

Cultural Stereotypes in EFL Classrooms and Their Implications on English Language Procedures in Cameroon

Authors : Eric Enongene Ekembe

Abstract : Recent calls on EFL teaching posit the centrality of context factors and argue for a correlation between effectiveness in teaching with the learners' culture in the EFL classroom. Context is not everything; it is defined with indicators of learners' cultural artifacts and stereotypes in meaningful interactions in the language classroom. In keeping with this, it is difficult to universalise pedagogic procedures given that appropriate procedures are context-sensitive- and contexts differ. It is necessary to investigate what counts as cultural specificities or stereotypes of specific learners to reflect on how different language learning contexts affect or are affected by English language teaching procedures, most especially in under-represented cultures, which have appropriated the English language. This paper investigates cultural stereotypes of EFL learners in the culturally diverse Cameroon to examine how they mediate teaching and learning. Data collected on mixed-method basis from 83 EFL teachers and 1321 learners in Cameroon reveal a strong presence of typical cultural artifacts and stereotypes. Statistical analysis and thematic coding demonstrate that teaching procedures in place were insensitive to the cultural artifacts and stereotypes, resulting in trending tension between teachers and learners. The data equally reveal a serious contradiction between the communicative goals of language teaching and learning: what teachers held as effective teaching was diametrically opposed to success in learning. In keeping with this, the paper argues for a 'decentred' teacher preparation in Cameroon that is informed by systemic learners' feedback. On this basis, applied linguistics has the urgent task of exploring dimensions of what actually counts as contextualized practice in ELT.

Keywords : cultural stereotypes, EFL, implications, procedures

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