

Learners' Perceptions of Culture through Movies

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Abstract

Since language and culture are inseparable, we cannot be teachers of language without including knowledge of culture or vice versa. Educational research has revealed that the most successful language learners are able to take on the “mindset” of the foreign language speakers assuming the culture along with the language. It is believed that to fulfill the educational potential of language and culture teaching, learners' language acquisition and knowledge of the target culture through foreign language classes can be enhanced by implementing teaching aids such as media. Movies are widely used as a teaching material in foreign language classes as they are a medium which can convey informational content of interest and relevance to learners' world experiences. In addition, movies are an economical substitute for field trips and other real visits to a country in which the target language is used. While most movies are fictional, they can provide insightful learning experiences on the language and cultures of the native speakers which students might unlikely to have in a classroom. This article aims to explore how learners of Thai as a foreign language perceive Thai cultures through watching some selected Thai movies. I will also discuss some teaching implications for development of learners' socio-linguistic competence by using movies as authentic material.

1 Introduction

Language education research in the past decades has revealed that language and culture are inseparable. Cultural awareness and the learning of a target culture can aid the attainment of second language proficiency (Kramsch, 1993). In Kramsch's view, second and foreign language learners necessarily become learners of the second culture because a language cannot be learned without an understanding of the cultural context in which it is used.

It is believed that the most successful language learners are able to take on the “mindset” of the speakers of the foreign or second language, assuming the culture along with the language. After the learners are guided to a recognition of the cultural base of their own attitudes and behaviors, they are ready to consider others in a more favorable light. Through this process, what has seemed quaint, peculiar or downright reprehensible becomes more reasonable and acceptable. Once the second language learner comes to understand the behavior of the speakers of the target language, regardless of the original motivation for study, the task of adding the language becomes far simpler, both through acceptance of the speakers of the language and through increased knowledge of what the language means as well as what it says.

To enhance learners' language acquisition and knowledge of the target culture through foreign language classes, movies can be a selected means or medium to convey informational content of interest to learners' world experiences. While most movies are fictional, they can provide insightful learning experiences on the language and cultures of the native speakers which students might unlikely to have in a classroom.

This study aims to discover students' perceptions of Thai culture through Thai movies. It is hoped that students will gain a better understanding of the target culture, culture awareness; that of their own and the others'. Given cultural awareness, it is hoped that students develop their overall abilities as learners of culture, a personal competence that they can apply to other culture learning situations.

2 Background

2.1 Overview: Language and culture

Language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways. (Kramsch, 1998, p. 3)

According to Brown (1994) culture is deeply ingrained part of the very fiber of our being, but language –the means for communication among members of a culture- is the most visible and available expression of that culture. And so a person's world view, self-identity, and systems of thinking, acting, feeling, and communicating can be disrupted by a change from one culture to another. Tang (1999) suggests that to speak a language well, one has to be able to think in that language, and thought is extremely powerful. Language is the soul of the country and people who speak it. Language and culture are inextricably linked, and as such we might think about moving away from questions about the inclusion or exclusion of culture in foreign language curriculum, to issues of deliberate immersion versus non-deliberate exposure to it (Cakir, 2006).

2.2 Cultural components

Culture is multifaceted and complex. If we tackle the question "what is culture?" through a study of cultural anthropology, the discipline dedicated to the study of culture, the results might be overwhelming. Each school of thought gives a different perspective of culture. I find a great challenge in finding the simple approach to its complexities, which are not derived from definers or definitions, but from the nature of culture itself. In the following, a definition of culture based on the realities and potential of the language teaching and learning will be discussed. Significantly, these realities address a view of culture that integrates language and culture.

The following definition of culture is based on three interrelated dimensions: products, practices, perspectives (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1990):

- *Products* are all artifacts produced or adopted by the members of the culture, including those in the environment, such as plants and animals. Products range from tangible objects – such as tools, clothing, written documents, or buildings – to more elaborate yet still perceptible constructions such as written and spoken language, music, or complex institutions of family, education, economy, politics, and religion. Products, both tangible and intangible, are located and organized in physical places.
- *Practices* comprise the full range of actions and interactions that members of the culture carry out, individually or with others. These include language and other forms of communications and self-expressions as well as actions associated with social groups and use of products. These practices are both verbal and nonverbal and include interpretations of time, space, and the context of communication in social situations. Practices also involve notions of appropriateness and inappropriateness, including taboos.
- *Perspectives* represent the perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes that underlie the products and that guide persons and communities in the practices of the culture. These perspectives can be explicit but often they are implicit, outside conscious awareness. Taken as a whole, perspectives provide meaning and constitute a unique outlook or orientation toward life – a worldview.

2.3 *Learners' and cultural experiences*

I have adopted the Cultural Knowing Framework proposed by Moran (2001) to support my argument concerning how students learn the target culture through interactions or learning processes. To illustrate, cultural experiences consist of four interconnected learning interactions as follows:

Knowing about

This interaction includes all activities that consist of gathering and demonstrating acquisition of cultural information – facts, data, or knowledge about the products, practices and perspectives of the culture. Pedagogically, students are expected to master information about the target culture.

Knowing how

This interaction involves acquiring cultural practices – behaviors, actions, skills, saying, touching, looking, standing, or other forms of “doing”. At the end of the learning processes, students are required to be able to adapt or integrate into the target culture – to appropriately interact with the native speakers of target culture.

Knowing why

This interaction deals with developing an understanding of fundamental cultural perspectives – the perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes that underlie or permeate all aspects of the culture. Through this interaction, students are required to practice skills in probing, analyzing, and explaining the cultural phenomena they encounter, which necessarily involves a comparison with their own culture.

Knowing oneself

This interaction concerns the individual learners – their values, opinions, feelings, questions, reactions, thoughts, ideas, and their own cultural values as a central part of their cultural experience in the target culture. It deals with self-awareness. Individual learners need to understand themselves and their own culture as a means to comprehending, adapting to, or integrating into the target culture. Ultimately, it is the learners who decide the extent to which they engage in, accept, explore, or become part of the culture and develop expertise as cultural learners.

2.4 *Analysis of the target culture*

The analysis of the target culture is as challenging as the investigation of one's native culture. It is assumed that as students begin to study various facets of the target culture, they will begin to realize that their own culture incorporates a complexity of patterns which they have never been aware of. In addition, it is assumed that students discover that a culture is not a static but an ever-changing phenomenon (Valette, 1986). A dozen major “themes” are proposed by Howard Lee Nostrand (Nostrand, 1974 cited in Valette, 1986) which is a sample study which tries to understand how students perceive the target culture. The twelve themes look for patterns in the feelings, beliefs, and thought process of members of the target culture. It is assumed that certain ingredients are characteristics of the behavior of a member of a culture. The procedure is to combine experience of the people's way of life with descriptive knowledge about the people, so that the resulting study is an examined experience of the target culture. The twelve themes which have been implemented widely in analyzing culture are the following (Nostrand, 1974 cited in Hughes, 1986, p. 166):

- The art of living: enjoyment of the lifestyle one has chosen
- Intellectuality
- Individualism and civil liberty
- Realism and good sense

- Law and order
- Distributive justice
- Friendship
- Love
- Family
- Religion
- The quest for community
- Patriotism

2.5 *Movie as experience*

In my study, films have been chosen to provide insightful learning experiences for students to be engaged in observing and learning about the target culture. Learners can develop and gain their cultural awareness through films (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2004, cited in Ho, 2009, p. 7). Films are widely used among language teachers in order to convey informational content of interest. In addition, films are an economical substitute for field trips and other visits to a country in which the target language is being used (Champoux, 2007).

2.6 *Films as new ways of learning*

Films are a multimedia technology being implemented in language education as an authentic or real-life material that replicates alternative ways of acquiring knowledge that are different from printed media. Films offer an exploratory and motivating type of learning as follows (adapted from Kramsch, 1993):

- Films provide a world of knowledge that is non-sequentially organized and that invites relational thinking and hierarchical structuring of the phenomena observed.
- It is suggested that students have to learn how to use the acquired knowledge in varying situational contexts for varying purposes and movies enhance a domain of cultural knowledge that has to be learned across different contexts.
- It is believed that movies invite learners to reinterpret, reorganize, and reconstruct prior knowledge in light of the new, to recognize the traces of prior texts and events as they appear in new contexts, endowed with a new value.
- Films are an accessible authentic material and lie in the construction of certain social reality by a society in dialogue with itself. Having been exposed to movies, non-native learners have to construct and reconstruct the meanings.
- Upon finishing watching films, a common comprehension classroom activity is to have a discussion in which students are given opportunities to explore various levels of understanding and to be conscious of their own knowledge assets and deficits.

3 Methodology

3.1 *Research question*

The research is intended as an exploratory study to investigate the culture learning of non-native learners of Thai (Beginners 2) at the National University of Singapore, Singapore. It attempts to answer the research question: what cultural aspects of Thai native speakers which are portrayed in the selected films will be perceived by the non-native learners of Thai?

3.2 *Participants*

Of 21 students who are reading Thai 2: LAT2201 as a foreign language at the Centre for Language Studies of the National University of Singapore, the participants in this study are 10

students whom I meet in class every Friday. They were asked to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. The students enrolled in this course have completed Thai 1 which required them to attend 66 hours of tutorials within one semester. They have quite little background knowledge in Thai language and culture. In this current course of Thai language, the participants are also to meet the same requirement regarding the number of contact hours. The participants consisted of 7 female and 3 male undergraduates, and are from different faculties, ranging from Arts and Social Sciences, Science, Engineering, Business, Law, and Computing. The participants were in their second and third year of university study. Their ages ranged from 18 to 24.

3.3 Method

The instrument for data collection was a list of selected Thai movies. Though the movies are commercial, they were implemented as an authentic material for non-profit and educational purposes. Each participant was asked to choose to watch a Thai movie from the given list and watch it at his or her own time. Upon completed viewing the movie, the participants were asked to write their perceptions of Thai culture learned from the movie. They were allowed to write it in English as it is hoped that they would be able to articulate and express their views better. Also, given the participants' language proficiency, they still lack of expressions to express their views critically in the target language. Having received the participants' write-ups (averagely 1 page long), I have categorized their reflections of Thai culture through Thai films into different themes as demonstrated later in the Findings.

The selected films are:

- "Overture" by Itthisunthorn Wichailak
- "Citizen Dog" by Wisit Sasanathieng
- "My Girl" by Nithiwat Tharaathorn
- "Long June" (name of the protagonist) by Kamol Srisawat
- "Suriyothai" (name of a Thai Queen) by Chaatrichalm Yukhon
- "Mor 8" (secondary school 8) by Yongyoot Phinitphong

Criteria for choosing the movies are as follows:

- availability of the film
- appropriateness in terms of language use, contents, scenes
- English subtitle provided (to suit the learners' language proficiency and to serve the main aim of the study whereby perceptions of Thai culture are to be explored)

3.4 Limitations and remarks on further study

As mentioned earlier, to serve as a tool to trigger the participants' perceptions of the target culture, an appropriate Thai film with English subtitle is needed. Nevertheless, it is quite difficult to find such a good choice. In addition, due to the time constraints, I could not show all selected films to all participants in a common theatre. I also wished to watch a movie with each participant so that we would be able to have a discussion on the culture portrayed right after the show. It is believed that this activity will motivate their interest in the target language and culture even more.

I hope to be able in future to conduct a further study in class whereby all students watch the very same movie excerpt followed by a discussion in Thai language on the target culture perceived through the movie clip.

4 Findings

In attempting to understand the students' perceptions of Thai culture through the selected Thai movies, I have categorized and described my findings into three major themes in which beliefs,

values and patterns of activities or behaviors of Thais have been reflected on. The three themes are life styles, attitudes and characteristics and education.

4.1 *Life styles*

The students have observed a few aspects of Thai life styles from the watched movies. Significantly, the simple life styles of Thais, especially of those who live in the rural area have been portrayed. A student has witnessed how Thai children in the villages spend their time or play with their peers as follows:

We see the simple lives of Thais in their daily dealings. The kids play by the river, with rubber bands etc. perhaps this is the life in Thailand in the village now, or in the cities in the past. It gives us a glimpse of how much globalization has taken place in the cities in Thailand as well. But the simple things in life will still remain the same. This film also gives us a glimpse of the simplicity and innocence in the lives of the children – and it is being portrayed very well. (Student A on “Long June”)

In addition, an awareness of some aspects of lives in a big city has been raised by the students. Drugs, gambling and hectic life styles of Thais living in a big city have been noticed by students as follows:

The movie shows the dangers of city life. From the movie it seems that it is easy to get involved with drugs and gambling as a young person. However, it also shows that these things can be avoided and lives can be changed. (Student A on “Long June”)

In the film, urban Thais in Bangkok are seen rushing and squeezing into the public bus without complaints. The extremeness of such hectic lifestyle is demonstrated when Yod and his girlfriend find pleasure squashed in the bus packed full of hectic urban Thais. This is in contrast to the countryside lifestyle, to which the director portrays Pod’s family ploughing the rice fields in extreme slow motion. (Student I on “Citizen Dog”)

Having seen how Thai children play with their friends through a movie titled “My Girl”, the students have become aware of one reality which seems to happen or be seen everywhere.

... the realities of the world are also shown in the film ... how Jeab actually rejected Noi Nah in order to be part of the other group etc. Aside from the warmth Thais bring, they are not exempted from all these realities as well. (Student B on “My Girl”)

A very heart warming film, and also, it really portrayed the realities in our lives in a very real manner. (Student B on “My Girl”)

Some students who have chosen to watch a historical movie titled “Suriyothai” have perceived the close relationship between Thailand (Siam) and China. One of the dominant aspects which has been noticed is the trade between the two countries and the influence of Chinese arts or products during Ayuthaya period.

... The movie hints at thriving trade between Siam and China, as well as exquisite carvings and gold leaf on almost every piece of furniture portrays a prosperous 16th century Siam with the grandeur of Thai palaces and royal households clearly seen ... (Student E on “Suriyothai”)

A very interesting point which has been perceived through a movie titled “Overture” is adaption of Thais’ life styles to the western culture which has strongly influenced Thailand since the nineties:

Regarding the point about modernization: if I’m not wrong, the high-ranking official in the movie was a real-life military general who was bent on introducing modern, Western culture influences to

Thailand for the sake of advancement. I thought this scene summed the whole idea up: the piano player was playing a funky, jazzy tune while the elderly Thai music Ajarn (teacher) looked on with a "I'm not impressed" expression, but subsequently sat down to accompany the same tune with his ranad-ek. So it was dislike and resistance initially, but this gave way to acceptance and adaptation to suit traditional Thai culture. (Student C on "Overture")

The traditional Thai costumes worn during the period of Ayuthaya kingdom seem to be a prominent, exotic and eye-catching feature of Thai culture to the students. A few comments on the issue are as follows.

Through the movie, one could also observe the way how Thai people are dressed up, which is very different from other countries. (Student F on "Suriyothai")

The film "Suriyothai" provides a glimpse into the life of the people of Siam at that period of time. The first thing that caught my attention is the attire of the women. The traditional costumes, though simple, were in my opinion very elegant. (Student E on "Suriyothai")

An issue significantly associated with Thai culture and Thai life styles which has been perceived through watching the film "Citizen Dog" is migration. The students have been aware of Thais living in the rural areas migrate to a big city of Thailand in quest of career advancement, educational opportunities and ultimately better lives.

... In the movie, both Pod and Jin represent the large proportion of Thais who make up the waves of migration into the city in search of employment and consequently a better life. Along with migration, the movie depicts the reaction that brings from the point of view of different generations of villagers. (Student G on "Citizen Dog")

The movie also portrays the lives of these migrants once they get into the city: their accommodation, standard of living, and their way of life in general. Even though this seemingly simple portrayal of migrant life, elements that are uniquely Thai can easily be sieved out. These include the forms of public transport (such as motorcycle taxi); and the type of employment that these migrants usually take up (e.g. security guards, factory workers, taxi drivers, maids). (Student G on "Citizen Dog")

... Furthermore, the film reflects the older generation of rural folks as apprehensive about the advantages of working in the city. Yet the younger generation of the rural community is drawn towards the city as it represents wealth, better future prospects and modernization, as opposed to the agrarian lifestyle back in the countryside. (Student H on "Citizen Dog")

4.2 Attitudes and characteristics

Typical Thai beliefs and characteristics have been reflected in the students' write ups revealing their awareness of how Thais show high respect to their King and Royal family.

Thai people show great respect for their King. One could observe how the Thai people greet their king. (Student F on "Suriyothai")

... All Thais revere the King ... (Student C on "Overture")

Thai manners have been observed; it is believed that Thais appear reserved, gentle and calm though they are facing chaos, hardships or difficulties.

Another aspect of Thai culture that is very prevalent in the film is the gentleness of the people. Even with the war undertones, everyone was still immensely polite in conversations, slow to anger and raised voices were almost non-existent. (Student E on "Suriyothai")

The movie has affirmed my opinion on Thai as being very polite and soft-spoken. Thais hold a very strong culture where there is a great sense of respect for the people around them, be it their own countrymen or foreigners. It is indeed very impressive and respectable to note that even in this fast-

paced and competitive world, we still have a huge country in South-east Asia that is practicing good manners. (Student J on “Mor 8”)

A gender issue associated with attitudes of Thais towards women’s roles has been pointed out. Through the movie “Suriyothai”, one student learned that Thai women have been holding important roles in supporting the country, society and family. Queen Suriyothai, the protagonist in the movie is just an example figure among other Thai women who have greatly contributed to the country.

... Suriyothai is portrayed as a woman with strong opinions and a great deal of self determination. I was surprised at the amount of freedom that Suriyothai had as a young girl and even after her marriage. Although women had more submissive roles, being able to converse freely with people of the opposite gender other than her family members and even learning to use European weaponry, was an opener. It is hard to imagine the freedom women enjoyed, as a compared to other Asian cultures of that time. (Student E on “Suriyothai”)

... Thai women now have more opportunities to be as successful and as capable as men ... (Student A on “Long June”)

A tendency towards modernization in Thai society was also observed. Though English is a foreign language in Thailand, those who know English are generally regarded as educated, capable and civilized people living their successful lives in cities. And this ideal issue is associated with modernization and westernization.

... Furthermore, it is clear that westernization and the English language have been accepted as the benchmark of modernized Thailand ... (Student H on “Citizen Dog”)

How Thais view the relationship among family members and between teacher and student has been obviously reflected in the students’ discussion. The students have observed that Thais value the sense of unity in a community and relationship in a family through the movies “Long June”, “My Girl” and “Citizen Dog”.

The movie shows that Thais value friendships very much. Long June always tried to protect his friends and his friends would help him in return. This shows a great sense of community spirit among the Thai people. (Student A on “Long June”)

The Thai family is a very important thing in the society. From the movie it shows that Thai value their family relations very much, especially showing respect to their parents. Although Long June was mistreated by his father as a child, he still submitted to his father. Similarly, Ky, although a rebel outside, still tried not to be disrespectful to his father and did not retaliate when being scolded. (Student A on “Long June”)

The show portrayed great family warmth amongst the different family members – in two different ways as well. Jeab’s family takes on the strict approach on disciplining him, in particular his mother. She beats him up when he comes back late, and we see the soft side of his father when his mother does it. On the other hand, family warmth in Noi Nah’s family is different. They take on the soft approach, perhaps because she’s a girl. Though discipline abound, it can be portrayed that the family loves one another and sticks together. This is probably very much like part of the Thai culture on the families. (Student B on “My Girl”)

The underlying moral of the film, also presents to the viewer that there is more to life than superficial material comforts and that **family**, is the basic supporting unit that one can turn to in times of need. (Student I on “Citizen Dog”)

Thais regard teachers as their second parents (as distinct from their biological parents). Hence, it is seen that Thai students pay high respect to and appear humble in front of their teachers.

I thought the teacher-pupil relationship was a big theme in the movie. In the movie Sorn (the protagonist) had to hide the fact that he wanted to play his dead brother's instrument from his father/teacher in the beginning, and after he got really good at it he still had to submit to his father/teacher's instructions to play another less showy instrument during a big showcase to a high-ranking official. I don't know if I got it right, but I thought this showed that pupils had to follow whatever the teacher dictates even if it went against what he really wanted, a somewhat familiar Confucian concept to me. But usually the teacher ends up making the right decision anyway :o) (Student C on "Overture")

... The film reflects the Thai culture of respecting teachers and is shown by the politeness of the girl students whenever they talk to their teachers ... (Student C on "Mor 8")

The sense of hierarchy and how it relates to how respect is shown by, and for, people was raised in some students' reflections. Thais show their sense of respect to whom they are communicating with. How a Thai behaves and expresses oneself in a context depends upon the age and social status of the interlocutor.

Thais are always aware of the difference in status when interacting with one another. This helps them to ensure they show due respect to the people they are communicating with. This definitely helps to create a peaceful atmosphere. (Student J on "Mor 8")

Last, but not least, in regard to the belief of Thais, religious values have been perceived by a few students. In Thai society, more than 90 percent of population are Buddhists. Thais reveal their religious value through their practice in traditions, festivals and ceremonies.

The Thai society practices Buddhism in their lives and Buddhist monks are highly respected. Some of the walls in the buildings are carved with Buddha faces. (Student F on "Suriyothai")

There are several ceremonies in the movies such as the royal marriage and cremation of the queen which is done in the Buddhist way. (Student F on "Suriyothai")

After watching the film, I was made aware of the importance of religion in Thai society. Throughout the film, there was a clear emphasis on reincarnation – an aspect of religious ideology still very relevant in contemporary Thailand. In the film, the reincarnation of the lead actor's grandmother as a lizard allowed the viewer to have a greater understanding of afterlife as perceived by the Thai themselves. This scene created much entertainment yet at the same time relay the importance of karma and Buddhism theology in an unimposing manner. (Student H on "Citizen Dog")

4.3 Education

Generally, it is believed that educated Thais are given more opportunities in terms of career advancement, comfortable life styles and high social status. Teachers in Thailand are highly respected by people in society and apparently educational institutes are regarded as sacred venues to Thais. Hence, Thais strive to complete a secondary school and tertiary education respectively.

In *Mor 8*, the story brings to attention the issue of education, the importance of teachers and the aspect of cultural changes due to foreign influences in Thailand in comparison with early and modern times. The story although almost a comedy, stresses on how the Thais view education to be of utmost importance and also how teachers are a profession revered by the Thais due to the importance of education by the society. (Student D on "Mor 8")

From the movie, I see that Thai students take off their shoes before entering their classrooms. This shows how much they emphasize the importance of cleanliness among the students. Similar to the situation in Singapore, students greet their teachers when he or she comes into the classroom to teach. (Student J on "Mor 8")

I see that the Thai people put great emphasis on the dress code in schools. Unlike here in Singapore where some schools are giving their pupils 'freedom' to express themselves, Thais in the movie

portray a very neat, prim and proper image of the students and even the teachers. Even the teachers, as seen in the movie, wear not too outstanding clothes. Instead, they are deck in almost similar fashion as well as the same color code. This again shows they high amount of respect they have for the learning institution. (Student J on “Mor 8”)

5 Suggestions for teaching implications

It is believed that learners’ increased cultural awareness in relation to the target language helps develop their communicative competence in which linguistic knowledge, interactional skills, and cultural knowledge are involved. In considering films as cultural texts, students are required to express themselves and communicate in activities such as asking questions, giving answers, or discussing what happened in the films which were watched. Classroom-based activities can be designed according to the curriculum, students’ background and knowledge, their level of proficiency, and other related factors to incorporate language learning related to cultural knowledge. Having been introduced to a movie clip or excerpt in a language classroom, students can be asked to describe what happened in the scenario, what happened beforehand or they can even be challenged to predict or guess what will happen afterwards. Students can be asked to expand their description to include reference to specific communities in their own native culture, along with specific products, perspectives, and how individual persons whom they know respond to this practice.

At another stage of the cultural experience, students can be encouraged to use the target language to develop cultural interpretations. The interpretations are based on cultural information elicited or presented during the introduction stage as mentioned above. At this junction, the topics shift from the concrete of description to the abstract of interpretation, from visible culture to invisible culture, from products and practices to perspectives. These functions thus involve inference, hypotheses, substantiation, justification, comparison and contrast, and other forms of langue that link concrete to abstract. At this stage of learning, students can be asked questions like; ‘what cultural attitudes, values, beliefs, or perceptions are explicitly and implicitly portrayed in the shown movie excerpt?’; ‘how might participants in the given scene differ in their perceptions of this event?’; ‘how do distinct communities within the culture differ in their perspectives on certain issues?’; ‘and how do these attitudes, values, beliefs, or perceptions contrast with those of other cultures that you know?’ Students can be asked to provide information about these other cultures to substantiate their comparisons.

Apart from the suggested teaching implications mentioned above, last but not least, it is suggested that learners can be engaged in knowing oneself and self-awareness. In line with the emphasis of this stage, the topic of discussion shifts from the culture to students themselves. The students’ own world becomes the subject matter. Their responses include feelings, opinions, values, beliefs questions, concerns, awareness, intentions, strategies, decisions, or plans that students may formulate as they anticipate further involvement in the cultural phenomenon. To put this approach into practice, students might be asked to respond to the questions, for instance: ‘What thoughts, feelings, or opinions do you have about this cultural phenomenon?’; ‘Describe any personal experiences you have had with this cultural phenomenon.’; ‘Do you share the cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, or perceptions of this cultural phenomenon?’; ‘What more would you like to know or do in regard to this phenomenon?’.

The language of response also involves the language used to illuminate the process of crossing culture, whether this be naming and managing cultural stereotypes, contrasting cultural values, or examining the applicability of models of cultural adaptation to students’ experiences. This can engage students in self-exploration of emotions, beliefs, or values.

6 Concluding remarks

In this paper, “the intrinsic relationship of language and culture” (Saville-Troike, 1996, p. 360) has been significantly emphasized. I have discussed how the cultural knowledge can be integrated

in language learning by having students revealed their perceptions of the target culture through implementation of movies which are considered motivating and culturally fruitful. Through the knowledge and understanding of the target culture gained, it is expected that will be an increase in the students' cultural knowledge and understanding of the target culture which will ultimately develop their appreciation and empathy for the people of this very culture and their way of life. Last, but not least, it is important to state that the gained cultural knowledge not only develops students' language abilities for effective and appropriate communication within cultural contexts of the target language and culture, but also their capacity to engage in intercultural situations, regardless of the cultures involved.

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