Culture as Context: Exploring Cultural Products, Practices, and Perspectives

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Goals

1) Present a framework for understanding culture in language classes.

2) Explore language and culture integration in language classes

3) Learn about a model for teaching and exploring culture: The IMAGE model
In the best language education programs today, the study of another language is synonymous with the study of other cultures. The two are linked. Gone are the days when anyone would suggest that language could be taught on its own as only discrete grammar points.

(Cutshall, 2012)

Teaching language in a cultural context (necessary but not sufficient)

vs.

Teaching culture as a context for language learning  (Galloway, 1985; Byram, 2008; Glisan and Donato, 2017).
Culture as Context: 
Three Essential Questions

What is culture for foreign language instruction and how do we define it?

What are the goals of culture instruction in FL classes?

How do we integrate the teaching of language and culture?

The 3 P’s of Culture for Language Teaching
Products and Practices reflect Cultural Perspectives

Cultural products and practices reflect and embody cultural PERSPECTIVES.

Hall (2012) states that culture is located in the activity of social groups, not in the individual mind.

What are Cultural Perspectives?

Cultural perspectives are the attitudes, values, beliefs, assumptions, and dispositions that underlie and potentially explain the cultural practices and products of a group. They represent a culture’s world view (Hall, 2012; Kramsch, 2012; Duranti, 1997).
Why are Cultural Perspectives important to know?

Cultural perspectives affects how people relate to one another and their ability to communicate. To a certain extent, cultural perspective influences the relationships that people have with each other.

https://www.reference.com/world-view/cultural-perspective-1d0f861949be920d

The Contrast

This view of culture (activity, dispositions, values) contrasts with the traditional notion that to know culture means simply describing behaviors, learning cultural customs, and memorizing historical facts (Kramsch 2012; Glisan and Donato, 2017).
What are some cultural perspectives?

*Youth is valued over age.* (“She’s ___ years young”).

*The importance of privacy.* (“I need my space”).

*Life is a journey* (Life is suffering in the Buddhist tradition)

*Time is money.* (Time is NOT money in all cultures)

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**Karmic Time**

*KARMA*

“When a bird is alive, it eats Ants. When the bird is dead, Ants eat the bird. Time & Circumstances can change at any time. Don’t devalue or hurt anyone if life. You may be powerful today, but remember, Time is more powerful than you! One tree makes a million matchsticks... Only one matchstick is needed to burn a million trees. So be good and do good.”
Developing Cultural Understanding: All three P’s are important

*Products*: Tangible and intangible creations  
*What we make.*

*Practices*: Patterns and norms of social practices.  *What we do.*

*Perspectives*: meanings, values, beliefs, concepts. *What we assume about what we make and do.*

Perspectives

*Perspectives are not always obvious and lurk beneath the surface of products and practices.*
Cultural Perspectives
The metaphor of the **iceberg**

Perspectives **below** the surface

- Nature of Friendship
- Values
- Assumptions
- Importance of Time
- Notions of Cleanliness
- Views on Raising Children
- Concept of Fairness
- Importance of Space
- Approaches to Problem Solving
- Thought Processes
- Notions of Modesty
- Attitudes towards Age
- Learning Styles
- Expectations
- Religious Beliefs
- Etiquette
- Norms
- Food
- Costume
- Music
- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts
- Festivals
- Holiday Customs
- Literature
- Games
- Dress
Perspectives require interpretation

Perspectives are not a re-statement of the practice. For example, ‘Italians like to eat pasta’ is NOT a cultural perspective.

Perspectives may not be known to us and require research and evidence, e.g., historical reasons, religious traditions, geographical reasons, the language, etc.

( google: reasons for cultural perspectives and you will see!)

Understanding perspectives prevents students from developing or maintaining stereotypes.

The Goal of Cultural savoir-faire

Byram (1997, 2008) and the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages (2007) argue that the goal of integrating culture instruction with language learning is to develop cultural know-how, that is to develop in learners the ability to analyze, understand, and participate in cultures unlike their own.
Developing Cultural Know-How

Byram (2008) argues that an important goal of integrating culture instruction with language learning is to develop cultural know-how in learners, that is the ability to analyze, understand, and participate in cultures unlike their own.

1) knowing *how to be and feel* when faced with cultures unlike one’s own,

2) knowing *how to understand* cultural differences, and

3) knowing *how to engage* the self with cultures in contact.

What the Goal of Culture Teaching is not

The goal is NOT to create native speakers of the language or copies of the cultural insider.

The goal is NOT present culture as tourism.

The goal is NOT to fill the heads of students with culture facts through teacher-fronted lectures.
The GOAL should be...

To develop CULTURAL competence in students. That is, students with cultural know-how. How to be in, feel about, understand, and engage with cultures unlike their own.

To explore culture while simultaneously developing language proficiency.

Learning about the Relationship of Products and Practices to Perspectives

Using IMAGES and TEXTS to explore cultural products, practices, and their relationship to cultural perspectives (Barnes-Karol & Broner, 2010; Johnson & English, 2003)

**The IMAGE model**
*(Donato and Glisan)*

Each letter stands for a step in the culture lesson

I
and
M
A
G
E
The IMAGE model
(Donato and Glisan)

Each letter stands for a step in the culture lesson
Images and Making observations
Analyzing Additional information Generating perspectives Exploring perspectives and reflecting further

Using Images as Cultural Data.

A Sample ‘Lesson’ in English using the IMAGE model
During the lesson think about...

How complex was the language used in the lesson?

Can language learners participate in this lesson and maintain the target language? At what level?

Could the lesson be used or adapted to an online environment?

I & M

Images and Making Observations
I & M

Exploring the Culture of Coffee
Inside Dunkin’ Donuts

??Questions??

What kind of questions were you being asked at this stage of the lesson?

Were they relatively easy questions?

At what level of instruction might you ask questions like this?
Known answer questions to **DESCRIBE** the images

Analyzing Additional Information
Branding

Runs: A double meaning?
Think about a possible perspective on coffee drinking in the US.
What do the images tell you about coffee drinking in the US?

What MIGHT BE the *unspoken meanings* in the wall image, the branding, and the following images that are implied about coffee consumption in the US?

In a Coffee Shop in the US
In a Coffee Shop in the US

Generating Hypotheses: Pair and Share

What MIGHT BE the *unspoken meanings* in the *wall image, the branding, and the previous images* that are implied about coffee consumption in the US?

Report your ideas to the group.
Unknown answer questions promote thinking

Confirming and supporting thinking

Option:

Student thinking can be confirmed and/or supported with additional information in the form of a short text from a reliable source.
From *Brewed Coffee* (April, 2015)

You’d think that people go to coffee shops to get coffee, but the truth is that quite a good number of people go to coffee shops for a completely different reason.

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Best Coffee Shops to Study and Work in Brooklyn

20 Coffee Shops Perfect for Working

Good coffee, Wi-Fi, and a spot to perch

by Triva Fenn and Alexandra Fraser

Updated Mar 21, 2019, 4:25pm EDT
From: *The Culture of Coffee Drinkers*  
Scientific American, 2011

While people still go to coffee houses for leisure activity, it’s far more likely in the US to see a variety of people working on laptops, reading, or doing some other form of work at coffee houses, like Starbucks.

Over the years, coffee drinking seems to have moved farther away from relaxing social activity.

(D’Costa, August 2011)

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**Perspective:** Coffee is often connected to activity and work

In some cultures, such as in the US, coffee is often associated with work. This perspective contrasts with other cultural perspectives on coffee drinking.

Consider the following images.
Exploring perspectives and reflecting further

Picture taken in Thai Dunkin Donuts
What do you see in this image?

A French Café
A coffee shop in Vietnam

Contrasting images
Exploring and reflecting further

What might these images tell you about coffee drinking in other cultures?

Can you make a statement comparing cultural perspectives on coffee drinking (without overgeneralizing)?

Return to the questions

How complex was the language used in this lesson?

Can language learners participate in this lesson and maintain the target language? At what level?

Could the lesson be used or adapted to an online environment?
A few comments

Texts of various kinds: quotes from articles, infographics, charts, graphs, videos, audio recordings, virtual tours, etc.

Example images from student projects

The following are sample images for various stages in the IMAGE model lesson.

Can you identify at what stage in the lesson the image was used?
I percentuali di viaggi per ogni modalità di trasporto

*source: ibike.org

La produzione di biciclette nel 2000

*source: ibike.org
• Quels types de livres?
  • Pour qui? Quelle type d’audience?

• Qu’est-ce que vous remarquez de la couture en Franco-Afrique?
• Vous êtes surpris?
Question 1/10 : Parmi ces quatre modes de transport, quel est votre préféré pour les trajets d'une distance de 200 à 500 kms ?

70,9% Train
10% Bus
11,4% Covoturage
7,7% Avion

Source : Sondage KelBillet.com, Septembre 2015

EN FRANCE
Trajet TGV Nantes - Lyon / empreinte CO2 train*, avion**, voiture*** (kg CO2 / passager)

NANTES 102 kg CO2 par passager
LYON 64 kg CO2 par passager

Octobre 2015
Use visual data: graphs

The Baguette as a cultural icon
Annual *Best Baguette in Paris*
Exploring further: COMPITI A CASA

CERCATE ALMENO 5 PUBBLICITA’ (VIDEO – YOUTUBE) DI DIVERSE MARCHE (BRANDS) DI PASTA E SCOPRITE QUALI MESSAGGI USANO PER PUBBLICIZZARE IL LORO PRODOTTO.
Mediating and Supporting Language

If creating with language is too difficult for students at certain levels, assist using multiple choice for rank ordering or selecting a preferred interpretation or provide forced choice options (x or y?).

PER GLI ITALIANI E' IMPORTANTE MANGIARE INSIEME

PER GLI ITALIANI, LA PASTA FA BENE ALLA SALUTE

PER GLI ITALIANI LA PASTA RAPPRESENTA LA FELICITA', LA FAMIGLIA E L'AMORE
Flexible and Adaptive

The IMAGE model is iterative and can be used flexibly throughout the lesson.

The model allows for adaptive expertise based on the needs of your students and your instruction context.

Simple or complex?

Thank You

Comments and/or Questions?

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