occurs in a '' third space'', which is neither L1 nor L2, but it is

something in between (Kramsch, 1993), (Cook & Bassetti, 2011). I will talk about this

concept later in my paper with further exploration and analysis accompanied with my

personal experience as a non-native speaker of English experiencing the third space.

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To further deepen the understanding of the acculturation process Acton and de

Felix (as cited in Valdes, 1986) proposed a model that entails four stages:

1- Tourist: The early phase, in which the new culture is almost totally inaccessible,

the phase often entails some degree of culture shock. Learners draw extensively

on first language strategies and resources.

2- Survivor: The stage of functional language and functional understanding of the

culture. One must pass through this stage to be considered an educated,

competent speaker of the language.

3- Immigrant: It is the stage reached by most literate people who spend an extended

period of time working and living in a foreign culture.

4- Citizen: This stage is almost at the level of the native speaker, in which one has

been acculturated to the degree to be native like citizen. (p.22)

D. <u>Thirdness in language education</u>

The concept of thirdness was initially proposed in this century to avoid the dualities in language education, i.e. L1 vs. L2, C1 vs. C2, us vs. them and self vs. other, however, this does not mean to neglect these dichotomies, but it suggests to focus more on a dynamic and emerging space between them that places the subjects (learners) in a position of being in between either two cultures, two languages, or in a more radical thought two selves (Kramsch, 2009).

Early in the 90s Homi Bhabha, the Indian British critic, touched upon the notion of third space in his social science research. According to him communication occurs not only between the I and the You, but the meaning of any communication act requires to be mobilized through a Third Space, which represents the subconscious discourse practices that speak through us and that constitutes our cultural differences. He continues by describing this third space as heterogeneous, dynamic, contradictory and ambivalent in which third perspectives can grow in the margins of dominant ways of seeing. On the same line, many researchers were inspired by these ideas and started to tackle this issue in more depth, especially in the field of language education. Perhaps, recently most of the research that deals with thirdness would cite the work of (Kramsch, 2000,2006), (Cook & Bassetti, 2011) and (Norton, 1995).This mediating process that takes

place within the cultural framework of C1, L1 and C2, L2 and more specifically

Kramsch's view of the third space has three main characteristics: (Kramsch, 2009 p.239)

a. A popular space. The third space of the language learners is a place where the

learners create their own meanings on the margins of official meanings, i.e. the

learners are actually constructing their own space within and against the others'

space, and the learners are speaking their meaning using the others' language.

For example, I speak English language and my native language is Arabic,

however, I am in fact constructing my own meaning that reflects both my Arabic

culture and the English language culture, but I am using the English language to

voice out my own meanings and my own space. For instance, I believe that my

views on the relationship between men and women are different from what my

family thinks it should be. My views are partially affected by the English culture,

so I see no harm if my daughter meets and falls in love with a young man in

college and that's something not very common in our family, but at the same

time I believe that my daughter should share this with me from the very

beginning and should get my approval.

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b. A critical space. The general pedagogy of third space does not merely mean to teach content in the L2 and have the learners practice their L2 through the medium of content. However, it encourages the learners to build and create connections of different world views expressed through various learning materials such as books, exercises, readings, etc. Third space promotes active comparisons between L1 and L2.

c. An ecological space. An ecological approach has been recently adopted by a number of researchers in language education, where environment and context affect and help in the evolution of thinking and learning. In this same context, the third space is seen as highly-context sensitive of the environment. The third space uses any method that works in helping the learners create their own meanings and space starting from communicative activities to translation and dictation.

In this sense, third space tries to visualize the fine line between NS and NNS. It helps to learners to better understand their role and position while learning an additional culture and language. At the same time, it helps language teachers to understand some of the students' outcomes and to set appropriate teaching

approaches using any available and suitable methods that would direct the

students' efforts to discover and create their meanings and therefore create their

own spaces.

More recently, there is a tendency in language education to use hybrid

textbooks to help in creating hybrid identities and meanings. In Australia, Alex

Kostogriz (as cited in Kramsch, 2009) is adopting a '' Third space pedagogy'',

where the teachers are invited to imagine the classroom as "multivoiced

collectives''. The teachers are encouraged to help the learners be aware of the

contradictions and ambivalences in the cultures and help them to find a way of

living, learning and dealing with this ambivalence. In the United States, the third

space is viewed as a learning developmental process, which takes place in a zone

of proximal development and therefore it could be called a developmental zone.

In this sense, the hybridity can help to promote learning (Kramsch, 2009).

E. **My Third Space**

In the context of talking about the third space and the process the learners

usually go through while acculturating to the target language, I could not help

myself, but to talk about my own experience as a native speaker of Arabic, who

has been learning English for more than14 years. In this paper I will present

myself as a case study of a learner of English language.

Facts

I am 28 years old. I was born and raised in Jordan of Palestinian parents, who

were born in Palestine and immigrated to Kuwait and lived there for 12 years. I

finished my high school, undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Jordan. I

went to the United States to earn my second Master's degree in TESOL and

stayed there for four months. Now I am an English Language instructor in Saudi

Arabia.

My relationship with Language

My mother tongue is Arabic. My first exposure to English language was in

the sixth grade, where I started to learn English formally in school. My parents

do not speak English and we did not communicate in English at all with each

other at home or anywhere else. The only domain where I used to speak and

communicate in English was at school and it was all formal. The total hours of

classroom instruction was 5 to 6 hours a week. I did not practice my English

outside the classroom during school. My teachers in high school followed the

traditional, old way of teaching the language that focused on making sure the students master the grammar of the language. They placed a minor focus on developing the students' communication skills as that was not measured or tested in the high school standardized test that focuses on reading comprehension and grammar.

In college I majored in English language and literature and the means of communication in the classroom during the 4 years of study was English. All my professors graduated from Western schools either from U.S or UK. This had a great impact on improving my communication skills as we used to communicate in English outside the classroom.

This informal exposure to the language helped me so much to improve my communication skills. Then for my masters I majored in Linguistics and the means of communication was English for three years. However, I would like to mention here that the greatest impact on developing my L2 communication skills was the informal exposure to the language and that was mainly through my work at the Marriott hotel for a year and then at the British embassy for two years where I communicated with native and near native speakers. I have been

teaching English to ESL and EFL students in Jordan and other Arab countries

since 2008. In 2011 I started a program in the U.S to get another Master's degree

in TESOL and for that purpose I stayed in the U.S for four months.

F. **The impact of languages on my perception**

The presence of two different languages in my mind, which means the

presence of two different ways of thinking, two different world perspectives and

two different life styles operating in my head, had a huge impact on my thinking

and the way I conceptualize things around me. In considering the social distance

between the Arabic culture and Western (English) culture, it is noticed that these

two cultures are distinctly different and having these two cultures in one's head

is not an easy thing to deal with. For example, religion plays a dominant role in

the Arabic culture and it is not exactly the same case in the Western culture

nowadays, as for me I think that my religion is very important in my life, but I do

believe a balance should be made to leave freedom and openness in the way I

conceptualize things based on my life experience and education. This being said,

these two cultures are offering me opportunities to navigate through multiple

cultural differences within English and Arabic speaking cultures to create my

own understanding and space. Therefore, this ability could be a special thing that not all the people possess i.e. being able to interpret things in two different points of views and then drawing from these two perspectives a unique, hybrid point of view of your own that takes bits and pieces from the two world experiences.

This unique, hybrid self generated meaning has not developed overnight, but it prospered and developed based on how much I had internalized the target language culture, I certainly went through systematic and subconscious stages that helped me to conceptualize things in a unique perspective. When I first started learning English, I did not care much about the way that the native speakers think or act, the only thing that I cared about is that I wanted to speak like a native speaker since this would give me the chance to have a good job as an English teacher. I worked hard on developing my linguistic skills just to sound like a native speaker. However, while I was working on developing my linguistic skills I also learned more about the culture of the West and their lifestyle and world perspectives. I then felt if I want to be like a native speaker and sound like a native speaker, I should not only speak like a native speaker, but also I have to act and react like a native speaker since it does not make sense

to speak like a native speaker and act like an Arab! Then I asked myself this question do I really want to act like a native speaker of English and forget about my mother language culture? At that time, I did not voice out my answer, but I had a strong feeling inside me that resisted the idea of becoming a native speaker. After sometime I reached a conclusion that it does not matter how much I work to sound like a native speaker because I will never be like a native speaker simply because I was not born and raised in the U.S, UK, Canada or Australia, but I was born and raised in Jordan, an Arabic native speaking country. Once I realized this fact I started to look at the whole learning another language thing from a different angle; the angle of a native speaker of Arabic who knows an additional language.

Anyone who knows more than one language feels that his thinking is either partially or wholly affected by the two different language systems and I am not a different case here. This realization set myself free to explore my new identity and look at this identity like a picture that has now been shaped by a new frame; the frame of the new language and the new way of thinking. This metaphor could be best explained through an example that one of my students talked about in a class debate about marriage, he said that he got married in a

westerner-Arabic way by knowing and having a pure and innocent relationship with his wife before getting married, but without breaking any of the religious or the Arabic traditions. So he said that I shaped the traditional way of getting married in the Arabic world with a new frame, which is having a pure relationship with my wife before getting married.

As an English language teacher now I feel that my new space is constantly changing and developing and it will never stop developing as long as I am always experiencing new world issues in my life. And it is my responsibility to help my students create their hybrid spaces and provide them with the learning opportunities that would help them to be aware of their own mother identity and at the same time raises their awareness of the target language culture. The emergency of these two cultures would later pave the way towards creating their third space.

Chapter 3

The ZPD framework of acquiring an additional culture

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All of the different models and approaches that described and analyzed how learners acquire an additional culture in various learning environments and contexts provided us with a valuable analysis and deep understanding of the acculturation process. However, after the intriguing post- structural research on emergency theory, third space and the revival of Vygotsky's views on language learning and teaching, one feels that a new and comprehensive framework is needed to embrace the new beliefs and findings in the field of language and intercultural learning.

The works of (Vygotsky, 1978), (Kramsch, 993), (Larsen- Freeman& Long, 1991), (R. Acton & de Felix, 1986) and others have inspired me to develop a framework that simply describes the process of acquiring an additional culture. The framework is a combination of the Vyotskyan perspective on language learning represented by the Zone of Proximal Development, in which learning happens in the comfort zone of the learners, Acton's and de Felix's acculturation model that includes four stages of development and finally Kramsch's concept of the third space that has been recently receiving a lot of attention and consideration in the field of intercultural education. In addition to all of these models I want to add that my personal experience as NS of Arabic who has

personally been in the process of acquiring an additional culture has much

helped me to visualize these models and perspectives in a framework. Therefore,

combining all of these models and perspectives together forms a satisfactory

framework that fleshes out the stages that the learners go through in acquiring

an additional culture. The stages represent a systematic and developmental

progress that the learners move through in acquiring an additional culture.

Since I first started teaching English I have heard from many teachers and

educators that their goal is develop the students' linguistics abilities in the target

language so that they would sound like native speakers. Therefore, I am

proposing the following framework as a modest attempt to help raise the

awareness and the understanding among practitioners that their learners are

going to end up developing a dynamic and hybrid spaces that consist of their TL

and ML. Therefore, the teachers have no other option but to help their learners

Tourist   *survivor*   *immigrant*   (

citizen)

Scaffolding
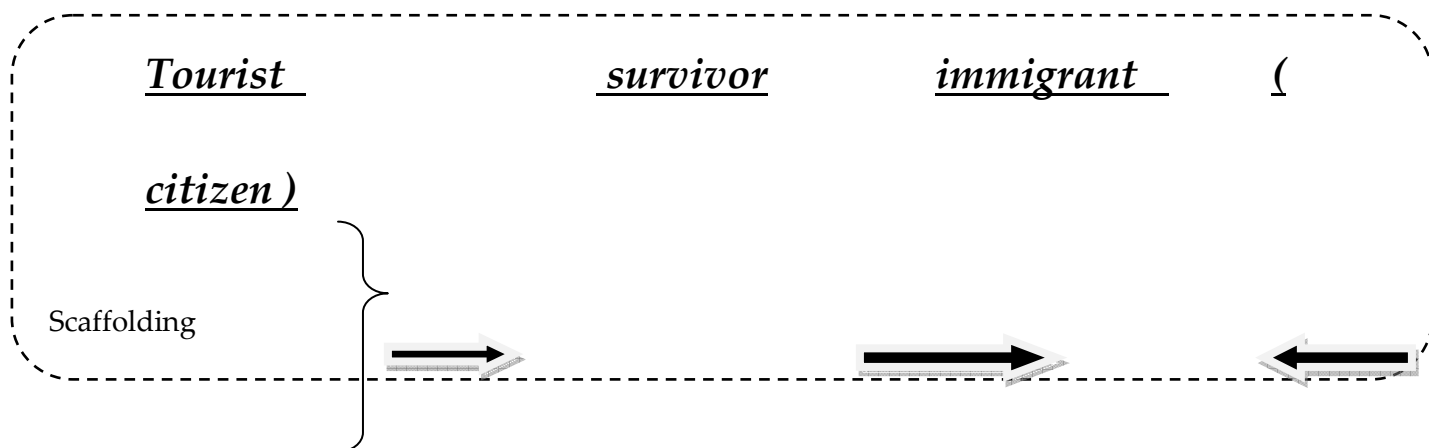
<u>ZPD Frame</u>

<u>The framework of acquiring an additional culture</u>

As can be seen the framework consists of four stages, in each stage the learners acquire new concepts and abilities that enable them later to flourish their new hybrid identities. In the first stage, when the learners first exposed to the target language culture, they will need support and assistance from the more capable others using their L1 culture. In the EFL context, the support is usually given by the teachers through spontaneous and systematic activities that use the students' L1 culture to promote their understanding of the target language culture. In this sense, the students' L1 culture represents the students' prior knowledge that helps both the teachers and the students to build on this existing knowledge to better understand the new cultural aspects of the TL. This can be best understood if we considered that usually teachers teach the TL linguistic aspects by referring to the students' mother language to make the connection between the two languages. Likewise, just as the similarities and contrasts in the native language and the target language have been found to be useful tools in language education, so too can the cultural similarities and contrasts; once

identified and understood they can be used to foster the students' learning of the TL culture.

However, it is not easy just to ask teachers to use the students' mother language in teaching the TL culture. Some teachers would not feel comfortable enough to use the students' native culture in the classroom as they might be afraid that they would be misunderstood or use it inappropriately that might cause more harm than it would help the learning. In this context, I interviewed my co-workers in Al Yamamah University in Saudi Arabia to share with me some of their insights on using the students' L1 culture in teaching the L2 culture and here is what a native English speaking teacher in KSA had to say about using the L1 culture of the students in the classroom:

''Since I am new to Saudi Arabia and I do not feel like I have a very clear understanding of the culture, I have really tried to stay away from Saudi cultural issues. I am always afraid that I will offend someone because I have interpreted something incorrectly or I have an unintentional bias that will show. Until I have a better understanding of the culture I have made a decision not to attempt to incorporate Saudi culture into my

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lessons. Having said that, it probably has happened unintentionally''. (Abdow,

personal communication, May 25, 2011)

In this case, I strongly encourage the teachers to use the NL culture of the

learners in the classroom once they feel they have a good understanding of the

L1 culture and the cultural specific issues especially if they are teaching a country

where the social distance is so different from their own culture. Having said that

it is so important that the teachers spend some of their time understanding their

students' L1 culture to help them later in their culture-focused lessons and this

what this English speaker teacher clearly trying to do in his teaching context in

Saudi Arabia:

'' I use my knowledge of the culture of Saudi Arabia - limited, outsider knowledge - to set

parameters for my lessons; this is to say I use this knowledge to limit my teaching of

the culture of the language of instruction, which in my class is American English.

Culture and language are of course in many ways inextricably bound, but I try to treat

their intersections neutrally in my current context, or allow my students to discover these

intersections themselves. My Knowledge of Arabic is quite basic, but I do study it in my

free time, and this has given me useful insight into the struggles of my level I and level II

students. I have had success using some basic Arabic dialogues and narratives in the classroom as the basis for various translation based exercises. I designed these activities to set students at ease (I've found it's very encouraging for basic level students to have expertise in some element of the lesson) and elicit awareness of basic structural differences between L1 and L2 in the context of the specific grammar and usage patterns we have studied.'' (Zuboy, personal communication, May 26, 2011)

Clearly, no one can deny the fact that using the students' L1 culture can help a great deal in developing the students understanding of the TL culture.

As a result, in this first stage the learners in an EFL context are guided and helped by their teachers using their L1 culture and this means that creating affordances (possibilities of learning through using everything in the environment) is necessary to help the learners notice the differences and similarities between their L1 culture and TL culture. These affordances could be spontaneous or drilled intentionally by the teachers in the classroom. However, what is important is to make the students aware of these differences and similarities.

In the second stage, as the students become more aware of the existences of these differences and similarities, they will start to self-notice these as they become more culturally competent in the two cultures. However, there is still some degree of assistance and guidance from the more capable others, especially, in creating the situations and contexts where, the differences and similarities become more feasible and apparent to the learners.

After the students reach a satisfactory awareness and understanding of the two cultures, the learners develop a hybrid and unique identity and space that neither to the first nor to the second culture; however, it is a dynamic space and identity that is in between of the two cultures. This third space is so unique in its identity and position as it has emerged as a result of the massive knowledge and awareness that the learners have possessed over a period of time. Therefore, the focus of any language or intercultural course should not be the production of native speakers of that particular language; however, it should be helping the learners to reach their dynamic and hybrid spaces.

However, one could ask what are the boundaries of these stages? As a teacher how would I know that a leaner has reached or at the first, second or the third

space stage? To answer these questions I believe that the teachers should keep on testing their students' level of awareness of the two cultures as they progress in the process. This can be achieved through running unofficial tests of cultural awareness through the framework. In the first and the second stage, the questions on the tests should touch upon all the aspects of the culture: the people's way of life as well as geographic, historical, economic and artistic aspects of the two cultures. However, in the third and fourth stage, the type of questions should merely focus on measuring where the learners have yet developed their third spaces or not. The questions for this stage could typically be multiple choice giving the learners three options, where one option could be strongly attached to the L1 culture and the second option is more attached the L2 culture and finally the third option could be more associated to the third space identity and culture.

A.   Noticing/scaffolding vs. knowledge/awareness

Just like in any other learning process, the learners when acquiring an

additional culture the level of awareness and knowledge in the target language

culture increases as they proceed in the process. At the same time the level of

scaffolding and noticing decreases. There is an inverse relationship between the

knowledge and scaffolding as can be noticed in this diagram.

Knowledge1
 and awareness
of L2 culture

Affordances of L1/L2

Third space   Survivor   Tourist
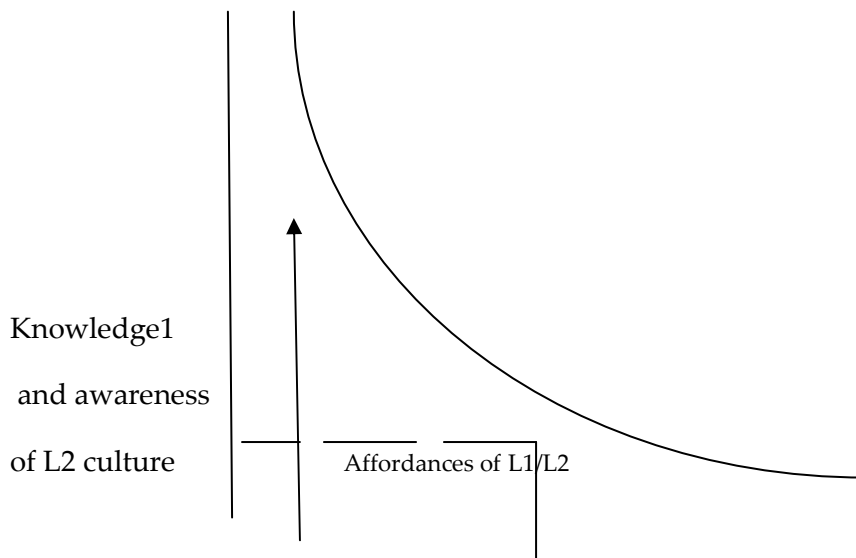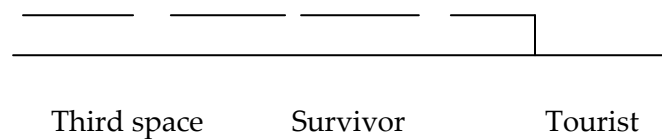
Scaffolding/ noticing from the capable others

This diagram clearly shows that the learners at the *tourist* stage has little knowledge and awareness of the L2 culture and therefore they will need more scaffolding and assistance when the cultural topics of the target language are introduced and as a result the more capable other should create situations and contexts, where affordances are utilized and created to help the learners increase their level of knowledge and awareness. The use of the native language culture is one of the affordances to help the learners notice the differences and similarities between the two cultures. As the learners' level of knowledge and awareness of the target language culture increases, they move on in the process to the next stages. As the learners reach the level of having their own hybrid third spaces, the level of scaffolding drops to the minimum since the learners are now creating their own affordances and are noticing the differences the two cultures by themselves. And eventually, they create their own perspectives and world views based on their massive knowledge of the two cultures and the two lifestyles.

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B. The framework in the ESL/EFL context

This framework differs in the way it works from one teaching contexts to another. There are some teachers who teach English in a native speaking country (ESL)and other teach English in a non- native speaking country(EFL). A number of questions could be asked here: how does the framework operate in both contexts? What do teachers need to do more or less in the two contexts to better help the students acquire the TL culture? How much do learners interact with target language culture in the two contexts and how does this help the process? What is the amount of knowledge and awareness of the TL culture do learners have in both contexts?

To answer these questions I would like first to highlight that the learners in an ESL context- learning the second language within the culture of that second language- are more likely to be exposed to the target language culture in and outside the classroom. Therefore the number of affordances that the learners could make use of is tremendously high, which means that the opportunities to acquire the target language culture are found in and outside the classroom. However, the learners still need some guidance and assistance from the teachers (more capable others) to help them in noticing the differences between their L1 culture and the L2 culture. This also involves

embracing the students' cultural shock. In contrast, the learners in an EFL context-

learning a non-native language and culture in one's own culture- are supposedly to be

only exposed to the TL culture in the classroom context. Therefore, the number of

affordances to learn the target language culture is limited to the classroom context. The

teachers in this context have a huge responsibility to create as many intercultural

situations and affordances as possible which should embrace the two cultures to help

the learners increase their awareness in the two cultures and later help them in the

noticing stage, while in the ESL context the affordances are everywhere in the

environment and that saves the teachers' time and effort in creating affordances and

situations because they are already there in the environment. And the teachers are only

required to makes use of these affordances in the classroom. Therefore, the pace at

which the learners move from one stage to another is faster in the ESL context than it is

in the EFL context. However, it is important to mention here that in both contexts the

learners eventually create their unique and hybrid spaces.

Chapter 4
Best practices in teaching culture

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Many practitioners and educators interested in cross-cultural studies listed a numerous number of activities and classroom applications that can be used to raise the students' cultural awareness in the target language culture. These classroom applications offer the students the chance to compare and contrast their own culture against the target language culture, which partially supports what this paper proposed i.e. using the students' L1 culture to teach the target language culture. However, these activities still need to be twisted and extended to allow the learners to explore these cultural contrasts against their own understanding and identity.

In this section I will mention a limited number of classroom practices deemed to be the most practical and successful in the classroom. Since developing the students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills is the main objective of any language course why shouldn't the learners read, write, speak and listen to something that has a cultural content that promotes the students' awareness and knowledge in both cultures (Valdes,1986). The following techniques are adapted from Hughes article '' An Argument for Cultural Analysis in the Second Language Classroom'' (1984).

1- Comparison method: In this method the teacher presents a code that could be a picture, a video, a written text, an audio, or a drawing that contains a cultural content that represents a particular component of the target language culture. The teacher then invites the students to discuss the differences and similarities between the students' L1 culture

and the target language culture concerning that particular cultural component. After making the list of the differences and similarities, the teacher asks the students to share if they accept these differences and similarities or not. In this way the students are exploring their own identity and understanding against these differences and similarities. For example, in one of my classes I presented a written text that talked about language and gender in the target language culture and I then invited the students to share how different or similar language and gender in their own L1 culture. Later they listed the differences and similarities between the two cultures and the problems that might be caused because of the differences. Then they gave their opinion if they accept these differences and similarities or not based on their understanding.

2- Newspapers: the teacher asks the learners to compare a certain item in the foreign newspaper with its equivalent in their newspapers and how their L1 culture would influence the attitude towards that particular item. After that the learners are given the chance to choose what they think is more acceptable and given the freedom to edit what they feel is necessary in these newspapers. One activity that could be done here is choosing captions from headlines, advertisements, comics, or editorials and delete some of the key words or phrases and then invite the students to fill in the missing phrases and words based on their knowledge of their L1 culture. And then after they fill them in, the teacher provides the students with the actual captions to compare their answers and see if their L1 culture influenced their answers or not and discuss any cultural confusions in TL

culture. The next step would be asking the students to choose which key words from both cultures are more acceptable to them in that particular caption and they are given the freedom to add, delete or change any words in these captions.

3- Culture assimilators: this technique involves a brief description of a critical incident of a cross-cultural interaction that could be misunderstood by students. After the description of the incident, the students are presented with four possible explanations from which they are asked to select one answer. Then the teacher provides the learners with the proposed right answer, but they are not forced to accept the right answer. Therefore, cultural assimilators here are considered as a way for examining right and wrong rather than for students to accept right.

4- Role plays: the students act out short scenes or situation in cross-cultural misunderstandings that usually misinterpreted in the target language culture. This activity could subconsciously reveal some of the students own understanding of the situations through acting. The teacher here accepts the students' personal additions to the scenes.

5- Culture island: in this technique the classroom is considered as a culture island, where the teacher and the students use posters, pictures, and bulletin boards all of which are designed with the purpose of attracting the students' attention and eliciting questions and comments about cultural issues and topics in both cultures.

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6- Debates: I have noticed in my classes that debates are very useful tools for the students to express their opinions and cultural identity through ungoverned conversations and discussions. Debates give the students the chance to speak freely and spontaneously to discover their own identity and space against each other. Debates motivate the students to speak, especially, if the topic is heated and involves cultural issues, however, teachers here should be mindful to the sensitivity of some topics in certain contexts. Debates allow the students to go beyond comparisons between the two cultures to the stage, where the voice out their space and understanding of both cultures.

It is worth noting here that all of these techniques and activities can be used at any stage in the framework, however, the teacher should be mindful about the level of sophistication of the topics, the language and the amount of scaffolding that the students need to be able to notice the differences and similarities between the two cultures and eventually reach his/her conclusions and understanding. It is crucial that the teacher chooses materials that are two-dimensional i.e. encourages the awareness of both cultures.

Moreover, there many topics that could be used in any of the activities above, for example, greetings, verbal taboos, holidays, games, songs, folklore, patterns of politeness, respect, food and drinks, etc.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Teaching the target language culture has been receiving a great attention and focus in field of language teaching. Therefore, this paper has a proposed a framework that teaches the target language culture through using the students' L1 culture. The framework proposed that the students are theoretically in a zone of proximal development, where they move from one stage to another till they develop their unique and hybrid space that neither belongs to the L1 culture nor the target language culture, but it is something in between.

In addition, the paper proposed some activities and techniques that could be used in the classroom to help the learners increase the awareness and knowledge of both cultures and eventually create their unique identities.

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