

A Discussion on Teaching a Language without Teaching its Culture

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Abstract

The human elements of language and culture are intricately and intimately intertwined, which is an aspect that has been studied by many linguistic scholars (Abdo & Breen, 2010; Annamali, 1989; Appel & Muysken, 2006; Gardner, 2012; Gregg, 2006; Hussein, 2013; Gumperz, 2001; Schegloff, 2001). When learning a new language, the cultural attributes of the language become relevant to the comprehension of the target language (L2). The purpose of this paper is to discuss the practice of teaching a second language (L2) without teaching the relative or content culture associated with the language. This is particularly relevant for individuals that speak Arabic and are learning English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL). The ensuing discussion will present a case study reflection of Jordanian Arabic speaking EFL/ESL students and how culture affects the comprehension of the English language due to the grammatical, syntactic, structural, and other differentiating characteristics in each linguistic paradigm, as well as a study conducted at a Middle Eastern university.

Keywords: Language, Culture, ESL/ EFL, Arabic language