CULTURAL IDENTITY FILTERS IN THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Iván Illesfalvi
ELTE University, Hungary

Abstract

Multilingual communities represent melting pots of cultures, a framework within which linguistic, social, political, economic differences are enhanced due to the permanent pressure of co-existence. The ex-British colonies are typical examples of this kind of situation. The English language, one of the most important media of international communication, therefore must be viewed as a vehicle that is carrying multicultural load; consequently, functional language teaching must focus on the cultural complexities hidden behind vocabulary and grammar. The general expectation of language examinations definitely provides evidence at this point, but the question inevitably appears: what kind of information should be considered essential?

The theory of cultural identity-filters argues that pieces of art filter out an amount of, both personal and community, experience of culture. In this sense, literary works are definitely cultural identity-filters that tell us about almost every segment of life. The use of well-chosen pieces of literature in English in course books and in the classroom may greatly contribute to the development of cultural (self-)awareness of language learners by providing them with examples of various cultural scripts, behavioural patterns from different Anglophone cultures. The present paper aims to sketch the layout of a classroom project using poetry to introduce cultural identity.

Key words: Cultural identity filters; Education; Literature.

References


