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The current study seeks to investigate teachers and students perceptions on the cultural dimension of language teaching and learning and some of the classroom practices present. The research approach is shaped by constructivism, which mainly asserts that reality is socially constructed. The research focuses on the way culture shapes the different aspects of teaching language in the classroom.
The epistemology of the study takes an objectivist approach with the analyzing and provision of data, which is tabulated in tables. The study assumes that culture affects or influences the perceptions of classroom practices by teachers and affects the priorities and views of the EFL students. Experimentation is evident as data is collected through various data collection methods such as questionnaires and interviews. Reliability in the study is ensured using a systematic observation scheme, which relies on a certain criteria that included goals, input, tasks, student role teacher role and kind of task. From a student’s perspective, different students can have different notions of epistemologies based on their different cultures. Similar, teachers may have different perceptive on the influence and need to incorporate culture in language classrooms.
Results from the study seem to be in line with some facts from previous studies; for instance, teachers view on preferring language teaching to culture teaching is evident. However, based on culture aspect touching on constructivism, basing culture teaching to a facts-based approach ignores that culture is a social construct.
The study indicates that the findings of the study are hard to generalize because of the limited number of participants. However, the authors claim that the study offers new insights into the teacher and student perceptions in the classroom. For most of the Vietnamese EFL teachers and students, culture teaching is inferior in the classroom as their cultural dimension of language teaching and learning already socially constructs most of their perceptions.
Implications for EFL education include the need to include culture in the goals of every lesson. Additionally, it is important to reduce language barriers. This may be done by approaching and incorporating culture in a simple way approach that involves things such as language use in daily life in the form of greetings and normal conversation. Then once they become accustomed to the normal form of English communications; they can be introduced to more complex and higher levels of language proficiency.
The study was done by Ho Si Thang Kiet, PhD Candidate in Applied linguistics, in the School of linguistics and Applied Language studies at the University of Wellington.