



USING SHORT STORIES, POEMS, NURSERY RHYMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND TOLERANCE ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

It is natural to learn foreign languages and get acquainted with the culture of the country where the language is studied. Especially at a time when today's information attacks are on the rise and the Internet is enriched with a variety of content, it is important to be neutral and impartial in relation to the culture of the country where we are learning the language. This article analyzes the importance and challenges of using English as a foreign language for primary and high school students in Uzbekistan and the use of literary works to increase the effectiveness of the process.

The focus is on the conflict between the cultures of the two different countries, in which case, to teach students to be tolerant and neutral towards English culture. The results of the research show that the role of the teacher is not only in the development of language skills through the study of short stories, poems and nursery rhymes, but also in the acceptance of cultural identities by comparing national mentality and European culture. In conclusion, figurative realities in short stories, easy memorization of rhyming words in poems, both rhyming and imagery in nursery rhymes, as well as moving fun mood help to develop language skills and make the process easier and more interesting. At the same time, the European

way of life and culture depicted in literary works may be a contradiction or an unexpected innovation in the Uzbek way of life and mentality. This can lead to a state of cultural influence in the psyche of children.

Introduction Today, there is a growing need to learn a foreign language, develop skills and abilities, communicate in a foreign language, and adapt to language changes in global communication. And this need motivates foreign language teachers to consider all possible meaningful and effective means of developing language acquisition. Teaching English as a foreign language, in particular, is a great responsibility for the teacher. This is because, as a foreign language, it is limited to creating an artificial communication



environment only during the lesson or during additional lessons. Not using and learning a language in a natural environment makes learning a foreign language a tedious and time-consuming process.

Accordingly, we believe that the use of small-scale literary works will be effective because they are easy for children to remember and have a figurative character. Literature, which is mainly described as written material such as essays, poems, novels and other works of fantasy, is characterized by constant or general topics of interest, perfection of expression and style, is widely recognized as one of these means of teaching English. Some researchers¹ have argued that the use of literature in foreign language classes allows foreign language teachers to use meaningful content to engage students, present a topic that stimulates conversation in the classroom, and capture their attention. Other researchers² point out that some forms of literature, such as drama, help foreign language learners develop independent critical thinking, and express their opinions. Supporting this idea, Gönen believes that literary materials such as poetry can serve as a tool for teaching a foreign language³. The interrelationship of the rhyme in the poetic sentences, the systematic description and figurativeness of the event in the poem make it easy for the

reader to remember the units of speech and units of expression related to the situation in the memory. It also allows the student to participate freely and with great interest in the process. Through the unique emotions and moods of the poem, students can learn words without too much effort. Although the importance of literary works in the formation of language skills has been studied by many scholars, the issue of cross-cultural understanding has been neglected. There are many issues that need to be analyzed and resolved. This article discusses English (western) culture and Uzbek (eastern) culture. Talking about English culture is not the same as talking about Uzbek culture. Uzbek culture is a unique complex of cultures of thousands of ethnic groups in the geographical area of ancient Turkestan, Central Asia. It has many things in common with the culture that exists in other Asian countries. "Western culture, or English-speaking culture, is largely the result of colonialism found in many parts of the world. English culture was influenced by ancient Greek mythology, Roman law, Christianity, modern humanism, and the science that now pervades many parts of the world outside of Western Europe"⁴.

Language and culture cannot be learned separately, if people learn a language at the same time, they have to learn the culture of the country where the

¹ Daskalovska, N., & Dimova, V. (2012). Why should literature be used in the language classroom? *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 1182-1186. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.271>.

² Starja, A. (2015). The impact of literature in teaching a foreign language. A case study on the use of drama and its practical implication. *turopean Scientific Journal*, 11(14), 1-10.

³ Gönen, S. İ. K. (2018). Implementing poetry in the language class: A poetry-teaching framework for prospective English language teachers. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 9(5), 28-42. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.9n.5> p.28.

⁴ Sunardi Y. The importance of cross-cultural understanding in English language learning. *The 3rd Indonesian International Conference on Linguistics, Language Teaching, Literature and Culture*. 2019. 333p.



language is spoken. Intercultural understanding refers to the basic ability of people to recognize, interpret, and respond to people and events that may be misunderstood due to cultural differences. There are some guidelines for effective and sensitive use of language to facilitate communication, i.e. careful knowledge and choice of words, avoidance of idioms, jargon, abbreviations, correct grammar, and follow the basic rules of standard syntax, be polite and formal, avoid informality, avoid jokes, listen. It is also important to know how to keep quiet when necessary.

Methods The attitude of primary and senior students of the 16th specialized state secondary school of Kattakurgan city of Samarkand region to the English language textbook was analyzed for a month. During the observations, special attention was paid to students' interest in short stories, poems and nursery rhymes, and their attitude and reaction to word expressions different from the units of communication in the Uzbek language in the process of learning new words.

Students' attitudes towards the following cultural elements⁵ were analyzed:

- a. Artifacts: the physical things that are found that have particular symbolism for culture.
- b. Stories, histories, myths, legends, jokes,
- c. Ritual, rites, ceremonies, celebrations.

- d. Heroes or named people who act as prototypes, or idealized.
- e. Symbol and symbolic action.
- f. Beliefs, assumptions and mental models.
- g. Attitude, external displays of underlying beliefs.
- h. Rules, norms, ethical codes, and values.

Results The results of the observations show that English language learners need to understand and tolerate differences in cultural elements, patterns of behavior, and the cultural object that society owns, recognizes, and respects or values. The following are examples of how language units differ in Uzbek and English culture, explaining some of the situations one by one.

1. Greetings.

a) the British use proper greeting such as –good morning, good afternoon, good evening, how are you. They do not use slang or other friendly expression

b) The Uzbek people put their right hand on their chest and say “Assalom-u alaykum”

2. The English people, according to their custom, always use the words “sorry” when something wrong has happened, “thanks” as often as necessary and “please” when asking to do something

3. According to the rules of etiquette, no one is asked about their monthly salary, age, whether they are married.

⁵ Brown, A, 1995. Organizational Culture. London: Pitman. 114 p.



4. The English people never argue about religion and politics. That is why they prefer to talk about the weather as the only topic that has nothing to do with politics.

Discussion The close relationship between culture and language can never be denied. Students should learn to understand intercultural relationships and be neutral about the differences between them by using the new language being studied. The reason is that there is a need for social information. This is due to the cultural difference between the learner's first language and the language being studied. As Rivers points out⁶, foreign language learners must also learn about a culture that is inseparable from language. It can be concluded that intercultural understanding is the study of cultures of different countries and aims to educate students about cultures in order to prevent misconceptions and misunderstandings due to cultural differences through the integration of cultures. Accordingly, the

analysis of the cultural elements shown in a short story, poems or nursery rhymes, which are also used as teaching material in the course, and the role of EFL teachers in delivering them correctly to students is very important. Teachers develop students' intercultural comprehension skills. They also prepare students to interact with people from different cultures. So, while the role of the teacher is very important in the correct acceptance and understanding of the new culture by the children, then the issue of teacher training becomes the main problem. because in teaching and educating, first of all, it is very important that the teacher himself has the knowledge and skills. It is important to be aware of cross-cultural issues and to have an objective position on them. In addition, arranging for the content of school textbooks to be delivered on the basis of friendly conversations between representatives of the two cultures can also serve as a positive solution to the problem.

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