Language and Culture in Foreign Language Teaching

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1. Introduction

This discussion deals with language and culture as foreign language (FL) curricular contents in an English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) situation. Culture has been neglected or being treated as a supplementary topic in FL teaching. It needs to be emphasized for the following reasons.

(1) One of the goals for learners to learn a FL is to communicate with the target language users, either native target language speakers or those who use it as a second (SL) or foreign language (FL) (Pennycook, 1994, Clyne, 1994). Evidences from researches of both spoken and written discourses demonstrated that linguistics phenomena are related to their society and culture. (Wierzbicka1985, 1986, Kaplan, 1966). Foreign culture (FC) learning can contribute to the success in language learning, as Tseng (2002, p.13) puts it: "success in language learning is conditional upon the acquisition of cultural knowledge: language learners acquire cultural background knowledge in order to communicate, and to increase their comprehension in the target language."

(2) FL learning should go beyond the level of acquiring grammatical rules; FL learners need know how to use the target language in the situated context (Neuner, 1997). It is impossible to teach a language without its culture for "culture is the necessary context for language use (Stern, 1992, p.205)." Some FL communication situation examples demonstrated that the cultural contents of the target culture(s) needed to be integrated into FL language teaching for cultural contexts to avoid misunderstanding even when people are using correct FL linguistic forms (Willems, 1996, Tanaka, 1997). Foreign culture (FC) learning is to help FL users successfully communicate in socio-cultural contexts.

(3) The language-culture link is significant in FL education because culture plays a role in helping FL learners to be proficient in the target language (Nault, 2006), as Alptekin (2002, p.58) puts it, "learning a foreign language becomes a kind of enculturation, where one acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers." From learning a new language, FL learners experience a new world.

Traditional thoughts of FC teaching tend to limit on transmission of foreign cultural information or teaching foreign literature in the classroom. However, the current trend of FL teaching associated with culture needed to take the relation of language and culture into account (Savignon and Sysoyev, 2002). The interrelationship

between language and culture provides a foundation to the idea that learning a FL is learning an aspect of foreign culture.

2.   The interrelationship between language and culture

Language and culture are so close that are being identified as synonyms (Scarcella, Oxford, 1992).   On the one hand, language is used to express people's cultural thoughts, beliefs and to communicate; on the other hand, culture is embedded in the language.   The interwoven relationship between language and culture can be summarized by Brown (2000, p.177): "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one can not separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture."

2.1   The notion of culture

Culture is such a broad concept that has been discussed in social sciences.   The concept of culture can be looked at from different perspectives.   The intension of bringing in the following definitions of culture is to systemize and synthesize the characteristics of culture in FL education.

(1) Lado (1957, p.111) defined culture as "cultures are structured systems of patterned behaviour."   This definition signaled two categories that are important in the concept of culture: structured and patterned.

(2) Robinson (1988) looked at culture from four perspectives: behaviour, function, cognition and symbols.   From a behaviourist's point of view, culture is a set of pattered behaviours; and a functionalist is to make sense of the behaviours.   A cognitive definition tries to argue that culture is a process of interpretation while a symbolic explains that culture is the product after interpretation.   Thus, cultural meanings are produced after learners' internal interpretative process.   Culture is both process and products.   Culture should be studies as a process as well as a product (Crawford-Lange &Lange, 1984, Moran, 2001).

(3) Kramsch (1993, p.205) identifies that "culture is a social construct, the product of self and other perceptions".   The definition signaled that culture is not collective but also individual.

(4) McCarthy and Carter (1994) look at culture from a social discourse perspective. It refers to " social knowledge and interactive skills which are required in addition to knowledge of the language system (McCarthy and Carter, 1994, p.151-152)."

(5) Moran (2001, p:25-26) defines culture as 'a cultural phenomenon'--" A cultural phenomenon involves tangible forms or structures (products) that individual members of the culture (persons) use in various interactions (practices) in specific social circumstances and groups (communities) in ways that reflect their values,

attitudes and beliefs (perspective)." That is, an aspect of culture includes practices, products, perspectives, persons, and communities, five dimensions. From the definitions listed above, it can be concluded that the concept of culture is associated with the society, the process of interpretation and the product of a social phenomenon. It is important to note that each dimension of culture is not mutually exclusive; they are interrelated to each other.

Language and culture complement each other. Language is the most central, essential elements in any culture (Brooks, 1964). It is used to participate in the culture, describe the culture, interpret the culture and respond to the culture (Moran, 2001). It allows people in the cultural group to share ideas and information. Also, it is a method for transmission of culture.

2.2 language, culture and communication

Both of language and culture have a function of communication because they both carry meanings. On the one hand, language carries syntactic, semantic and pragmatic meanings for language users to communicate (Brooks, 1997). On the other hand, culture carries meanings and cultural meanings are expressed through patterns of behaviour, e.g., language. In order to communicate successfully across languages and cultures, one must understand culturally different norms of interaction and people's values and thought (Saville-Troike, 2003). Sometimes linguistic correct sentences could cause misunderstanding or confusion when they are in a different cultural context (Schulz, 2007).

2.3 Communicative competence (CC)

Communicative competence (CC) is the main factor in constructing meanings (Loveday, 1982). The notion of CC, first introduced by Hymes (1972), refers to the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language but also to know when, where, and to whom to use those sentences appropriately. CC in FL learning refers to a FL learner can use a FL in a "linguistically, socio-linguistically and pragmatically appropriate way (Council of Europe, 2001, cited in Sercu, 2005)." CC involves what a FL language user need to know to use the language appropriately in a specific cultural-setting.

In Canale and Swain's (1980) and in Canale's (1983) later studies, four different components make up the construct of communication competence. They are grammatical competence, social-linguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. According to Canale and Swain (1980), the grammatical

competence is the competence that we associate with mastering the language. Discourse competence is the ability learners have to connect sentences and to form a meaningful whole from a series of utterances.   Social-linguistic competence is the knowledge of the social-cultural rules of languages which requires an understanding of the roles of the participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction.   Strategic competence is the strategies that learners use to compensate for imperfect knowledge of rules or the target language, to sustain communication. From this model, we conclude that the competence for an effective communication should include not only linguistic but also sociolinguistic knowledge (Tseng, 2002).

The inseparable relationship between language and culture suggests that learning a foreign language means to learn an aspect of FC.   The following discussion represents the cultural dimension of FL teaching in an EFL setting.

3.   The cultural dimension of FL education

The writer looks at the cultural aspect of FL teaching from the historical development of foreign culture (FC) teaching.   It starts with a historical background of FC teaching, followed by FC teaching in FL pedagogy.

3.1   Background and development of FC teaching
3.1.1   Culture teaching history

Risager (2007) provides an overview of foreign culture teaching in her recent work, which systematically noted that the relation of language and culture and the influences they have toward the position of FC teaching.

3.1.1.1 1960s

In the sixties, culture pedagogy started in the USA with Lado's (1957), Brooks' (1964) and Nostrand's work (1997).

(1)   In Lado's *Linguistic across cultures* (1957), he defines culture as " a structured system of patterned behaviour (Lado, 1957, p.111).   Lado(1957) suggests comparing units of two cultures from three levels: 'form'(a cultural phenomenon or action), 'meanings' (what the phenomenon means to the people in that culture) and 'distribution' (on what occasions does the phenomenon happen).   Two cultures are said to reflect the same phenomenon when the phenomenon is the same all through the three levels.

(2)   Brooks has a culture-anthropology oriented culture pedagogy.   He suggests "formal culture" vs. "deep culture" later developed as Capital C (Big C) vs. little c (small c).   The concept of small c (little c) refers to those associated with

human daily life in a society while Big C (Capital C) refers to human achievement or refinement, such as, art, literature, technology, philosophy and so forth.

(3) Nostrand's emergent model provides an inventory for analysing and categorising a culture.   His model developed a comprehensive classification category for intercultural communication and understanding (Risager, 2007), as Hardly (2001,p.350) stated: "in Nostrand's model, the goals for culture learning go beyond identifying key aspects of culture to include procedural knowledge that would enable students to observe and analyze cultural elements and patterns."

From 1960s, more attention in anthropological aspects of culture has been put in FC teaching.   There was a shift from Capital C to small c (Morain, 1983, Flewelling, 1994) in language teaching, as Kramsch (1993, p.224) states that famous scholars " searched for a common universal ground of basic physical and emotional needs to make the foreign culture less threatening and more accessible to the language learner."   Meanwhile, the study of language began to emphasize on the context of society and its culture under the influence of Hymes's communicative competence (Driven and Putz, 1993).

3.1.1.2 1970s
In the seventies, there was a clear trend that culture learning in FL learning is connected with societies, both native and target societies.   Cultural contents in FL/SL education are trying to be made visible, for instance, introducing cultural topics in class.   An emphasis on situational context of the FL teaching was brought into FL pedagogy along with a communicative approach.   The role of culture in FL education is enhanced massively.

3.1.1.3 1980s
In the eighties, scholars begin to delve into the dynamic of culture and its contribution to FL/SL learning (Risager, 2007).   The interrelationship between language and culture was closely examined and the need of integrating linguistic and culture learning in FL education was proposed.   Scholars, in the USA, such as Damen (1987), Robinson (1988), Seelye (1993) and Valdes (1986) and in the Europe, Byram's culture studies (1988, 1989a) all advocated on integrating culture into SL/FL teaching.

3.1.1.4 1990s
In the nineties, the challenge that FC teaching faced is the impact of globalisation

(Nault, 2006).   FL teaching should be across national and ethic boundaries and be looked at in a "transnational and global context (Risager, 2007, p. 1)".   The role of English as a world/international language (EIL) demands three changes in culture dimension of ELT (Wandel, 2002):

(1)   An intercultural approach is proposed in ELT to train FL learners to be EIL users. That is, to train learners use English as a lingua franca and develop their intercultural sensitivity and awareness.   Pauwels (2000) argues that the complex setting of lingua franca settings should be emphasized in FL pedagogy. It is important to develop culture sensitivity and culture awareness in FC teaching under globalisation since it is impossible to include all aspects of culture into one curriculum.   The intercultural communicative approach allows English users to use culture as a powerful tool to understand and explore the global cultures (Prodromou, 1992).

(2)   ELT teaching with mainstream cultures contents, ie, North America, Britain, Australia (NABA), needs to have a rethink.   It has to be noted that there are other forms and varieties of English emerging, especially in non-Western contexts (Kachru, 1992).   English educators need to rethink the cultural dimension of ELT: whose culture and what culture should be in the EFL curriculum and what goals in culture teaching and how should culture-related materials be designed and chosen (Nault, 2006).   It is suggested that a more diversity of culture and non-mainstream cultures in ELT instruction is included in the phenomenon of English as a global language (Nault 2006).

(3)   The notion of communicative competence is being challenged through globalisation (Alptekin, 2002).   People from different language and cultures background use English to communicate in various settings, travelling, academic study, or conferences.   As English is being used as a lingua franca, speakers of non-native speakers are engaged in the specific intercultural context and require strategies for interpreting cultures and languages when they communicate (Crozet and Liddicoat, 2000).

It also has to be noted that the development of technologies has played a role in FL/FC learning since the eighties.   The visual aspect of culture teaching was strengthened because the development of video technology in the eighties and computer and internet in the nineties influence FL learning and interaction in a great sense (Liaw and Johnson, 2001, Dlaska, 2000, Lin 1999, Tseng, 1999).   For instance, email communication allows a cross-culture contact possible (Liaw and Johnson, 2001) and Dlaska (2000) suggested of using internet and information technology in supporting autonomous language and culture learning.

3.2　FC teaching in FL education

In this section, some characteristics of FC learning are presented followed by a FC in FL curriculum discussion.　The way to teach culture depends on how one approaches culture (Crawford-Lange and Lange,1984).　The characteristics of FC teaching reflect some approaches that FL educators approach aspects of culture.

3.2.1　Characteristics of FC learning

(1) Culture learning is a process of interpretation.　Teaching cultural facts or information has not enabled learners to understand foreign attitudes, values, and mindsets (Kramsch, 1993).　The purpose of culture teaching is to make students "understand why the speakers of two different languages acts and react the way they do, whether in fictional texts or in social encounters, and what the consequences of these insights may mean for the learner (Kramsch2003, p.32)." It is a process of learners' interpretation and making sense of their inner and outside world.

(2) Cultural understanding is a constructive learning.　Adamowski (1990), Robinson (1985), Tseng (2002) all advocated a cognitive and constructive view of culture learning.　They view cultural understanding as a shared process in which every individual constructs his/her own meaning with his/her internal cognitive map. "Past experience influences meaning, which in turn affects future experience, which in turn affects subsequent meaning, and so on (Robinson, 1988, p.11)." The socio-cultural world of the target language shape learners' attitudes and have an indirect effect toward their native world (Neuner, 1997).

(3) Culture teaching can not be generalized as teachers do in grammar teaching. Cultural teaching needs to focus on "exploration and description" which is different from teaching grammar because the rules of creating meanings are dynamic (Kramsch, 2003).

(4) Issues of stereotype, bias and ethnocentrism are issues to be aware in FC teaching. Stereotype is unavoidable in culture teaching.　It is one of the goals to teach learners be sensitive to cultural stereotypes (Flewelling, 1994).　Stereotypes could become a factor to motivate learners in learning a FL (Dlaska, 2000). Meanwhile, it is important to both achieve balance and avoid bias in designing a cultural syllabus and it is also crucial to be aware of the images of ethnocentrism (Hardly, 2001).　For instance, Liu (1998) argues that ethnocentrism in TESOL programs in NABA does not take international students' need into account; the training TESOL students can not meet their needs in their later teaching in an EFL context.

3.2.2   FC contents in EFL context

FC learning contents need to be associated with its socio-cultural context(s), as Seely's claim (1997, p.10): "learning a language in isolation of its cultural roots prevents one from becoming socialized into its contextual use."   Cultural contents are seen as inherent and implicit in language to help effective communication (Prodromou, 1992, Murphy, 1998).   In most language teaching situations, the teaching of cultural knowledge is implicit, embedded in the language class, a hidden curriculum (Lessard-Clouston, 1997, Peterson & Coltrane, 2003).

The discussion of cultural contents in EFL instruction needs to consider the influence of globalisation because it raises the problem of what culture to be taught and whose culture is the target culture.   Considering an English-as-a-lingua-franca situation, a Chinese speaker might communicate with a Japanese speaker using English as a medium.   Thus, different sense of cultural contents should be assigned in different FL learning contexts, depending on the needs of learners (Adaskou et al., 1990).

Another issue of cultural contents concerns with EFL learners' local culture because cultural contents need to be associated with the learners' socio-cultural context, as Kramsch (1993, p.205) claim that language teaching should include "a reflection both on the target and on the native culture."   There are studies (Mckay, 2003, Tzu, 2001, Moore, 1995) proposing the strength of integrating appropriate local cultural contents into culture learning in the FL classes.

It is inevitable to learn a FC with learners' local culture as Robinson (1988.p.12) suggested, "cultural understanding involves a synthesis between the learner's home culture, the target cultural input and the learner as an individual."   Language learners acquire target cultural knowledge with the influences of their own cultural influences.

In addition, the use of authentic materials at the intercultural level is argued to not include texts produced by native speakers, but also those who written or spoken by people who use it as a lingua franca to achieve communication purposes (Feng and Byram, 2002).

3.2.3 Byram's FL teaching model

Byram (1989a, 1991, 1997a) presented a model for culture learning in FL classroom by integrated learners' native cultures and languages.   Two approaches can be

combined and used in this model.　The first approach is to use learners' mother tongue as a medium to study FC and the second approach is to integrate language and culture by using the FL.

Figure 2 is the model of FL education; four elements are included.　The four elements are presented as a circle of experiences and techniques.　Double headed arrows show the mutual support of each quarter with the other two adjacent quarters (Byram and Esarte-Sarries, 1991).
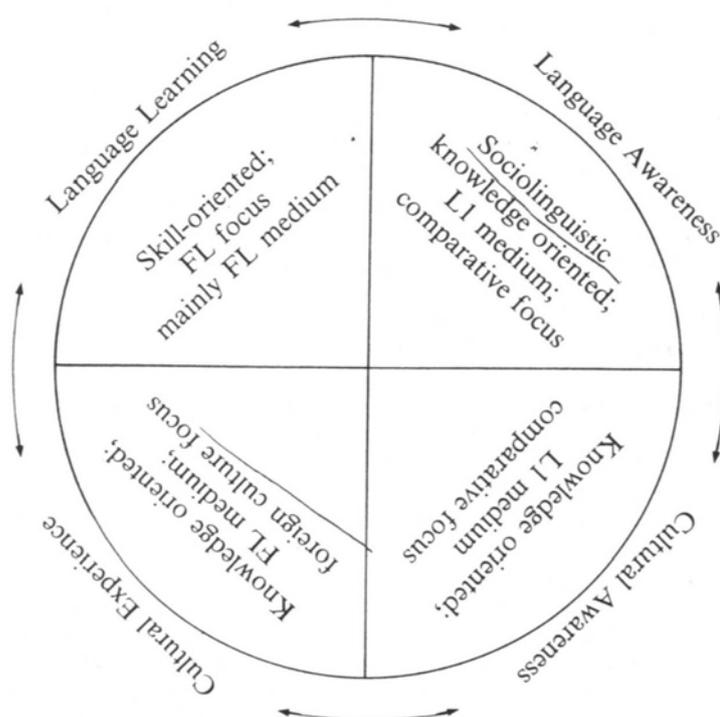

Fig2.　A model of foreign language education
(Byram and Esarte-Sarries, 1991, p.15)

(1) Language Learning:　It refers to the learning of the foreign language.　It now pays more attention to the language use and its context with an approach of CLT.

(2) Language Awareness:　It presents the opportunity for learners to analyse and understand the relationship between language and cultural phenomena.　This component, linking learners' language skills with the understanding of a foreign culture, is pragmatic awareness which helps learners to use the language appropriately in specific situations (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005).

(3) Cultural Awareness:　Cultural awareness is non-linguistic dimension of culture.　It focuses on "the question of change from monocultural to

9

intercultural competence (Byram, 1991, p.24)." Cultural awareness raising is an important dimension in culture teaching (Bateman, 2002, Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2004, Broady, 2004). Fantini (1995) suggests that developing culture awareness is an important task for FL teachers because students' failure in linguistic competence could be due to the lack of culture competence.

(4) Cultural Experience—It refers to the direct experiences that FL have with the target culture either by travelling or a similar atmosphere in the classroom.

Two things have to be noted in adapting this model. Those four components are not separated in teaching materials or teaching methodologies; " they are mutually supportive elements of a whole (Byram, 1991, p.29)." Meanwhile, the proportion of attention and time allocation in the four elements can be determined by learners' age and development.

The most significant value of this model is that FL learners are educated to understand themselves and the world around them. On the one hand, it gives a positive view on pupils' first language in FL classroom because pupils might use a comparative approach in raising their both language and cultural awareness (Byram, 1997a). On the other hand, learners' FC experiences contribute to learners' language learning and become the orientation of ethnographic skills in FL learning (Risager, 2007).

The model explains learners' process of FL/FC learning and socialisation. Byram (1991) also argues that learners' socialisation is to achieve intercultural competence. The process is described as followed:

> "the integration of language and culture learning by using the language as a medium for the continuing socialisation of pupils is a process which is not intended to imitate and replicate the socialisation of native speaker peers but rather to develop pupil's cultural competence from its existing stage, by changing it into an intercultural competence (Byram, 1991, p.19)."

In all, this model provides a theoretical foundation for the development of intercultural communication competence (ICC).

3.3 Intercultural communicative approach in FL teaching

FL teaching does not only mean to transfer language and culture information. " It is the assertion, negotiation, construction and maintenance of individual and group identities-that has led to the development of an intercultural approach to language education (Corbett, 2007, p.20)". Many FL scholars and educators demonstrated that the final goal for FL learners is to build up language learners' intercultural

communicative competence (ICC) (Byram, 1997, Roberts et al. 2001, Sercu, 2002).

3.3.1 From CC to ICC

One of the predominant goals in FL education is to help FL communicate effectively within the cultural context of the target language or other appropriate contexts (Kramsch, 1991). Culture differences may inhibit communication. When communicating with speakers of other language varieties, FL learners requires a competence that combines both linguistic and socio-cultural skills to suit the context of communication situation. If communicating with a lingua franca, at least three cultures involve in the interaction: the culture of each interlocutor and the culture of the lingua franca (Willems, 1996). Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is needed in this cross-cultural communicative situation.

The cultural dimension of FL teaching moved from communicative approach to an intercultural communicative approach to emphasize the language use in different cultural contexts and using the target language as a lingua franca (Risager, 2007). In the intercultural approach, the goal of FL teaching is 'to accommodate the two worlds in the learner's mind…, to sharpen the learners' awareness of similarities and differences and help them to come to terms and deal with divergent experiences (Neuner, 1997, p.236)."

3.3.2 ICC

In defining ICC, Driven and Putz (1993, p.152) state that the ICC approach is to develop strategies to bridge the gap between FL learners' "imperfect and un-cultural use of the foreign language and the fluently and culturally-loaded native-speaker." In the interaction with 'others', language learners have the ability to interpret and accept different perspective of the world, and to mediate between the differences among different languages and cultures (Byram et al., 2001).

The components of ICC is to include attitudes, knowledge, and skills to mediate within learners' cultures and target cultures (Byram et al, 2001), as it is in Fig. 3.

	Skills Interpret and relate (*savoir-comprendre*)	
Knowledge Of self and other; Of interaction: Individual and societal	**Education** Political education Critical cultural awareness (*savoir-s' engager*)	**Attitudes** Relativising self Valuing other (*Savoir-être*)

(*savoirs*)		
	Skills	
	Discover and/or interact	
	(*Savoir-apprendre /faire*)	

Figure 3. Factors in intercultural communication (Byram, 1997, p.34)

1. First *savoir*, *savoirs* with a plural 's', form the knowledge dimension. It includes, ' knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor's country on the one hand, and similar knowledge of the processes and interaction at individual and societal levels, on the other hand (Byram, 1997a, p.35)." Sercu (2005) also stated that *savoirs* should include cultural specific and cultural general knowledge that will assist FL learners in dealing with a wide range of FC contact situations. In all, *saviors* included general knowledge about the target social groups.

2. *savoir-comprendre/ savior-apprendre/savoir-faire* includes the skills of comparison, interpreting, and relating between two cultures (Byram et al, 2001). It is the ability to use *savoirs* and the ability to interpret, relate and reflect. FL learners have these skills so they can discover cultural differences and interact with people from different cultures

3. *savoir-s' engager* is a critical cultural awareness.

4. *Savoir-être :* refers to the ability to abandon ethnocentric views and attitudes toward foreign languages and cultures (Byram, 1997a).

This ICC model is to "encourage the development of both culture-specific knowledge and skills, and culture-general knowledge and skills for learning about, becoming involved in, and successfully negotiating intercultural communicative interaction (Hall, 2002, p.110)." In developing FL learners' ICC, "learners should be aware of the methods they are using to analyse the language-and-culture in question (Byram, 1997a, p.57)".

3.3.3 ICC approach in FL learning

Adapting an intercultural approach in FL learning means that FL learners have the ability to behave appropriately in the social context and mediate between cultures. Alred (2003) stated that the notion of 'intercultural competence' composes two approaches, two sides of the same coin: training learners as ethnographers to engage and mediate in the foreign culture on the one hand, and develop students' self awareness and source, become an intercultural speaker, on the other.

Encouraging FL learners as ethnographers is the most recent approach of culture teaching in FL education.   Ethnography is to gap the missing link between linguistics and cultural studies (Buttjes1991).   An ethnographic approach of FL learning encourages learners to observe, understand and analyse a FC while they are encountering other FL and FC (Roberts et al. 2001).   Adapting an approach of intercultural teaching in FL teaching, educators urged to develop an ethnographic skill in FL learning (Morain, 1983, Byram, 1989, Holliday, 1994, Roberts et al. 2001, Morgan, 2001).

The concept of intercultural speakers means that a person who has the ability to interact with others, to accept others' perception of the world and to mediate the differences between the different perceptions and have the conscious and awareness about self and others (Byram, Zarate, and Neuner, 1997; Kramsch, 1998b).   Speakers know how to adapt and select appropriate forms and norms in a context (Kramsch, 1998b).   The appropriateness and authenticity of language use is encouraging in FL teaching, other than a native-speaker approach.

4.   Conclusion

Culture teaching and language teaching are inseparable and culture is always embedded, integrated into language learning context (Nault, 2006).   That is, FC teaching should move from passing information of target cultures to teaching the language in context, to give meanings to FL learners, and raise learners' cultural awareness in the process of FL learning (Willems, 1996).

FL education is to provide a chance for learners to reflect their own language and culture, through the experience with foreign language and culture (Byram, 1988). In curriculum design, it is suggested that integrated learners' local content into communicative activities to both improve learners' motivation in learning the language and also train learners as an intercultural speaker or an ethnographic learner. That is, an ICC approach is proposed to emphasize the cultural dimension of FL teaching and to train FL learners to be equipped with ICC to mediate between cultures.

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