



انجمن علمی آموزش زبان انگلیسی
دانشگاه هرمزگان

Language & CULTURE

نشریه شماره 1 انجمن زبان انگلیسی دانشگاه هرمزگان



دبیر انجمن: سیده زهرا موسوی

سر دبیر نشریه: مبین سلیمی پور

هیئت تحریریه: نسترن کهزاد

آزاده علی زاده

فرزانه ملائی

مبین سلیمی پور

سیده زهرا موسوی

ریشه ضرب المثل ها 8

1 سرمقاله

13 زبان بدن

2 مقاله

13 میم ها

4 مصاحبه

Lg Alter Ego 20





Editorial

Language and culture are closely linked; they cannot be separated. Communication carries culture, reflecting history, values, and beliefs. Studies of this connection date back to the 18th century, with scholars like Wilhelm von Humboldt noting how language influences thought and cultural perspectives, a concept tied to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. It's similar to the chicken-or-egg question, but here, they likely emerged together. Building on that foundation, culture plays a key role in identity, especially through language. It shapes our sense of self and place in the world, affecting language use from vocabulary and grammar to pronunciation. For example, Colombian Spanish uses diminutives like "ito" to express affection, or consider "hygge" (a Danish word for a quality of cosiness), without cultural context, it's hard to grasp, much like metaphors and proverbs that stem from specific experiences. Kinship terms illustrate this well: "Uncle" can vary across cultures, combining literal meanings with social practices. Culture integrates deeply into language, making expressions unique to different societies.

This leads to the way language and culture evolve together in complex ways, where a change in one often leads to shifts in the other. Linguistic relativity, from thinkers like Boas and Whorf, suggests languages guide thought patterns, such as perceptions of space or time, without fully determining them. Cultural influences appear in body-based metaphors, like the Chinese view of the heart as the "ruler of the body," or in varying color categories that show no universal standard. Body language adds another layer to it like a thumbs-up can be positive in some places but offensive in others.

This interaction is mutual. Language preserves culture, while culture adapts language, as in World Englishes where English adjusts to local norms, now sped by social media's slang. Recognizing these dynamics highlights why language is a cultural heritage worth protecting to maintain traditions. Losing it can erase patterns and emotional subtleties. In intercultural communication, understanding this link reduces misunderstandings; in second-language learning, it builds hybrid identities. Raising awareness of this connection offers practical benefits, like improved global discussions. With dialects disappearing, preservation goes beyond academics. Without language variety, we lose the diverse elements that enrich human identity. This relationship is broad and multifaceted, shaping how we understand ourselves. Areas like Cultural Linguistics continue to explore it, connecting fields for new insights.

As of 2025, recent developments emphasize multilingual education's role in unlocking learning and inclusion, with UNESCO advocating for mother tongue integration amid globalization. Ultimately, delving into the dynamic fusion of language and culture through emerging frameworks promises to illuminate the depths of human cognition and collective evolution.

Ref:

Sharifian, F. (Ed.). (2015). The Routledge handbook of language and culture. Routledge.
Anastasia. (2024, October 13). The language-culture connection: How words shape our identity. Medium.

<https://medium.com/@anastasia22/title-the-language-culture-connection-how-words-shape-our-identity-3c1578a8ba94>

Article

What is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis?

It's named after American linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, two individuals who came to a near conclusion, leading later researchers to join together their ideas under the same banner: the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

This hypothesis is played out in the exciting movie *Arrival*, and proposes that our perception of reality is shaped by the languages we speak. In essence, it says that there is a direct relationship between the structure of a language and the cognitive processes of the speaker,

implying that our thought processes and worldviews are determined or are significantly influenced by language.

This would mean that if you speak English, you think differently than someone who speaks Mandarin or someone who speaks Persian. This hypothesis has spurred a plethora of arguments, creating a divide, if you will, among researchers in the field, so it's worth unpacking.

These arguments have gone back and forth for thousands of years. Charlemagne, Holy Roman emperor, said, "To have a second language is to have a second soul".

A strong statement that shows language crafts reality. On the other hand, Shakespeare has Juliet say,

"What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

" Well, that suggests that maybe language doesn't craft reality. (Though, let's be honest, if roses were called "stinkweeds," we might not be so eager to stop and smell them in the first place.)

Actually, the hypothesis comes in two flavors: a strong version, often called 'linguistic determinism,' and a weaker version, known as 'linguistic relativity.'

Linguistic Determinism: This strong version, more associated with Whorf, argues that language determines thoughts. In other words, the language you speak sets the boundaries for what you can think about, like trying to imagine a color you've never seen, but on a cognitive level.

Linguistic Relativity: The milder take suggests that language influences thoughts rather than dictating them entirely. It's like language giving your brain a gentle nudge in certain directions, not a full-on shove. To illustrate, consider the Hopi people in the American Southwest. They don't have tenses for past, present, or future, and instead, divide time into manifested (what's real and objective) and unmanifest (mental and subjective). You would say something like, "It rained" without specifying when, treating time as a continuous process rather than discrete units.

The way that you greet someone in Hopi might involve acknowledging the cycle of events rather than pinning them to a calendar. People who speak languages like this perceive time really well, probably better than most of us who rely on reminders and still forget important dates.

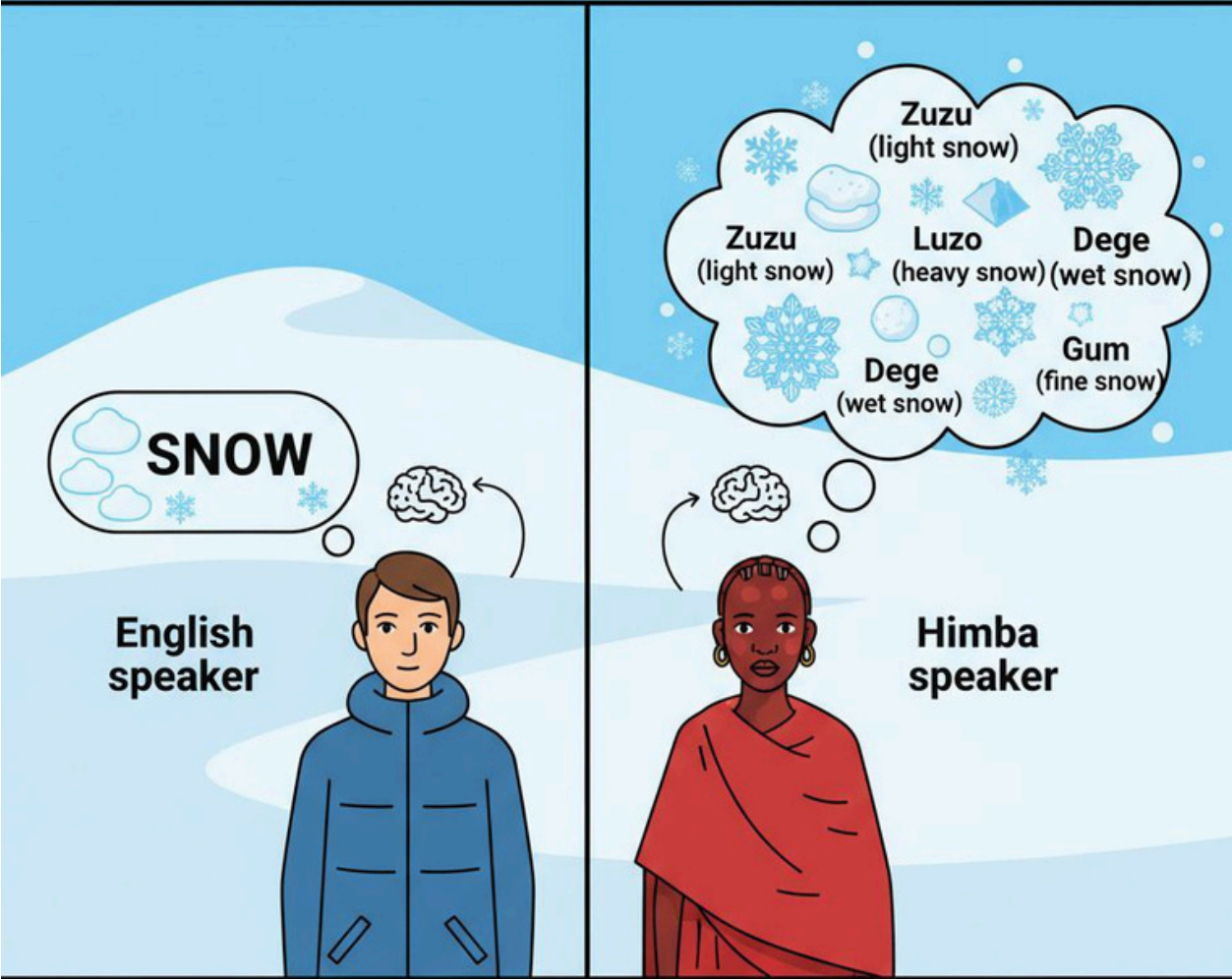
Another example: Some languages don't have exact number words beyond "five," like the Mundurucu in the Amazon. People who speak these languages approximate quantities but have trouble with exact counting beyond small numbers. If I ask you to match this number of

penguins to the same number of ducks, you would be able to do that by counting. But folks who don't have that linguistic trait can't do that precisely for larger sets.

In Himba, spoken by a Namibian tribe, there is no separate word for blue. They lump it with green under one term, but have multiple terms for shades of green. Himba speakers have this lifetime of experience of, in language, not distinguishing blue from green. Himba speakers are slower across this linguistic boundary. They're slower to be able to tell the difference between blue and green. But they can distinguish subtle shades of green that look identical to us. The brains of people who use different words for certain colors will give a surprised reaction as the colors shift across categories. Grammatical gender plays a role too. The bridge is feminine in German but masculine in Spanish, and the moon, the reverse. If you ask German and Spanish speakers to describe a bridge, German speakers are more likely to say bridges are "beautiful," "elegant" and stereotypically feminine words. Whereas Spanish speakers will be more likely to say they're "strong" or "long," these masculine words.

All in all, language can have big effects, like with space and time, where people can lay out space and time in completely different coordinate frames. Language can have really deep effects, like with number words opening up mathematics. Language can have really early effects, like with color perception. Language can have really broad effects, like with grammatical gender applying to all nouns. Language can shape things that have personal weight, like blame and punishment or eyewitness memory.

Sapir-Whorf Hypotesis: Same World, Different Languages



Language doesn't just describe reality. It shapes how we perceive it.

“Language is neither a prison nor a passive medium”

Language is neither a prison nor a passive medium; it is a tool that mediates our interaction with the world. The nuances of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis encourage us to explore how language, thought, and culture interact in complex and dynamic ways. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis continues to inspire debate and research, evolving as new methods and data emerge.

It challenges us to reconsider the power of language in shaping human experience, urging us to question whether the way we speak molds the way we think or vice versa. By bridging linguistics, psychology, and philosophy, this hypothesis enriches our understanding of the human condition, reminding us that the words we use are not merely tools of communication but windows into the mind and mirrors of culture.

REF:

Nielson, K. (2024, September 1). What is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis? Medium. <https://medium.com/@kyl enielson/what-is-the-sapir-whorf-hypothesis-94cac523143a>

NThomas, K. (2024, November 27). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: A comprehensive exploration of linguistic relativity and determinism. Medium. <https://medium.com/visio nary-currents/the-sapir-whorf-hypothesis-a-comprehensive-explorat ion-of-linguistic-relativity-and-determinism-af8293f8c14a>

University of Missouri–St. Louis, College of Education. (2019, November 30). Chapter 4: Linguistic relativity (Sapir-Whorf hypothesis). In Introduction to linguistics (OER textbook). <https://irl.umsl.edu/oer/13/>

Zhou, X. (2023). Language and the mind: How language shapes our thinking. *Journal of World Languages*, 9(3), 505–529. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2023-0018>

مصاحبه با عضو هیئت علمی گروه آموزش زبان انگلیسی دانشگاه هرمزگان

1. شوک فرهنگی چیست و چرا برای زبان آموزان رایج است؟

شوک فرهنگی حالتی از ناهماهنگی شناختی اجتماعی است که فرد هنگام مواجهه با الگوهای متفاوت معنا، رفتار، ارزش‌ها و انتظارات ارتباطی تجربه می‌کند. اگر از دیدگاه پیازه به قضیه بنگریم، شوک فرهنگی نتیجه برخورد رفتارها و عادت‌ها و بیان‌های تثبیت شده زبان آموز با واقعیت جدید است؛ یعنی تعارض بین همانند سازی (assimilation) و هماهنگ سازی (accommodation). از منظر ویگوتسکی، شوک فرهنگی زمانی رخ می‌دهد که فرد وارد اجتماع گفتمانی جدید می‌شود اما هنوز ابزارهای فرهنگی زبانی لازم برای مشارکت معنادار در آن را کسب نکرده است. در نتیجه شوک فرهنگی برای زبان آموزان رایج است زیرا یادگیری زبان، ورود به یک نظم اجتماعی فرهنگی تازه است، نه صرفاً یادگیری واژگان و دستور یا زبان محض.

2. معمولاً زبان آموزان در کدام مرحله از آموزش بیشترین احتمال تجربه شوک فرهنگی را دارند؟

شوک فرهنگی معمولاً در سه نقطه حساس یادگیری رخ می‌دهد: اول مرحله گذار از یادگیری زبانی به تعامل واقعی که در آن زبان آموز برای نخستین بار با گفتار طبیعی و قواعد نانوشته‌ی ارتباطی مواجه می‌شود؛ دوم مرحله‌ی آغاز تعاملات بین فرهنگی پیچیده که نیازمند تفسیر نشانه‌های اجتماعی مانند لحن، سکوت، شوخی و فاصله فیزیکی است؛ و سوم مرحله‌ی ورود به موقعیت‌های پرریسک مانند ارائه بحث گروهی یا مکالمه با افراد بومی. در هر سه مرحله، عادت‌ها و رفتارهای شناختی تثبیت شده فراگیر با واقعیت فرهنگی جدید در تعارض قرار می‌گیرد و او بدون میانجی‌گری و راهنمایی کافی هنوز توان مشارکت مستقل در جامعه گفتمانی جدید را ندارد. به همین دلیل، بنظر شدت تجربه شوک فرهنگی دقیقاً در این نقاط بیشترین مقدار را دارد.

3. شما در تجربه‌های آموزشی خود، با چه نمونه‌هایی از شوک فرهنگی در زبان آموزان مواجه شده‌اید؟

در تجربه هایم، شوک فرهنگی زبان آموزان معمولاً زمانی رخ می‌دهد که همزمان با چند لایه از انتظارات و هنجارهای ناآشنا مواجه می‌شوند. بخش مهمی از این شوک از حجم بالای مطالب، دشواری سطح درک متون و فعالیت‌ها، و انتظار آماده بودن جلسه به جلسه برای بحث، ارائه یا پاسخ‌گویی دقیق ناشی می‌شود. بسیاری از زبان آموزان نیز در برخورد با صدا زده شدن ناگهانی، صحبت کردن در جمع، قرار گرفتن زیر نگاه دیگران و دریافت بازخوردهای صریح دچار تنش و عقب نشینی می‌شوند. در کنار این‌ها، کار گروهی دختر و پسر، مدیریت نقش‌ها، هماهنگ شدن با سبک‌های متفاوت هم گروهی‌ها، مدیریت تعارض‌های کوچک، و انجام کارها در زمان فشرده کلاس برای بسیاری از دانشجویان یک مواجهه کاملاً تازه و گاه شوک آور است. تفاوت در سطح صراحت ارتباطی، رابطه برابرتر استاد و دانشجو، تماس چشمی مستقیم، شوخی‌های فرهنگی، و سخت‌گیری در مدیریت زمان نیز لایه‌های دیگری از این تجربه را شکل می‌دهد. این مجموعه عوامل معمولاً به شکل سکوت ناگهانی، کاهش مشارکت، اضطراب، تعارض‌های خرد گروهی، انفعال لحظه‌ای، یا احساس ناتوانی در مدیریت زمان و وظایف بروز می‌کند؛ این وضعیت نمونه تصویری است از شوک فرهنگی در کلاس‌های زبان

در این شماره از نشریه، به موضوعی می‌پردازیم که بسیاری از زبان‌آموزان و حتی مدرسان با آن روبه‌رو می‌شوند: شوک فرهنگی. این پدیده نه تنها بر یادگیری زبان تأثیر می‌گذارد، بلکه می‌تواند تجربه ارتباطی افراد را در موقعیت‌های واقعی دگرگون کند. برای بررسی ابعاد مختلف این موضوع، گفت‌وگویی انجام دادیم با یکی از متخصصان برجسته حوزه آموزش زبان انگلیسی.

دکتر سید محمدعلی سوزنده‌فر، عضو هیأت علمی دانشگاه هرمزگان و پژوهشگر برجسته حوزه آموزش زبان انگلیسی است. ایشان هر سه مقطع کارشناسی، ارشد و دکتری را در دانشگاه شیراز با عنوان «دانشجوی ممتاز» گذرانده‌اند و رساله دکتری‌شان در زمینه هویت حرفه‌ای معلم از پژوهش‌های تأثیرگذار این حوزه به شمار می‌رود. دکتر سوزنده‌فر نویسنده دو کتاب تخصصی و بیش از ۳۰ مقاله علمی در نشریات داخلی و بین‌المللی است. حوزه تخصصی او تربیت مدرس (Teacher Education) است و در موضوعاتی چون ارزیابی پویا، روان‌شناسی مثبت، توانش بین‌فرهنگی، نظریه پیچیدگی و توسعه حرفه‌ای معلمان فعالیت‌های علمی شاخصی دارد. ایشان از سال ۱۳۸۶ به تدریس اشتغال دارند و علاوه بر آموزش در مقاطع مختلف، در طراحی برنامه‌های درسی، هدایت پژوهش‌های میان‌رشته‌ای و ارتقای کیفیت تدریس نیز نقش فعالی داشته‌اند.

۴. فکر می‌کنید کدام مولفه‌ها یا عوامل بیشترین نقش را در تجربه شوک فرهنگی برای زبان‌آموزان دارند؟

بنظر من این عوامل را می‌توان به چند دسته اصلی تقسیم کرد:

۱. عوامل آموزشی و محتوایی

۲. عوامل رفتاری و تعاملی

۳. عوامل گروهی و مشارکتی

۴. عوامل فرهنگی و اجتماعی

مثال‌هایی را که در پاسخ به سوال ۳ عرض کردم، میتوان در این ۴ دسته طبقه بندی کرد

۵. شما چه راهکارهایی را برای کاهش یا مدیریت شوک فرهنگی در کلاس‌های زبان پیشنهاد می‌کنید؟

برای کاهش یا مدیریت شوک فرهنگی در زبان آموزان، می‌توان چند راهکار عملی و همزمان پیشگیرانه و حمایتی به کار برد:

۱. آشنایی تدریجی با محیط و انتظارات کلاس: ارائه توضیح روشن درباره حجم مطالب، شیوه ارزیابی، وظایف گروهی و فردی، و سبک تعامل استاد و دانشجو قبل از شروع فعالیت‌ها.

۲. ایجاد فضای ایمن و حمایت کننده: تشویق به پرسش، پذیرش اشتباه به عنوان بخشی از یادگیری، و ارائه بازخورد سازنده و مثبت به جای صرفاً نقد صریح.

۳. تقسیم وظایف و مدیریت زمان: برنامه ریزی فعالیت‌های گروهی با زمان بندی مشخص، تعیین نقش‌های روشن برای اعضای گروه، و تمرین مهارت‌های مدیریت گروه و زمان به صورت مرحله‌ای.

۴. تمرین تعاملات فرهنگی: شبیه سازی موقعیت‌های واقعی تعامل، تمرین صحبت در جمع به صورت تدریجی، و ارائه نکات رفتاری و فرهنگی مرتبط با کلاس یا جامعه مقصد.

۵. پشتیبانی روان شناختی و تقویت اعتماد به نفس: استفاده از فعالیت‌های کوچک موفقیت آفرین، بازخورد فردی حمایتی، و ایجاد فرصت برای تجربه موفقیت در فعالیت‌های گروهی و فردی.

۶. ارزیابی هفتگی فعالیت‌های کلاسی: طراحی جدول ارزیابی هفتگی که آمادگی جلسه، مشارکت در کلاس، کیفیت کار فردی، مشارکت در کار گروهی، مدیریت زمان، و بازخوردهای فردی را شامل شود. این کار باعث می شود دانش آموزان به تدریج با انتظارات کلاس آشنا شوند، پیشرفتشان پیگیری شود و بازخورد هدفمند دریافت کنند.

با اجرای همزمان این راهکارها، زبان‌آموزان می توانند اضطراب خود را کاهش دهند، اعتماد به نفس بیشتری پیدا کنند، و مشارکت مؤثر و سازنده‌ای در کلاس داشته باشند.

۶. یک معلم زبان در کلاس چه کارهایی می‌تواند انجام دهد تا شوک فرهنگی زبان‌آموزان کمتر شود؟

بنظر من یک معلم زبان می‌تواند با مجموعه ای از اقدامات آموزشی، ارتباطی و مدیریتی، شدت شوک فرهنگی را به طور قابل توجهی کاهش دهد. مهم ترین کارهایی که نقش مستقیم و مؤثر دارند عبارت اند از:

شفاف سازی انتظارات از همان جلسه اول: توضیح روشن درباره حجم کار، شیوه ارزیابی، نوع فعالیت‌ها، نحوه ارائه‌ها، میزان مشارکت مورد انتظار و قواعد تعامل. این شفاف سازی سطح ابهام را کم و امنیت روانی را بیشتر می‌کند.

ایجاد فضای امن برای اشتباه و پرسشگری: پذیرش اشتباه به عنوان بخشی از یادگیری، تحسین تلاش به جای قضاوت، استفاده از بازخوردهای ملایم و سازنده، و پرهیز از صدا زدن ناگهانی و چالش برانگیز در مراحل اولیه.

تسهیل تدریجی تعاملات اجتماعی و بین فرهنگی: شروع فعالیت‌ها از جفت‌های کوچک، سپس گروه های همجنس، و بعد گروه‌های مختلط، تا دانشجویان بدون فشار ناگهانی وارد تعامل شوند. این روند تدریجی اضطراب را کاهش می‌دهد.

طراحی فعالیت‌های قابل مدیریت با زمان مشخص: تعیین نقش ها در کار گروهی، تقسیم وظایف به بخش‌های کوچک، نظارت بر هماهنگی گروه‌ها و آموزش مهارت‌های مدیریت زمان و ارتباط گروهی.

حساسیت فرهنگی در رفتار و بازخورد: توجه به حریم شخصی، تماس چشمی، شوخی‌های فرهنگی، و سبک‌های ارتباطی. استاد می‌تواند با توضیح کوتاه درباره این تفاوت‌ها از ایجاد سوء تفاهم جلوگیری کند. استفاده از جدول ارزیابی هفتگی فعالیت کلاسی: تدوین جدول مشخص برای آمادگی، مشارکت، کیفیت کار فردی، نقش در گروه، مدیریت زمان و بازخورد باعث می‌شود دانشجو بداند دقیقاً از او چه انتظاری وجود دارد و پیشرفت‌ش چگونه سنجیده می‌شود. این شفافیت، منبع اصلی کاهش شوک فرهنگی است. تقویت اعتماد به نفس با فعالیت‌های کوچک موفقیت آفرین: ارائه فرصت‌هایی برای موفقیت‌های کوتاه مدت، مثل ارائه‌های ۳۰ ثانیه‌ای، فعالیت‌های دو نفره، یا پاسخ‌های کوتاه، به دانشجو کمک می‌کند از حالت دفاعی بیرون بیاید و جای خودش را در کلاس پیدا کند. در مجموع، نقش معلم نه فقط انتقال زبان، بلکه مدیریت تجربه فرهنگی دانشجو است! تجربه‌ای که اگر درست هدایت شود، یادگیری زبان را عمیق‌تر، پایدارتر و لذت بخش‌تر می‌کند.

۷. چه فعالیت‌هایی برای تقویت آگاهی فرهنگی پیشنهاد می‌کنید؟

برای تقویت آگاهی فرهنگی در کلاس زبان، می‌توان مجموعه‌ای ترکیبی از فعالیت‌های تعاملی و تجربه محور به کار گرفت که به دانشجویان کمک می‌کند تفاوت‌های فرهنگی را ببینند، تحلیل کنند و در عمل مدیریت کنند.

نخستین دسته فعالیت‌ها، فعالیت‌های مبتنی بر Task-Based Learning است. در این روش، دانشجویان با انجام تکالیف واقعی مانند طراحی راهنمای بقا برای ورود به یک فرهنگ یا تحلیل موقعیت‌های سوء تفاهم فرهنگی، به شکل طبیعی و کاربردی با قواعد پنهان فرهنگ‌ها آشنا می‌شوند. چنین وظایفی به دانشجو اجازه می‌دهد فرهنگ را نه در قالب حفظ کردنی، بلکه به صورت یک مهارت عملی تجربه کند.

در کنار آن، role-play های فرهنگی نقش بسیار مؤثری دارند. با بازآفرینی موقعیت‌هایی مثل درخواست مؤدبانه، ارائه بازخورد، مدیریت تعارض، کار گروهی دختر-پسر یا مواجهه با مستقیم‌گویی و غیرمستقیم‌گویی، دانشجویان یاد می‌گیرند رفتار ارتباطی خود را مطابق با انتظارات فرهنگی طرف مقابل تنظیم کنند. این روش، یکی از بهترین شیوه‌ها برای کاهش شوک فرهنگی است زیرا تمرین مواجهه را بدون پیامد واقعی امکان پذیر می‌کند.

استفاده از authentic materials نیز به شکل چشمگیری آگاهی فرهنگی را تقویت می‌کند. مشاهده کلیپ‌ها، مصاحبه‌ها و تعاملات واقعی به زبان مقصد، فرصت مناسبی برای تحلیل عناصر نهفته ای مثل لحن، زبان بدن، فاصله اجتماعی و قواعد ضمنی ارتباط است. فعالیت‌های مقایسه‌ای نیز در این مرحله مفیدند؛ به گونه‌ای که دانشجویان رفتارهای رایج در فرهنگ خود را با رفتارهای فرهنگ مقصد در موقعیت‌های مشابه مقایسه می‌کنند و درک دقیق‌تری از منبع سوء تفاهم‌ها به دست می‌آورند.

علاوه بر این‌ها، فعالیت‌های تحلیلی مانند Cultural Incident Analysis و پروژه‌های کوچک قوم‌نگاری (Mini Ethnography) دانشجویان را به مشاهده دقیق‌تر و تحلیل گرانه‌تر دعوت می‌کند. آن‌ها در این فعالیت‌ها یک رفتار واقعی را مشاهده، توصیف و تفسیر می‌کنند و برای سوء تفاهم‌های احتمالی راه حل ارائه می‌دهند. این فرآیند، مهارت تفکر میان فرهنگی را تقویت می‌کند.

در نهایت، فعالیت‌های تولید محتوا، از ساخت ویدیوهای کوتاه درباره باید‌ها و نباید‌های فرهنگی گرفته تا نوشتن ایمیل در دو نسخه بومی و مقصد، به دانشجویان کمک می‌کند در عمل تفاوت‌های فرهنگی را بازنمایی و تمرین کنند. همچنین دعوت از مهمانان بین‌المللی یا استفاده از گفت و گوهای واقعی ضبط شده، تماس مستقیم دانشجویان با واقعیت‌های فرهنگی را امکان پذیر می‌سازد.

چنین مجموعه‌ای از فعالیت‌ها در کنار هم باعث می‌شود آگاهی فرهنگی نه به عنوان یک درس تئوریک، بلکه به عنوان یک توانایی کاربردی و زیسته در ذهن و رفتار یادگیرندگان نهادینه شود.

۸. آیا تجربه شخصی از مواجهه با تفاوت فرهنگی دارید که روی شیوه تدریس‌تان اثر گذاشته باشد؟

بله! بنظرم تجربه های شخصی من از مواجهه با تفاوت های فرهنگی تأثیر مستقیم و عمیقی بر شیوه تدریس گذاشته است.

نخستین تجربه زمانی بود که در یک موقعیت آموزشی بین فرهنگی متوجه شدم بسیاری از رفتارهایی که ما در کلاس طبیعی می‌دانیم، مثل مستقیم گویی، سرعت صحبت، نگاه کردن طولانی در چشم مخاطب، یا حتی نحوه ارائه بازخورد، در فرهنگ های دیگر می‌تواند کاملاً متفاوت معنا شود. برای مثال، رفتاری که ما آن را صراحت و صداقت تلقی می‌کنیم، در برخی فرهنگ ها نوعی بی ادبی تلقی می‌شود و برعکس، سکوت و احتیاط که در فرهنگ ما نشانه احترام است، در برخی محیط‌های بین‌المللی به عنوان عدم مشارکت برداشت می‌شود. این تجربه به من یاد داد که رفتار ارتباطی همیشه از درون یک نظام ارزشی و هنجاری تفسیر می‌شود، نه از درون نیت فرد.

تجربه مهم دیگر زمانی اتفاق افتاد که خود من به‌عنوان یادگیرنده در یک کلاس چند فرهنگی شرکت کردم. متوجه شدم فشار روانی صحبت کردن در برابر جمع، مدیریت زمان در کارهای گروهی، و هماهنگی با سبک های ارتباطی متفاوت چقدر می‌تواند پرتنش باشد. همین تجربه باعث شد در کلاس‌هایم روندی تدریجی برای تعاملات طراحی کنم؛ از فعالیت های دو نفره شروع کنم، گروه‌ها را مرحله به مرحله از هم جنس به مختلط برسانم، حجم کار را در جلسات ابتدایی سبک کنم، و برای دانشجویان فرصت تنظیم تدریجی فراهم کنم.

همچنین تجربه مواجهه با سوء تفاهم‌های فرهنگی، مثلاً در ارتباطات ایمیلی، در زمان بندی، یا در برداشت از شوخی، به من نشان داد که بیشتر سوء برداشت ها از نبود آگاهی نسبت به قواعد ضمنی فرهنگ مقابل ناشی می‌شود، نه از بدخواهی یا بی‌احترامی. این فهم باعث شد در تدریس بیشتر از قبل بر تحلیل رفتار، مشاهده هدایت شده، و تمرین‌های نقش آفرینی مبتنی بر موقعیت تأکید کنم.

در مجموع، تجربه‌های شخصی‌ام به من آموخت که تدریس زبان بدون توجه به ابعاد فرهنگی‌اش ناقص است و معلم باید نه فقط انتقال دهنده زبان، بلکه تسهیل گر عبور یادگیرنده از فاصله فرهنگی باشد؛ فاصله ای که اگر دیده و مدیریت شود، یادگیری را چند برابر ثمربخش تر می‌کند.

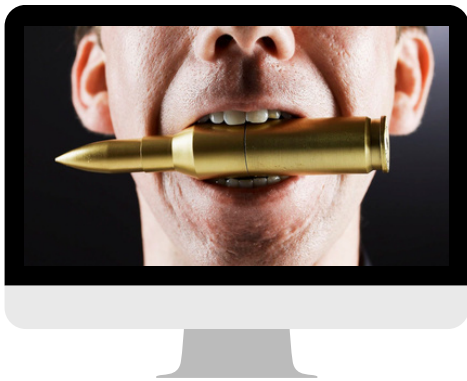
آنچه از این گفت‌وگو به دست می‌آید این است که شوک فرهنگی بخشی طبیعی و جدایی‌ناپذیر از یادگیری زبان است؛ نه نشانه ضعف زبان‌آموز. با این حال، نقش معلم در مدیریت و هدایت این تجربه بسیار تعیین‌کننده است.

با شفاف‌سازی انتظارات، ایجاد فضای امن، تمرین موقعیت‌های واقعی و توجه به تفاوت‌های فرهنگی، می‌توان این شوک را به یک «فرصت یادگیری عمیق» تبدیل کرد. دیدگاه‌های دکتر سوزنده‌فر نشان می‌دهد که آموزش زبان بدون توجه به لایه‌های فرهنگی‌اش کامل نیست؛ زیرا یادگیری زبان، یادگیری چگونه بودن و چگونه تعامل کردن در یک فضای فرهنگی جدید است.

Roots of idioms

There are moments in life when you have to "bite the bullet." You might wonder, "Bite the bullet? How can I chew or crush something as hard and metallic as a bullet?" Well, it's not about using your teeth to crush or chew the bullet. "Biting the bullet" is an idiom, just like thousands of idioms that we use in our daily lives, and it doesn't carry its literal meaning. Take the idiom "bee's knees" as an example. Imagine you've just received a promotion at work, and your boss congratulates you by saying that you are "the bee's knees." You might find yourself confused—what do bees have to do with my promotion? Today, we've selected six idioms to explore together. But before we dive into their meanings and origins, let me ask a question: Have you ever thought about where idioms come from?

1. Bite the Bullet:



The first recorded usage of this idiom goes back to 1891 in a novel called *Light and Failed*. It is believed that in the past, when there was no anesthetic, patients used to clench a bullet between their teeth to endure the extreme pain they felt during medical surgeries. So painful, right? It is also believed that this expression evolved from a British Empire expression, "to bite the cartridge," which refers to the Indian Rebellion of 1857; these two expressions have the same meaning. Now, with all these explanations, can you guess the meaning? Wait, don't cheat. Think first and then see if you were correct or not. The meaning is to endure something difficult or unpleasant.

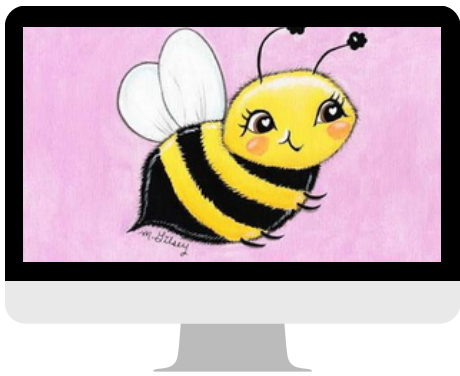


2. Caught Red-Handed:

To find out the meaning of this idiom, we need to get in our time machine and travel back to Scotland in 1432. At that time, there was an old English law stating that any person who butchered an animal that didn't belong to him would face punishment. You may ask how they found out who was guilty. It's simple: by catching them red-handed with blood on their hands. Have you ever been caught red-handed?

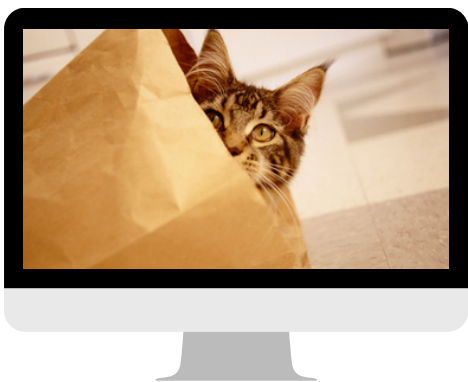
Roots of idioms

3. Bee's Knees:



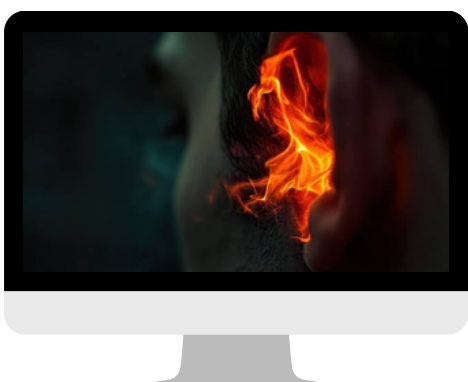
Let me first state the meaning. This idiom refers to someone or something that is outstandingly good or perfect—just like your perfect romantic relationship. (That relationship is not the bee's knees; break up for God's sake.) Its origin is in 1920s America, where there was a trend involving the pairing of an animal with a body part. For instance, elephant's adenoids, cat's miaow, ant's pants, tiger's spots, elephant's wrist, eel's ankles, and bullfrog's beard, just to name a few. As time has passed, many of these idioms have been forgotten, and only a few have been remembered. Can you make an example using this idiom?

4. Let the Cat Out of the Bag



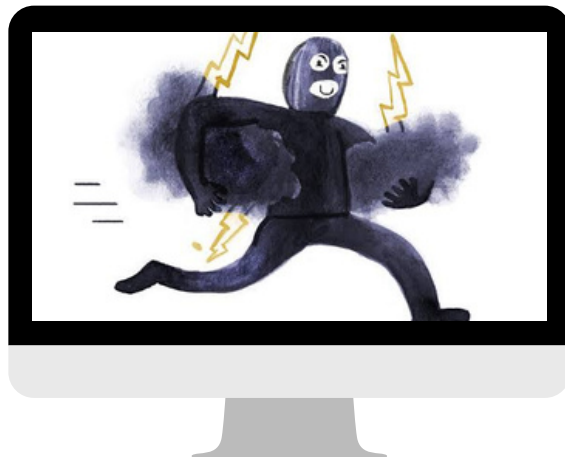
Raise your hand if you are a cat person. I, like thousands of other people who adore cats, had to choose this idiom. The meaning is to divulge a secret. In the 16th century, there was a farmer who committed fraud. Can you guess what he did? He tried to sell a cat instead of a pig by putting the cat inside a bag and telling the buyer it was a pig. Did the buyer find out? There is no record of that, but the deceit would have been uncovered if someone had let the cat out of the bag.

5. Burning Ears



Buckle up your seatbelt because we are headed to Roman times. Have you ever been the subject of gossip? Romans believed that whenever someone was talked about, a tingling or burning sensation in his or her ears would occur. They also believed that if a person's right ear was burning, then he was being praised (since the right hand signifies good), but a burning left ear indicated that he was the subject of evil intent (because the left hand signified evil). So next time you feel a tingling sensation in your ear, remember this idiom.

Roots of idioms



6. Steal One's Thunder

Are you familiar with John Dennis, an 18th-century playwright? According to his claim, he invented a device to create the sound of thunder for use in his theater production, *Appius and Virginia*, in London in 1704. Later, due to this method being copied and stolen by his rivals, he complained that they had 'stolen his thunder.'

So I guess the meaning is obvious: stealing other people's ideas and achievements and getting praised for it. Have you ever done that?

And that's all the idioms we have covered.

I hope you all enjoyed it as much as I did while writing this.

Source: The Intrepid Guide <https://share.google/wz4RMiTSxVb6ICFwB>



Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you desperately needed an English idiom, but all that came to mind were the equivalents in your native language? You might be thinking, "I wish I had someone to teach me English idioms. I'm having such a hard time blending in." Well, wipe your tears, grab a pen and notebook because I've got your back. Today, I want to share six idioms to use in your daily conversations when necessary.
Are you ready?
Let's begin.

Apple polisher
پاچه خوار



Have you ever met an apple polisher in your life? This idiom refers to those kinds of people who are always trying their best to get the approval of someone in authority through praise and flattery. So annoying, right?

Curiosity killed the cat
کنجکاوی زیادی سر آدم رو
به باد می‌ده



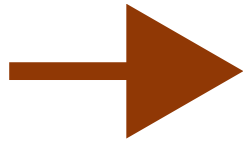
Imagine your friends invite you to a sleepover. Everything is going fine; you guys are having so much fun, but suddenly your friends pull out a Ouija board and try to summon a demon. That's scary, right? You insist on refusing, but the pressure of acceptance from them is so high. They try to convince you by saying it's just out of curiosity. This is the moment when you need to use this idiom and leave the house immediately.

Fraidy cat
بزدل



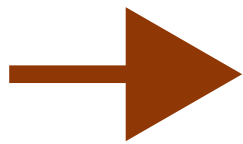
Now it's the day after the sleepover. You see your friends at school. They are whispering, and you are pretty sure it's about you. You feel like they are making fun of you, laughing at you for being a coward. As you're passing by, one of them suddenly shouts, "Here comes the famous fraidy cat!" and the whole school bursts into laughter. What a traumatizing experience! But don't worry; deep down, you know you did the right thing. I mean, these kids didn't watch *The Conjuring*?

Crystal clear
تابلو، كاملا واضح



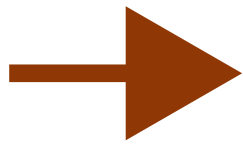
You are a teacher grading your students' exam papers. One of your students surprisingly gets a high score. You are shocked because this student was always on his phone, turning in his homework late, and not participating in class. So you walk into the principal's office with the exam paper in your hand and say, "It's crystal clear this student has cheated on the exam."

Dream on
خواب دیدی خیر باشه



Jack is a 6-year-old kid. He is fond of space and wants to be an astronaut one day. He is so passionate about it that the walls of his room are all covered with posters of the Milky Way, different planets, and the famous astronaut Neil Armstrong. At Thanksgiving, while he is having dinner with his grandparents, he enthusiastically talks about wanting to be an astronaut one day. His mother, a cold-hearted person, immediately jumps in and says, "Dream on, boy. You will never be an astronaut, so be quiet and finish your potato salad."

Has the habit
of stealing
دستش كچه



You're on the phone inviting Ashley, one of your friends, to your house for the weekend. Your mutual friend Taylor, as soon as she hears Ashley's name, tries to stop you from inviting her. She literally does everything possible: moving her hand as a sign to stop, trying to grab the phone from your hand, and writing "no" on a piece of paper. But you are stubborn and invite Ashley anyway. After the call is over, you angrily say to Taylor, "What was that all about?" Taylor, with a disappointed attitude, says, "Ashley has a habit of stealing. The last time I invited her to my house, she stole two bars of soap, one towel, and my dog's collar. I mean, what could she possibly do with that collar? She doesn't even have a dog."

Thank you for reading and I hope you get a chance to use these idioms in your life.

source: common idioms in English prepared by Majid Jalilzadeh

Body language

What is body language?

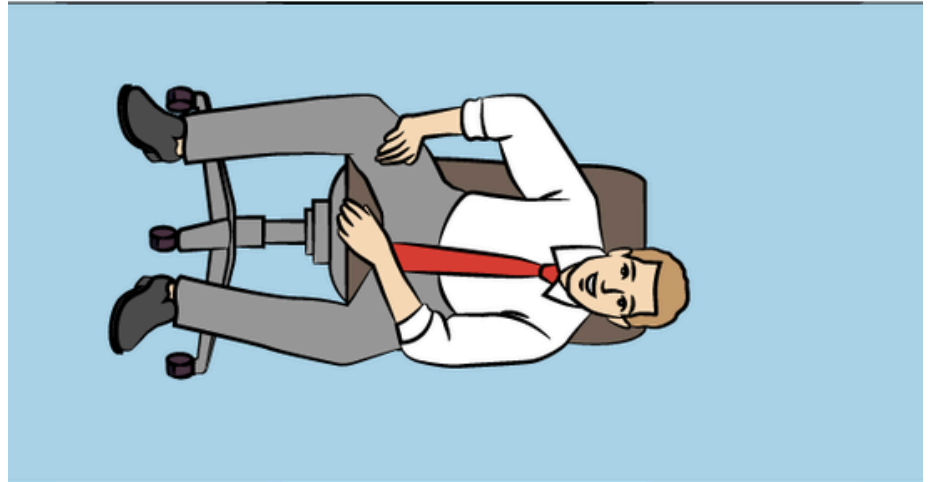
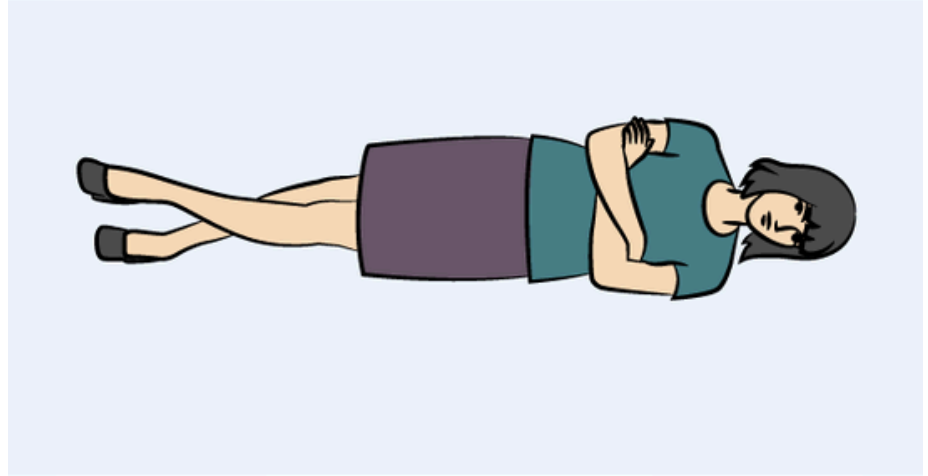
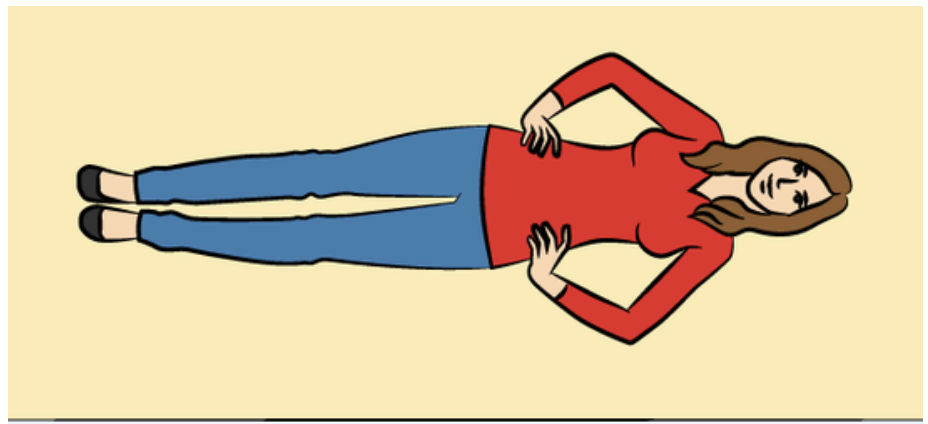
Body language is a form of communication that uses movements of the head, eyes, neck, hands, arms, feet, and other body parts to show expressions. These movements convey messages to others and are mainly used to express our feelings or to reinforce what we say verbally.

It is stated that the first impression of a person is received by eye contact which takes up %60 of the message and %30 is received by the ear, the remaining %10 of the message is the verbal message itself. From the points mentioned above, it is clear that non-verbal signals have a significant impact on communication.

Why is it important to learn body language?

Understanding body language is important because a large portion of human communication is nonverbal, and many emotions, attitudes, and intentions are expressed through physical movements rather than words. Knowing how to interpret these signals helps improve mutual understanding, strengthens effective communication, reveals hidden emotions, and enhances both personal and professional interactions. It also reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings by allowing individuals to recognize the true meaning behind messages conveyed through gestures, facial expressions, and posture.

Learning the different common rules of body language in different cultures is very useful for us to understand each other better.



EYE CONTACT:



specific types of meaning that eye contact conveys vary from culture to culture, with the greatest divide existing between the West and the East.

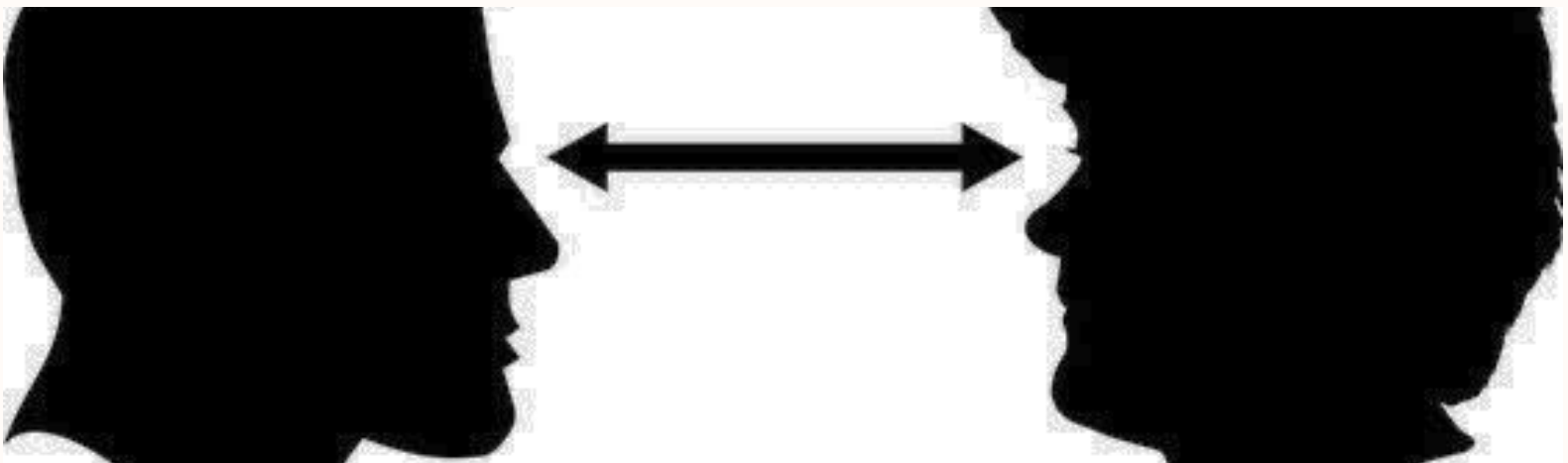
In the West, holding a speaker's gaze for an extended period without a break is considered staring, which can be perceived as rude or even aggressive

Averting one's eyes for too long signals to the speaker that the listener's attention is diverted, which Western speakers generally interpret as rude.

In many Caribbean, East Asian, and Latino societies, making extended eye contact, either while speaking or listening, is considered disrespectful and is usually avoided.

several non-Western societies also avoid prolonged and direct eye contact, but with the slightly different purpose of showing respect for social status. In regions of Africa, young people or those considered lower in the social hierarchy avoid making eye contact with their elders or superiors for just this purpose. Nearly the same tradition applies in India, where people of different social and economic classes avoid meeting one another's eyes. However, when interacting with

members of the same class, Indians usually hold eye contact for extended periods. Westerners who interact with Indians can perceive this behavior as intimidating staring. In numerous Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa, religiosity and modesty discourage men and women from making eye contact unless they know one another. However, among members of the same sex, eye contact during conversations is not only direct but also prolonged, so that listeners can absorb the truth of what is being said.



SMILING

Smiling does not carry the same meaning across all cultures; while in many Western societies a smile is usually interpreted as friendliness, warmth, or politeness, its meaning can differ greatly elsewhere. In the United States and much of Europe, smiling is commonly associated with openness and positivity. In contrast, in some East Asian cultures such as Japan, a smile may be used to hide discomfort, embarrassment, or emotional pain rather than to show happiness



HAND SHAKE



One key aspect of human body language is the handshake, and even slight differences in how it is performed can be interpreted in various ways around the world. While handshakes are generally a social convention, the appropriate firmness should be adjusted depending on the cultural and geographic context in which the interaction takes place.

In Western cultures, a strong handshake is often associated with confidence and persuasiveness, whereas many people in the Far East may interpret a firm handshake as a sign of aggression

For this reason, bowing is preferred over handshaking in many Far Eastern countries. In Europe, handshakes are also common, but they vary by region: in Northern Europe, handshakes tend to be quick and firm, while in Southern Europe they are usually longer and warmer, often involving the left hand touching the other person's elbow or clasped hands. Similar patterns are seen in South and Central America, although in Turkey, a firm handshake is considered a clear indicator of aggressiveness.

While in Iran, a handshake is considered a common gesture of politeness and respect, often used in both formal and informal social interactions to greet others, show goodwill, or establish a friendly connection

Our world today is turning into what many describe as a “global village.” As connections between countries and cultures grow stronger, knowing how to communicate with people from different backgrounds becomes increasingly important. Whether we travel abroad or meet individuals from other cultures, effective communication is essential. However, attention is usually directed toward learning the spoken language, which means a crucial part of communication—gestures—is often overlooked.

Because communication goes far beyond words, understanding the role of gestures is just as important as learning vocabulary or grammar. Hand movements can express respect, agreement, discomfort, or even offense—and their meanings vary widely across cultures. For this reason, exploring how different countries use hand gestures can help us avoid misunderstandings and communicate more effectively in international settings.



Hand gestures

Ok gesture 🇺🇸

In American culture, forming a circle with the thumb and index finger to make the “OK sign” is a positive gesture.

It simply means “OK,” “all good,” or “everything is fine.” It is friendly, common, and not considered offensive in everyday situations.

The meaning changes significantly around the world:

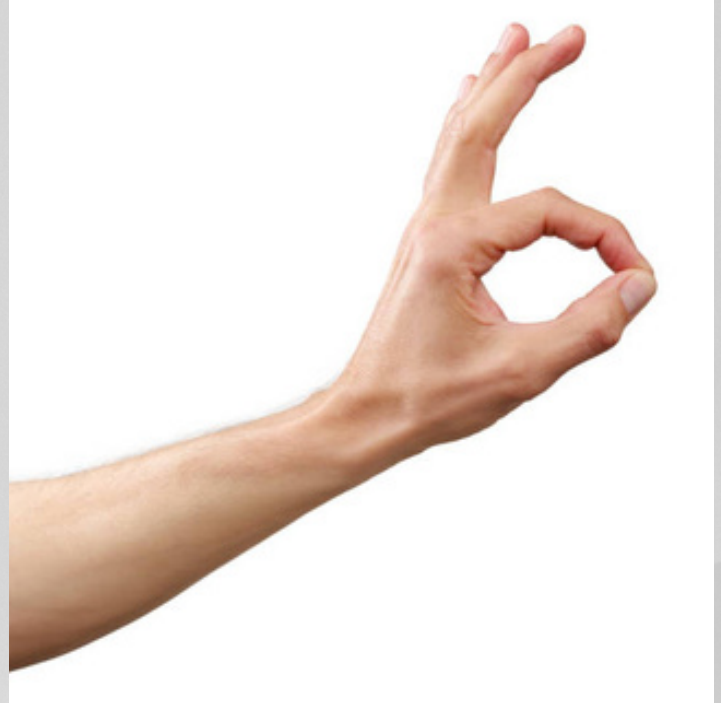
- Brazil & Turkey: The gesture is considered very rude and can be interpreted as a strong insult.

- France: It can mean “zero” or “worthless,” rather than “OK.”

- Japan: It often represents money or coins, not approval.

In Iranian culture, the OK gesture is not commonly used in its American sense.

If recognized at all, it usually does not mean “OK.” In many cases, Iranians may interpret it as rude or disrespectful, similar to how some Middle Eastern cultures view it. Most Iranians prefer using a thumbs-up or verbal expressions instead of this hand sign.



Thumbs up 👍

Generally a positive sign, the thumbs gesture signifies approval, agreement, or satisfaction, especially within American and European cultures.

This prevalent hand gesture that has been used for thousands of years has a completely different meaning in many Asian and Islamic countries. There, it is seen as a major insult and can offend. In Australia, it has a positive view until you change a little detail. When you move this gesture up and down, it changes its meaning to an insult.



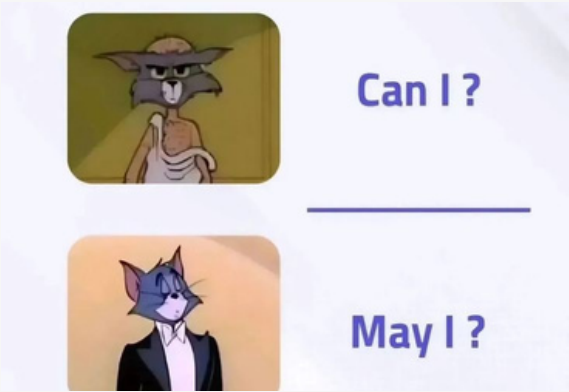
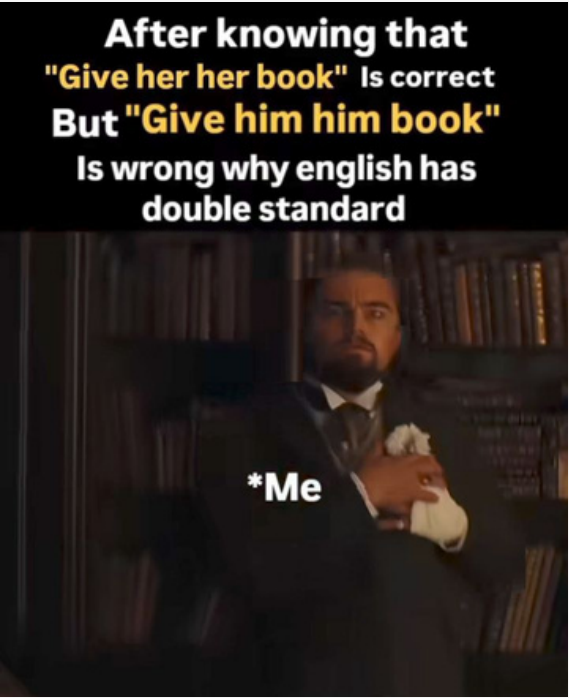
Ref: Ren, Z. P. (2014). Body language in different cultures. US-China Foreign Language, 12(12), 1029–1033.

Akkilinc, F. (2019). The body language of culture. International Journal for Innovation Education and Research, 7(8), 32–39.
<https://doi.org/10.31686/ijer.Vol7.Iss8.1639>

Chastain, G. (2024). Attention. EBSCO Research Starters.
<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/psychology/attention>

Memes and Their Linguistic Influence on Persian-Speaking Youth

Internet memes—those seemingly simple, humorous images or short clips shared for a quick laugh—have grown into something far more complex. Beyond entertainment, they function as a shared cultural code and even a unique language that young people use to express emotions, critique society, and build online communities. Today, memes circulate across social networks at high speed, appearing in education, politics, marketing, activism, fandoms, and everyday personal communication. As such, they have become a subject of increasing academic interest, especially in fields connected to language, culture, and digital literacy.



The language and style of memes:

One of the most visible features of memes is their distinct linguistic style. Meme language tends to be informal, playful, and highly condensed, often relying on slang, irony, exaggeration, and even purposeful grammatical “mistakes.” The tone can be humorous, sarcastic, or deliberately absurd. Visually, memes frequently mix text with well-known images from films, TV series, music videos, internet culture, or local social situations; sometimes they rely on exaggerated expressions, animals, or pop-culture characters to make a point.

This mix of visual and verbal elements creates a specific multimodal genre of communication—one where meaning is not conveyed by words alone but by the relationship between captions, images, cultural references, and shared assumptions.

Cultural ideas behind memes

Memes often act as micro-narratives of everyday life, reflecting the feelings, anxieties, humor, and values of the communities that create and share them. For Persian-speaking youth, memes can express everything from frustration with economic pressures to pride, sarcasm, political commentary, or the humor of daily life. Their simplicity makes them accessible; their humor makes them memorable; and their ability to quickly adapt to current events turns them into a digital mirror of generational identity.



Importantly,

meme formats travel across communities—K-pop fandoms, anime culture, Iranian student groups, global feminist or political movements—and each group reshapes these templates with its own language and worldview. The result is a dynamic, constantly evolving tapestry of shared symbols and inside jokes.

Linguistic impacts: What research shows
Scholars now view memes as active agents of language change in the digital age. A recent thematic analysis, *The Linguistic Impact of Social Media* (2025), notes that platforms like Instagram and Telegram accelerate lexical innovation, non-standard grammar, creative spelling, and the spread of hybrid forms, reshaping how young people write and speak in both their first and second languages .



Similarly, the study *Social Meme-ing: Measuring Linguistic Variation in Memes* (2023) demonstrates that memes, as multimodal texts, produce and circulate distinct linguistic patterns within different online communities. Variants of the same meme adapt to local cultural norms, humor styles, and language practices, showing how digital culture fosters rapid, community-based linguistic variation.

From a socio-semiotic perspective, research on English and Arabic meme captions highlights that memes rely heavily on ellipsis, code-mixing, visual symbolism, and innovative wordplay to convey meaning. These linguistic choices allow users to express identity, critique authority, and share collective emotions in ways that traditional language contexts do not readily allow .

More broadly, studies on social-media communication indicate that online platforms act as engines of linguistic change. They enable new expressions to spread widely and rapidly, shaping the vocabulary, grammatical preferences, and communicative habits of entire generations. As one analysis notes, social networks play a central role in the diffusion of new linguistic forms across communities, accelerating changes that once took decades

Why this matters for TEFL

These observations and research findings show that memes are not just entertainment—they are a powerful linguistic ecosystem. Persian-speaking youth frequently use memes that combine Persian with English phrases, borrow global slang, and remix culturally specific references. As these forms circulate, they influence not only how young people communicate online but also how they understand and use English.

For TEFL practitioners, this highlights a crucial reality: English learning today is shaped not only by textbooks or classrooms but also by the informal, creative, meme-driven language students encounter daily. Studying memes therefore offers valuable insight into youth identity, language attitudes, and the evolving nature of digital communication.

WHAT IS LANGUAGE ALTER EGO



I've always felt that different languages rearrange me differently from the inside. It happens quietly. I move from one language to another, and something in the tone of my thoughts changes. It's like opening a door and finding a slightly altered version of myself on the other side; someone familiar, but not quite identical. Ekaterina Matveeva, a linguist, calls this the Language Alter Ego, but for me it's simply the sense that each language invites a different self into the room. I don't force it; it happens whether I want it to or not. My first language, Persian, carries history and intimacy and all the emotional layers that come with growing up inside a culture. English, on the other hand, slips into me differently. It makes me more direct, but not extremely; more in the essence of American openness blended with something of British politeness. On some days that combination feels clearer, freer. On other days, the emotional weight of my mother tongue pulls me into a quieter, more cautious version of myself.

I've often wondered how much of this subtle shift comes not only from personal experience, but from the deeper ways language shapes thought. In fact, the idea behind Language Alter Ego builds, in part, on the theory of linguistic relativity (Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis)

According to that view, the language we speak influences how we think, perceive, and respond to the world. The words, concepts, sound patterns embedded in each language guide our mental landscape, leading us toward certain emotional and cognitive patterns.

So perhaps what changes when I speak English is more than tone or accent; maybe the language itself mildly re-orient's my mind. Speaking English might open doors to thought patterns less available in Persian, like a different emotional register, a different approach to honesty, directness, even to humor. And that re-orientation becomes the Language Alter Ego, leading not only to a different voice, but to a differently shaped mind.

Listening to a guest speak about this on the Teacher's Coffee podcast made me realize how common this experience is. Matveeva talked about creativity, cultural intelligence, and the strange way language becomes a real-life performance. When she said that every language comes with its own emotional architecture, I felt something inside. I had always sensed the gesture patterns, the social expectations, the unspoken rules you absorb along with the vocabulary but I've never named it.

I've noticed how this plays out in classrooms too. I've seen shy students suddenly become active when they speak in a second language. I've also seen the reverse: confident students shrinking a little when they return to their native tongue, as if the weight of familiarity pulls them back into old habits. And there is another group I can never forget. Students whose heavy regional accent in Persian made them silent. Because they came from less-developed regions, their accent unfairly marked them as less capable in the eyes of others. They learned to withdraw, to speak as little as possible. Yet when they switched to English, the dynamic changed. Their voice became clearer, their confidence rose, and their personality expanded. They showed sides of themselves that Persian, weighed down by social judgments, had kept hidden. It was a striking reminder that sometimes the alter ego isn't created by the new language, but revealed by it. If I had to define it, I'd say a Language Alter Ego is a linguistic personality that forms itself, sometimes with our help, sometimes without it, to match the social and cultural environment we step into. It's a small, natural shift rather than a dramatic transformation. And maybe it's proof that identity isn't a solid object but something that reshapes itself the moment we pick up a new point of view, a new sound, a new way of reaching another person. What I love most about this idea is that it suggests we are never only one thing. Each language gives us a different emotional toolkit, a different display of courage, or curiosity, or even vulnerability. If there are many languages, then maybe there are many selves waiting behind them. And perhaps the most complete version of ourselves is not limited to any single language, but appears in the spaces between them where perspectives overlap, identities shift, and the mind absorbs diverse inputs that help us expand who we can truly be.

References:

Matveeva, E. (2025, November 20). The Language Alter Ego (G. Kokolas & V. Dooley, Interviewers). In Teacher's Coffee podcast by Express Publishing. <https://eltwebinars.com/v5135/>

Matveeva, E. (2025, March 11). What is Language Alter Ego. <https://www.ekaterinamatveeva.com/blog/whatislanguagealterego#:~:text=Language%20Alter%20Ego%20refers%20to,everyday%20self%2C%20in%20other%20words.>

