

THE CULTURAL CONTENT OF THE CURRICULUM

BY
Dr. Bushra Saadoon Al- Noori
Assistant professor
College of Education for Human Sciences/Ibn Rushd

ملخص البحث

ان الثقافة او الحضارة هي واحدة من اهم انجازات في اي مجتمع .ويمكن استنتاج ان الثقافة تتكون من العناصر المستمدة من المجتمع كالاعراف والتقاليد الاجتماعية والمواضيع المتعلقة بعلم الانسان . كل المجتمعات لديها وسائل للاتصال وارسال المفردات من جيل لآخر وبعض هذه المجتمعات تحصل على الثقافة من المؤسسات التربوية كالمدارس وغيرها. نحن نعيش في عالم يتميز بخصائص التغير السريع والمشاكل التي لاتفسر بالمنهج الذي نريده هو دراسة شروط واتجاهات المجتمعات المتعاصرة . هذه الدراسة تهدف الى معرفة مقاييس اختيار العناصر الثقافية للمنهج ومن هذه مقاييس القيم والصواب والجوانب النفسية والتركيب الاجتماعي وغيرها .وبعد استعراض كل الميزات المتعلقة بالمحتوى الثقافي للمنهج استنتجنا ان كل هذه المقاييس التي تناولتها الدراسة هي مهمة لمعرفة المنهج ومعرفة المبادئ المستخدمة في اختيار الثقافة التي يتكون منها منهج تدريس اللغة الانكليزية

INTRODUCTION

Culture in its broad sense refers to the way of life of a community : its speech and customs ; its modes of eating and dressing its attitudes

towards strangers , parents , children , friend its social gradings , the status of its occupations , its sexual behavior, its educational institutions , its beliefs , amusement , legends proverbs , songs , festivals and religious observations . This is the anthropologists' use of the novel culture .Nada(1974 :36)

Cultural anthropologists , during the last twenty – five years have gradually moved from an atomistic definition of cultures , describing it as a more or less haphazard collection of traits , to one which emphasizes pattern and configuration .

Kluckhohn and Kelly express this modern concept of culture as cited by Hiller (1953:554) as “ all these historically oriented designs for living explicit and implicit , rational , irrational , and non- rational , which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behavior of men “ traits , element , or better , patterns of culture(in this definition are organized or structured into a system or a set of system , because it is historically created , is therefore open and subject to constant change)

Having defined Culture as the Whole patterns of living of a nation Lado (1964:34) focuses on “ how a language is both a components of culture and central network through which the other components are expressed “ . Thus Lado our attention to the interrelation ship between language and culture .

Language does not develop in a Vacuum . A language is a part of the culture of people and the chief means by which the members of a society communicate , a language therefore , is both a component of culture and a central network through which the other component are expressed” Lado (1964 : 23)

Raymond (1976:76) (as cited by Lawton) suggests that culture is one of the most difficult words in English Language , partly because it has a history of shifting meaning and partly because the word is now used to discovery important concepts in several disciplines and in several incompatible system of thought .

Lawton(1983 :25) points out that cultures as used by sociologists' and anthropologists means everything that is man – made in a society : tools and technology , language and literature , music and art , science and mathematics , attitudes and values – in effect , the whole way of life of that society .

Any society has the “ problem “ of transmitting its way of life , or “ culture” to the next generation .in simple societies culture is transmitted

directly by the family “ face- to- face “ interaction . In complex societies , the division of Labour and social mobility make it impossible for culture to be passed on by traditional , informed means and the task is partly entrusted to formal education.

Education is concerned with making available to the next generation what we regard as the most important aspects of culture , because schools have limited time and resources , the curriculum should be planned carefully in order to ensure that an appropriate selection from culture is made. The selection should be neither arbitrary nor idiosyncratic. it should be open to rational enquiry and justification.

In order to plan a curriculum based on a reasonable selection from , culture , it is necessary to have a set of principles and processes through which the selection from culture is made. the process refers to “ cultural analysis “.

This study tends to shed light on cultural and in criteria for making selection from culture. to our best knowledge , no such study has been undertaken

1-1 purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to set up the principles through which the selection from culture is made in the ELT Curriculum.

1-2 Definition of Basic Terms

1-2-1 Culture

Culture can be defined as the established ways of sharing and regulating experience that communities and groups evolve through common forms of expressions their material lives.

Hiller (1983 : 117)

1-2-2 Curriculum :

Refers to the planned experiences that learners are exposed to under the school guidance. Hass ,(1985 :49)

1-2-3 Criterion

A Criterion is a Standard on which a decision or judgment can be based , it is a basis for discrimination . Hass(1980 : 217).

1-2-4 Curriculum Criteria

Curriculum Criteria are guidelines or standards on which curriculum or instruction decision can be based . Ibid, (1980 : 217)

2-Cultural Analysis

Lawton (1983 : 27) Suggests two approaches to “ cultural analysis “ : the classificatory and the interpretive . the classificatory method involves checklists , tables and elaborate systems of classification , whereas the interpretive method is concerned with looking at the Culture as a whole.

Some anthropologists have attempted elaborate system of classification of simple societies by listing such key characteristics as kinship system , economic features ,religious beliefs . the problem with this method is that it becomes impossible to make generalization because it is seconded with the wealth of details .

On the other hand , the educationist attempts to analyze his own society which has some advantages over an anthologist in simple society . the educationist , however , suffers from the disadvantage of looking at his own society through his own ideology or belief system . so , he , tends to take some aspects of culture for granted and assumes the value of certain practice and the power of tradition.

Raymond (1976 :46)

In an attempt to see how the curriculum in society is derived from the unique Culture of that society , it is necessary to ask detailed question about knowledge skills and values , Thus , Culture analysis when applied to curriculum planning would ask

- a-What kind of society already exists ?
- b-In what ways is it developing ?
- c-How do its members appear to want it to develop ?
- d-What kind of values and principles will be involve deciding on (e) and on the educational means of achieving ?

Taba (1962:98) and Lawton (1983:65) agree that Culture analysis also involves asking questions about the extent to which a school system matches the needs of society . they also add that , in the process of developing a method of matching the needs of individual children living in a specific society by means of a carefully planned curriculum . This selection from culture is made by analyzing the kind of society that exists and “ mapping out “ the kind of knowledge and the kind of experience that are most appropriate this process requires three kinds of classification

First : deciding on major parameters

Second : outlining a method of analysis which can be used to describe any given society and making use of those parameters .

Third : means of classifying the educationally desirable knowledge and experiences . Ibid (1983:65)

3-Criteria for Making Selection of Culture Elements

Lawton (1973 : 153) puts forward three criteria for making selection from Culture . He introduced these three criteria in terms of questions which might be applied to possible curriculum contents ; they are :

- 1-Is it worth while ?
- 2-Is it relevant
- 3-What is the best way of organizing this for efficient Learning ?

Each criterion as identified above is discussed below

3-1 the criterion of value

This criterion was put clearly when Herbert Spenser posed the question in one of his essays on Education “ what is of most worth ? “ He answered this question in relation to science as the relevant subject matter for the school main purpose to prepare children and youth for complete living . for Spenser ,science is the key to complete living : for preservation for health , earning a living , good citizenship , highest production and enjoyment of the arts and intellectual and moral discipline .

Spencer’s view that the purpose of the school should be focused on effective living , good citizenship , highest production and enjoyment of the arts and intellectual and moral discipline .

Spencer ‘s view that the purpose of the school should be focused on effective living that the knowledge key to school life in society is science . this comes as a result of distorted classical studies for being irrelevant to modern living ,Tanner and Tanner(1975:100)

Lawton adds in his discussion of “ value “ some criteria to be suitable under the heading of “ Value “ . He confines the discussion to a limited , philosophical view of value – that is the unchanging aspects of education : those permanent human qualities which most ages value sufficiently to want to transmit to the next generation (1973 : 153) .

3-2 The Criterion of relevance.

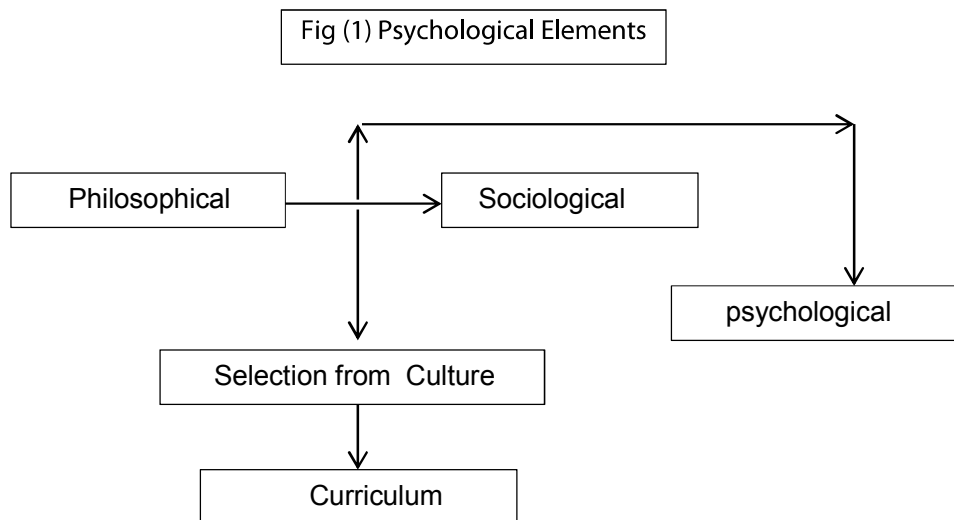
The question of relevance is somewhat easier to resolve , whereas philosophers tend to be concerned with the constant of invariable criteria , under the heading of social relevance . the particular criteria technological and society includes not only the changing technological and social conditions , but also ideas equality , and firmness .

Obviously , one of the main effects of considering relevance as a criteria for selection curriculum for school is to avoid treating knowledge in an entirely abstract and theoretical way , but to relate it to the real everyday world This means that contemporary issues (pollution or violence) and should be linked with academic knowledge wherever possible . This is considered an important aspect of common culture .

3-3 Psychological Aspects

The psycho logic criteria are procedural rather than matters of principle , concerned with how learning should take place rather than why .

This criterion also relates not only to what can most usefully be taught at a given time , but also to what should be taught (giving certain basic aims) . thus , the model used so far is not entirely correct and should rather be thought of as in the diagram , below



Lawton (1983:37) states eight features as the major heading for making selections from culture. After examining these features it seems that they are interrelated and their influence each other. These features described and identified as follows.

3-3-1 Social structure

All societies have some kind of social structure that is some system of defining relationship within society as a whole. Kinship, status, role, duty and obligation are the key social concepts which not only exist in every society, but to passed on to the next generation.

Lawton(1983:38) adds that social structure is simple in some societies and complex in others. The social structure is closely related to economic and technological factors. For example when western European societies are rural and agricultural, the dominant factor in social relationship is the possession or non-possession of land, but as trade and industry developed and became less important than capital or the ownership of the means of production.

3-3-2 Economic system

Every society has some means of dealing with the problem f scarce resources, their distribution and exchange in some societies, the economic arrangements are simple, involving barter, in other societies the economic system is complex. Some say that the link between education and economy should be the dominant one simply because the purpose of cultural analysis is to emphasize the features.

3-3-3 Communication System

In all societies, human beings communicate with each other. One of the major differences between man and other animals is the existence of human language.

In many societies speech is not the only form of communication for example; some societies have developed various kinds of writing it has often been pointed out by sociologists and social historians that the development of print has made enormous differences to the type of society which developed.

Most societies have visual symbols of some importance such non-speech forms of communication are required less than speech, and some kind of teaching and learning process is involved for the purpose of educational analysis, the development r writing and of print of great

significance. This is because print makes specialized knowledge available, but at the same time encourages the tendency for printed knowledge to be highly specialized.

3-3-4 Rationality System

All societies are rational in the sense of having a view about what is reasonable, and what counts as an explanation in terms of cause and effect. But without any kind of rationality, any kind of communication would be impossible. Any kind of explanation is accepted as rational will, however, vary from one society to another or from time to another with a given society, so that whereas one group might explain man being attracted to a woman in terms of "love" another group might invoke Freudian

Theory, another magic or witchcraft. These explanations are seen by anthropologists as different expressions of rationality rather than as being right or wrong explanation.

Levy Strauss (1966:87) (as cited by Lawton) classifies societies as "hot" or "cold". "hot" societies are characterized by scientific thinking, whereas "cold" societies are time suppressing and they rely on myth rather than science and history to explain their universe.

3-3-5 Technology system

Early man developed tools to build shelter from the climate, and to kill animals for food; later to produce food by various kind of agriculture.

All human beings are technologists in the sense of being tool users, and make progress by passing on their developing technology, with the improvement to the next generation. In some societies, technology is simple, whereas, in other societies the difficulty lies on how to cope with the transmission of knowledge and the problem of allocating of selecting different individuals for certain kinds of learning. He also adds that it is possible to classify a society according to the dominant system of technology "is it simple or complex?" Is the society at the pre-industrial or post-industrial state of development?

3-3-6 Morality system

Another characteristic that all human beings have in common is that they possess a sense of "the moral". All societies have some kind of code of ethics and they distinguish between right and wrong behavior. In some societies, the moral code is unitary and taken for granted; in other socializing the young is much more difficult-total agreement is lacking, yet

some kind of rules of behavior need to be transmitted. When moving from cultural in variants to cultural variables the main ways of categorizing morality systems include analyzing the dominant system as, for example religious or secular.

3-3-7 Belief system

This system is closely connected with morality system. It is also related to religious dogma and divine revelation of myths about the origins of the community, in other societies, these links have become weakened or the prevailing belief system is entirely secular. For example, having a belief in scientific explanation where "man is the measure of all things". In some societies, the problem of educating the young and passing on a belief system is much more difficult, not least because the young will be encouraged to question and criticize the simply learn and accept.

3-3-8 Aesthetic System

All human beings have aesthetic drives and needs. Every society produces some kind of art and entertainment for its members. One of the interesting features of human life is enormous variety of aesthetic forms, but nowhere is a sense of the aesthetic absent.

Raymond Williams (1981:65) as cited by Lawton discusses culture in relation to attempts to categorize societies according to aesthetic stages. He adds that it is sufficient to take into account some classification that counts as "Art" in any society, establishing boundaries between the Arts and examining the relationships between categories. Finally it is very important to analyze the relation between sub-divisions within aesthetic system and the other seven systems; in that respect the complex relationship with all the other systems will be important.

4- Conclusion

No matter what curriculum addresses, culture is always one of its important aspects, it has been found out that culture should process the following derived from conventional sociological and anthropological definition of society. All societies have means of transmitting elements from one generation to the next. Some societies, will achieve this cultural transmission partly through educational institutions including formal schooling.

Since we live in a world characterized by rapid change and insoluble problems, the curriculum we need should study conditions and trend in contemporary society and probable conditions as well as, any future developments for democratic living in the years of century closing through to the next one.

5- Bibliography

Hass, Glen (1980) Curriculum Planning: A New Approach. Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Hiller.A.H American Heritage Dictionary Hot Rindhart and Winston inc. New York(1983).

LAdo, Robert (1964) Language Teaching A scientific Approach. New York: McGraw Hill, Inc.

Lawton, Denis (1973) Social Change Educational Theory and Curriculum Planning London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Lawton, Denis (1983) Curriculum Studies and Educational Planning. London Hodder and Stoughton.

Nida E (1974) Language in Culture and Society, New York: Harper & Row.

Taba, Hilda (1962) Curriculum Development Theory and Practice New York: McGraw Hill, Inc.