

The Semiotic Approach and Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

This study investigates the relation of the Foreign Language Teaching with the Semiotic Approach that gains more importance recently and tries to explain how this concept has been used as Semiotic Approach in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning and teacher-learner roles, strong-weak sides, types of activities, etc. have been handled.

Key Words: Semiotics, approach, Ethnolinguistics, Paralanguage, English Language Teaching (ELT), Foreign Language Teaching (FLT)

Öz

Bu çalışma Yabancı Dil Eğitimi ile son yıllarda güncellik kazanan Göstergebilim kavramının bağlantısını incelemekte; bu kavramın Göstergebilim Yaklaşımı adı altında Yabancı Dil Eğitimi ve Öğretiminde nasıl kullanıldığına değinmekte; öğretmen-öğrenci rolleri, iyi- kötü yanları, kullanılabilir alıştırma çalışmaları, vb. verilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göstergebilim, yaklaşım, Budunbilim, Dilötesi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi, Yabancı Dil Eğitimi

1. Introduction

The Semiotic Approach dates back to the time of the philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Socrat, Sextus, Heraclitus, who generally thought ‘the language is the sign system of our minds’. Their approach to show the symbols of what is in mind shed light on the research of many anthropologists. Among them, Cassirer’s search was for a philosophy of symbolic forms in 1923. However, the field of semiotics was mainly studied in the 1950’s. The International Association for Semiotic Studies, its journal ‘Semiotica’, and the journal’s Editor in chief, Thomas A. Sebeok

gave encouragement to research on sign languages. In these years, George Trager focused on suprasegmental as well as segmental signs. Moreover, the term 'kinesics', the whole system of visible signs, was brought into focus by Ray Bird Whistell.

Thomas A. Sebeok paid attention to sign language and welcomed research articles on sign languages in the journal 'Semiotica' and monographs in such series as 'Advances in Semiotics, Current Trends in Linguistics, and Approaches to Semiotics.' The sign language studies first appeared in 1972 as a semiannual, typeset in Bloomington, Indiana, printed in Ann Arbor Michigan and published by Mouton in Holland. In 1977, Scott Liddell studied the art of describing the language and tried to explain how linguistic and semiotic approaches can sometimes cover the same ground. In 1986, Liddell and Johnson studied the relationship between phonology and semiotics, and it is still applied to classroom activities in English language teaching as an effective approach.

In short, the Semiotic Approach, which was mainly studied by Levi Strauss, Geertz and Michael Silverstein, who generally claimed that culture was a system of signs, has important contributions to English language teaching. Verbal, nonverbal, and visual communications, which lead to an effective teaching / learning process in English classes, are dealt with and the place of the Semiotic Approach to English language teaching is emphasized. That is to say, this is a way of teaching language and culture using signs, symbols, icons, and several semiotic elements. However, the fact that the Semiotic Approach does not work if a teacher does not have cultural information about the target language of his/her learners.

2. Related Areas

The Semiotic Approach is in relation to semiotics which studies the sign language to provide the interchange of messages while communicating. Semiotics emphasizes the functions of signs which we use in order to communicate verbally, non-verbally and visually. 'Semiotic processes prepare the future speakers for entrance into meaning and signification (the symbolic)' (Kristeva, 1987: 136). Semiotic deals with the signs and their functions in everyday life. The signs are observed in three kinds. The first one is symbol. The symbols in which the signifier does not resemble the signified are made in an arbitrary manner. All languages in the world; alphabetic letters, punctuation marks, words, phrases, sentences, numbers, Morse code, or traffic

lights, national flags are examples of symbols. The second one is an icon in which the signifier resembles the signified. For example, a portrait, a cartoon, a scale-model, onomatopoeia such as ‘buzz’, the sound of a bee, realistic sounds in program music, sound effects in a radio drama, imitative gestures, etc. The last type is index in which the signifier is not arbitrary but is directly connected in some way to the signified. Examples of natural signs are ‘smoke as an indication of fire’, or thunder, footprints, echoes), medical symptoms (pulse rate), measuring instruments (thermometer, clock), signals (a knock on a door, a phone ringing), pointers (a pointing index finger, a directional signpost), recordings (a photograph, a film, video or television), personal trademarks (handwriting).

In addition to semiotics, anthropological linguistics has relevance to the Semiotic Approach in ELT. ‘Anthropological linguistics views language through the prism of the core anthropological concept, culture, and, as such, seeks to uncover the meaning behind the use, misuse or non-use of language, its different forms, registers and styles’ (Folley, 1997: 3). It is concerned with the place of language in its social and cultural context. It has an important place in the Semiotic Approach as it reveals the differences between the first language and the second language. ‘The basic discipline of anthropology is the deep understanding of the differences across cultures’ (Folley, 1997:7). Cultural differences enable learners of English to understand cultural values and their effects on language. For example, while translating the word ‘lecturer’, which does not have an equivalent in Turkish, students will not get much difficulty if they know the social context of American culture very well. Thus, the teachers of English provide students with cultural and social context of the second language by the help of anthropological linguistics in the Semiotic Approach.

Ethnolinguistics is also related to the Semiotic Approach in ELT. It studies the languages of ethnic groups such as American people, Turks, etc. Teachers of English should know about these related areas in order to present the cultural values of the second language. The reactions of the native speakers in the second language to certain social actions show us the cultural norms in their minds, and their effects on the second language play important roles to understand the target language clearly. Thus, ethnolinguistics enables teachers of English to understand the relations among cultures, language, society and ethnic groups, which avoids any breakdown in communication in the target language. Finally, teachers can help students see

cultural differences by using semiotic-type materials such as visuals showing the properties of other culture, or real-like dialogues taken from the real lives of native speakers. In order to examine the Semiotic Approach, one must take into consideration its principles. It has a few principles as listed below:

1-Signs and languages are interrelated with each other. They are means of communication. The best way of communication is no doubt language. Nöth assumes that "language is the most highly developed and culturally most important for all semiotic systems" (Nöth 1990:227). Not only the language but also signs and symbols are means of communication. When someone sees smoke rising from a house, and calls for the fire brigade it means that smoke acts as a means of communication.

2-Language learning is a sign learning in all aspects. Language is the signs, symbols, gestures, etc used for indicating ideas or feelings. For example, you are teaching the natural phenomenon " rain". You show the clouds to the students and say 'it is going to rain', or you can use an umbrella to explain the meaning. Here, the clouds or the umbrella acted as a sign of rain.

3-Language learning is a concentrated way of sign learning, signs are the building blocks of conveying messages. Leeds-Hurwitz states that "language works because its speakers share particular signs (words are signs) and share a code (each language combines words through grammatical structures) as well as sharing understandings of how to use that codes to convey meaning (norms of use of that particular language) (Leeds -Hurwitz 1993:14). All signs are integrated into larger systems; they are parts of a chain. For example, a cross represents Christianity, and Christianity reflects religion.

4-Language learning is reinforced by iconic signs and signs. Letters are o written or printed sign representing a sound used in speech and they are icons in arbitrary relationships. Writing is " a way of recoding language by means of visible marks" (Nöth 1990:251). These visible marks are signs of language. We cannot think of language teaching without writing, or letters. So, a language teacher makes use of letters in terms of literary texts, books, etc.

5-In every culture, a sign represents a code of its own. These codes have a dictionary and a grammar. Culture is composed of symbols and other signs; these provide a structure for social

actors, and these symbols and signs are the tools people use to convey meaning. Every culture has a set of systems or codes of symbols and meanings. A particular kind of handshake, an arrangement of house space, a conception of femaleness are examples of cultural sign system.

6-Signs represent something meaningful. There are several kinds of signs. *Icons* are symbols that involve resemblance to the referent. For example, most of the traffic signs are iconic. Or we usually come up with iconic signs of toilets in theaters or cinemas some words are iconic: crash, boom, splash, cuckoo. *Symbols* involve conventional associations with the referent. The difference between a sign and a symbol is that a symbol stands for something because we agree to it, or have made up a relationship. Through symbols we organize our social relationships and our value systems. For example, when a person burns the Turkish flag, we react as if our country has been invaded. This is because we think not of the flag but of its referent "independence". A car is a means of transportation but BMW cars are symbols for "A Prestige" or 'richness.' Thus, we attribute meanings to symbols. Cowboy boots, McDonalds, Hollywood, or cross are symbols for American culture, and 'giraffe' is a symbol for Hacettepe University and Atatürk's Statue in Samsun is a symbol for "19 Mayıs University."

7-Culture is a sign system and communicates itself through signs. Cultural boundaries can be understood by means of gestures, mimes, eye contact, and kinesthetic dimensions. These signs are social actors such as kinship systems, culinary systems or food styles, literature, clothing styles. These systems are the signs of a specific culture. To put it in other words, these systems signal to culture and culture demonstrates itself through these systems. Hence, culture is communicated by means of these sign systems like language, clothing style, and food style

3.Learner and Teacher Roles

Teachers of English with the knowledge of semiotics can easily use signs in their classroom activities. Especially in the Communicative Approach, teachers can make use of the signs to give examples while using verbal, non-verbal and visual communication in English language classes. The symbols such as punctuation marks, traffic lights, or national flags are good examples to teach stylistic, the meaning of 'right' and 'left', or the names of nations. Secondly, the icon is very important while teaching the onomatopoeic words such as 'buzz', the sound of a bee in English. Finally, the index can help teachers of English while telling a story in

which thunder, footprints, or echoes represent the events in the story, or a phone ringing, a knock on a door may take place in the story. Moreover, teachers can also use pictures, body language to make the activities meaningful in English language classes. The teacher is a manager of the classroom activities in the Semiotic Approach. He effectively uses verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication, and enables learners of English to see the cultural differences between the first language and the second language. The teacher also provides the learners with communicative activities such as dialogues, or role-plays by giving real life situations.

Secondly, teachers in the Semiotic Approach have a good classroom management with body language in classroom activities. For example, teachers of English can give directions while teaching intonation patterns by using eye contact. They can raise their eyebrow to indicate the primary stress in the sentence. Besides, they can give feedback or any directions by using head movements, facial expressions, and eye contact. In addition, students can learn the functions of the second language at the same time; they can focus on the lesson. For instance, the teacher can congratulate a student who answers a question in the way a native speaker does; he can shake his hands by the help of kinesthetic dimension, postures, mimes, and gestures. Teacher can catch students' attention by using body language, therefore he can have control over the class. Moreover, students are motivated to learn the target language and store what they learn into their long-term memories when the teacher makes use of such signs.

Thirdly, the Semiotic Approach helps teachers of English in teaching vocabulary and grammar in ELT. The students easily get the meaning of vocabulary items, or grammar rules by the help of visuals and body language. For example, teachers can effectively use pictures, real objects, stick figures, visual images, film strips to teach the word 'box'. They can bring a box into the classroom, or draw a picture of a box on the blackboard. Moreover, a teacher can also use body language to teach a word. He can shape his hands like a box, and tell about what can be put into a box through the use of gestures, postures. Similarly, teachers of English can effectively use visuals and body language to teach grammar items. For instance, a teacher can bring pictures of someone sleeping, reading a book, or drinking something into the classroom to teach the present continuous tense. Moreover, he can walk and say to the class 'I am walking', or open the window and say 'I am opening the window' in order to teach the present continuous through the use of

postures. These activities make student motivated to use the second language and store what they have learnt into long his term memory.

The Semiotic Approach helps students develop their four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing in ELT. Teachers provide learners of English with an effective teaching / learning process through the use of visuals, authentic materials and body language. For instance, students are asked to listen to the native speakers on a live radio broadcast and speak about the subject the native speakers present in the radio. Besides, they can be asked to write a paragraph about the subject and then they are given opportunities to read their paragraphs in the classroom. Therefore, students can easily get the chance of developing their four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This process can be performed through the use of not only the authentic materials, but also the visuals. For instance, the students can be asked to talk about a picture of a couple sitting at a table. Students can be asked questions such as ‘Are they married, happy, or what do you think they are talking about?’. They can be asked to write a paragraph about the picture and then read it in order to encourage them to use the target language The students learn by observing the signs (pictures, maps, tables, graphs, charts etc...) and signals (gesture, posture, body movement, facial expression etc...) as well as by performing the actions appropriately. The students are encouraged to use their sense of feeling, seeing, hearing, and touching in classroom activities. Teachers in the Semiotic Approach attract the learners’ attention by using body language and motivate them to use the target language by presenting the subjects with maps, pictures, graphs, charts. Moreover, they are asked to participate in activities such as role-plays, dialogues to give them opportunities to use their body languages, which enable them to store what they learn into their long-term memories.

5 Strong Sides of the Semiotic Approach

The Semiotic Approach provides a very effective teaching / learning process through verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication in the target language. For example, in the mimemem method, teachers can teach dialogues representing the real life situations. First, they make learners of English repeat the dialogue and then memorize it part by part. Finally, students act it out. Furthermore, teachers can be more successful in teaching vocabulary, intonation patterns, or functions of the second language by using body language. For example, they can easily teach certain adjectives such as nervous, upset, happy, etc. by using mimes, gestures. Moreover, eye-

contact plays an important role in classroom activities. For instance, you can teach intonation patterns by indicating the primary stress through raising your eyebrow. Finally, visual communication devices are the most important contribution of the Semiotic Approach to ELT. Pictures, film strips, visual images, photography, comics, video, etc. play important roles in teaching vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, writing, and reading in ELT. Firstly, pictures are used for vocabulary teaching; by showing the picture of a flower, you can teach the word 'flower'. Photography, film-strips, comics, or pictures are also useful for grammar teaching. For example, pictures, films strips or visual images showing some actions such as walking, eating something, or sleeping help students learn the Present Continuous Tense easily. Finally, students can watch a dialogue on video and they can be asked to summarize it by speaking or writing, and then they can act it out in groups. All these activities enable learners of English to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Non-verbal communication receives attention in English language classes as one of the effective ways of teaching / learning process. By gestures, mimes, eye contact or tactile communication, teachers of English provide students with not only meaningful learning, but also cultural values of the second language. For example, the teacher using gestures makes vocabulary learning easier for students, or while telling a story, he can make his arms open just like holding a baby to indicate a sleeping baby, which motivates the students to learn the second language. In addition, while teaching the word 'hitchhike', the teacher can raise his thumb to indicate the word and make students understand it clearly by raising his thumb in order to hitchhike which has been widely used in American culture, and is now used in our culture. Besides, mimes are also very useful while telling a story. They are widely used in the Audiolingual and mim-mem methods. Teachers of English make vocabulary teaching easier by using repetitions of substitution drills, and of course visual aid. First of all, teachers act out the role play and then make students repeat it, finally make them act it out. Moreover, eye contact, which demonstrates the human feelings, clearly is another element of non-verbal communication. Using eye contact in English language classes is an effective way of teaching adjectives such as angry, happy, etc. They can easily demonstrate angry or happy faces by using eye contact in the classroom. In addition they can raise their eyebrows to indicate the intonation or primary stress in the sentence while teaching intonation patterns. Finally, tactile communication encourages the students to learn the second

language as teachers use tactile communication to teach the functions of the second language such as greeting, or congratulating in role-plays.

Visual communication receives attention as one of the strong sides of the Semiotic Approach. Visual images, paintings, drawings, photography, comics films, film strips, video are among the devices of visual communication. Besides, the authentic materials are inevitable part of visual communication in ELT. Teachers of English can use pictures in teaching vocabulary, grammar, writing, speaking and listening in English language classes. For example, in teaching vocabulary, the teacher can show a picture of someone who is ill, lying on the bed in order to teach the word 'patient' or a picture of three boys one of whom is short and the others are tall in order to teach comparatives and superlatives in grammar teaching. A picture of rooms in the house may be a good material to make students write or speak about the description of the house by using 'there is, there are'. Besides, they can listen to the description of the house from the tape. As a result, the teacher provides learners of English with many activities such as speaking, listening and writing by using pictures.

In short, the Semiotic Approach provides learners of English with verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication, while the Communicative Approach enables them to be motivated to use the target language by emphasizing independence learning and encourages them to communicate in the target language fluently and accurately as much as possible in pair / group works. The Semiotic Approach provides with an effective teaching / learning process through using body language, pictures, visuals, film-strips, video, photography, etc.

6. Weak Sides of the Semiotic Approach

Although the Semiotic Approach has many advantages in English language teaching, its avoiding linguistic correction in English language classes remains as the weak side of the Semiotic Approach. Teachers using verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication in order to provide an effective teaching / learning process do not pay much attention to linguistic correction in their classroom activities in the Semiotic Approach. Students are presented on American TV broadcast, a live radio broadcast as the authentic materials, or they are given chances to listen to the native speakers from tape recorders, video films, etc. in the classroom activities. However, linguistic correction does not receive much attention when students practice the pronunciation of

words in English language teaching. As phonological meaning precedes the phonological codes, in other words; phonological meaning is the function of phonological elements; students are forced to pay attention to not what a native speaker says, but what he thinks or what he says. For example, when a student listens to a live radio or TV broadcast, he pays attention to how the language is represented by phonological elements, what the speaker on TV wants to say but he does not pay attention to how he pronounces the words.

Similarly, in the Communicative Approach, linguistic awareness is avoided in English language teaching. 'Language is for communication. Linguistic competence, the knowledge of forms and meanings are, however, just parts of communicative competence' (Freeman, 1983: 133). There is a difference between learning a language for communication and learning it as communication. I mean, the process starting from 'structure' leading via controlled practice to 'function' is needed in the Communicative Approach. Although students are motivated to learn the second language by group activities, language games, or problem solving activities, their grammatical and linguistic errors are ignored. 'A student makes an error. The teacher and other students ignore it'. (Freeman,1983:129). Since independence training is emphasized in the Communicative Approach, no linguistic correction takes place in English language teaching. The authentic materials are widely used to give students an opportunity to understand language as it is actually used by native speakers. However, they are not forced to pay attention to the pronunciation of words on TV programs or radio broadcast.

Finally, Semiotic Approach avoids linguistic correction in English language Teaching. Although both of them effectively use the authentic materials such as TV broadcast, or a live radio broadcast in classroom activities, they do not emphasize the linguistic knowledge of English language. Both of the approaches aim at developing the four skills of the learners of English to enable them to communicate easily in the target language; however, students get difficulty in communication as the linguistic correction is ignored in English language classes. Finally, students face with the problem of being accustomed to mispronouncing of certain words in English, which cause a breakdown in communication in the target language.

As a result, if the classroom size and conditions of crowded classes in state schools are not suitable for the goal of the lesson, the Semiotic Approach may not be so successful. For example, teachers using body language or visual communication devices may not be effective as

the students at the very back row may have difficulty in following the lesson, and watching the teacher in very crowded classes. Moreover, it can be difficult and time-consuming to make use of signals as detailed explanation may be needed in teaching grammar and complex structural points.

7. Contributions to Language Teaching and Learning

The Semiotic Approach emphasizing the importance of the sign system in foreign language teaching includes important contributions to language teaching and learning. For example, meaning is a function of a linguistic form in a context. The Semiotic Approach dealing with the communication with regard to the meaning in the context observes verbal, non-verbal and visual communication in language teaching and learning.

'I reserve the name verbal symbolism for the area of indirect meaning, and the name symbolic of language for the study of these meanings' (Todorov, 1982: 12). The verbal symbolism is an inevitable part of foreign language teaching. Speech being the verbal channel for language enables us to send messages to others. Furthermore, the written form of language is the way to send messages by means of visible signs, which proves us the importance of texts and literature.

The sign language, which is also a part of verbal communication, provides the teachers of English language with the effective teaching ways by using hands and arms just like in the gestural language. They can use dialogues, role-plays, mim-mem method in their classroom activities. Moreover, paralinguistic features of the second language also receive attention, the suprasegmental messages and how the native speaker of English demonstrates them can also be taught to the students through dialogues and role-plays.

Non-verbal communication includes gestures, mimes, eye contact, and tactile communication, which provide an effective teaching / learning process in ELT. For example, the teachers of English language can use gestures which are bodily communication by means of hands and arms to teach the adjective 'long' by raising his hand. Furthermore, using the mimes in which people convey meaning by using their hands, heads and bodies, language teachers can act out a dialogue and make students repeat the dialogue and then act it out. Mimes are widely used in the Audiolingual and mim-mem methods. Moreover, the eye-contact is other way of providing meaningful learning. For example, a teacher can raise his eyebrow while teaching intonation and

stress patterns to indicate the primary stress. Shortly, the contextual meanings, real life situations, vocabulary teaching, or cultural values of the second language can be provided by means of non verbal communication.

The semiotic Approach has important applications to culture, vocabulary, grammar teaching. Moreover, it enables students to develop listening, speaking, reading, writing skills, and provides teachers of English with effective classroom management in ELT. Besides, it helps learners of English store what they have learnt into their long-term memories with verbal, non-verbal and visual communication. Visual communication includes visual images, paintings, drawings, photography, comics, filmstrips, films, videos, objects, and the authentic materials which provide a successful teaching / learning process. Teachers can make good use of pictures to teach vocabulary items. For example, the teacher can show a picture of ‘a glass’ to teach the word ‘glass’. That is to say as it is mentioned above there are lots of ways teaching the vocabulary items. In terms of the Semiotic Approach, the best way of doing this is to use authentic materials, visuals, or pictures or drawings, if possible, because it is believed that learners can learn best by visual aids. Listening activities can also be employed by using drawings, pictures, real objects, symbols, etc. In addition, those types of exercises will be more effective and enjoyable in terms of students. Listening to tape cassettes can aid comprehension by stressing the tone, pitch and the intonation. An exercise that could help the development of this skill would be listening to understand the general mood of the speaker; happy, angry, excited, patient, friendly, etc. as an introduction to the listening exercise. Video, however, is the ideal tool for the Semiotic teaching of listening because all the visual signals are present to aid understanding. Various techniques can be employed during video teaching For example, teacher play the cassette with its sound off because this technique will focus on the non-linguistic signs for the students to interpret. It’s also worth stopping the video at particular frames and discuss the dress of people, and thereby guess either their characters or what others will think of them.

On the other hand, speaking is sending messages as well as reading their results. A Semiotic Approach to speaking would involve attention to the whole body (gestures, stance, eye movements, and so on) , in coordination with the spoken word. The skills of communication can be separated out and practiced one such aspect is this. A student has to say the word sausages in different ways to the class – happily, sadly, seriously, angrily, etc. – who have to guess the

manner correctly. In order to practice the basics in such exercises, semiotics needs to produce taxonomy of elements of communication. Situations that give the best practice here therefore need to involve drama of some kind, either in role play or simulation activities. Here are some exercises. To teach pronunciation with the help of the Semiotic Approach, some sound pictures may be used. These pictures integrate the phonemic symbols in the drawings. This helps to demystify phonemic script. Remembering the shapes within the pictures will be much easier than remembering the phonemic symbols in isolation. Similarly, in the Communicative Approach, 'language functions are emphasized over forms' (Freeman, 1983: 134). The language functions are taught to the learners through dialogues, role-plays, games, etc.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Semiotic Approach is very effective in English language teaching to motivate learners of English to learn the target language with verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication. Students are given opportunities to use the second language in real life situations so that they can develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Moreover, they can understand the target language and communicate effectively as they are presented a contrastive analysis between the first language and the second language, especially in cultural values. Students are provided with differences in cultural aspects between the first and the second language, they are presented not only verbal, but also non-verbal channels in order to avoid any breakdown in communication in the target language, itself. Shortly, students can easily learn the grammatical structure of the target language and the effects of cultural values in the society where English language is spoken on the interpretation of the second language by the help of the Semiotic Approach.

Needless to say, the Semiotic Approach is also very effective in teaching culture of the target language in ELT. There are, of course, several ways of teaching culture. Strategies for teaching culture first began to appear in 1960s, and then proliferated in the 1970s with the rise of the communicative competence. Several of these early techniques were cited regularly in the literature and served as points of reference for other teaching strategies that would follow. A revised list of those techniques and ways that are more currently developed are *culture capsule*, *culture cluster*, *culture assimilator*, *audio-motor*

unit, cultoon, cultural mini drama, audio-visual material, study of kinesics, authentic materials, native speakers in the classroom, culture aside, culture island, and the internet.

That is to say, by the help of the Semiotic Approach, we can easily teach the culture of the target language because the Semiotic Approach provides learners of the target language with not only real life situations, but also cultural values of the second language by using visual communication devices such as pictures, posters, filmstrips, stick figures, comic cartoons and the authentic materials such as television programs, radio broadcast, films on video, newspaper, or magazines. For example, television programs, or radio broadcast enable students to learn daily lives of people using the second language, or informal words, phrases such as using ‘pal’ instead of ‘friend’, or ‘*I ain’t going*’ instead of ‘*I am not going*’. Moreover, the Semiotic Approach helps students learn cultural differences between the first language and the second language by using non-verbal communication in the classroom. For example, students can learn certain seating arrangements, table placements, and shapes, postures during conversation in the target language by the help of proxemics being the study of interpersonal distance. By decorating the classroom to display all kinds of posters, cartoons, maps, newspaper cuttings, exhibitions of realia such as theater tickets and programs, railway and airline time tables, restaurant menus and so on, teachers and learners can create a visual and tangible presence of the target community. Moreover, kinesics describing meaningful gestures in a society provides students with cultural differences in body language. For instance, a girl shaking her hands just like playing the violin to a boy trying to persuade her to court wants to say ‘I do not mind you!’ in American culture. After viewing and analyzing, the students can be asked to give possible meanings and functions of the gestures. Then, they can practice a gesture and its appropriate verbal equivalents in the target language. In addition, cultoon can be used to illustrate a point of non-verbal culture that must be read as the native speakers read it. Also, the culture assimilator, as an other technique for teaching culture, can be used as an out-of-class technique for cross-cultural training. The culture assimilator is a brief description of a critical incident of cross-cultural interaction that is likely to be misunderstood by the learners. It consists of three parts: a short passage demonstrating an intercultural exchange in which a misunderstanding occurs; four possible interpretations of what transpired and feedback for the correct answer.

Finally, in the Semiotic Approach, the use and the study of the *sign language* help students learn about the meanings of certain cultural symbols in the target language. Students should know the words representing American culture such as Hollywood, cowboys, cross, Halloween, Christmas, etc. Besides, when the learners of English hear a native speaker saying ‘You are green’, they can learn this sentence means ‘You are novice’ by watching a film on video, television programs, listening to a live radio broadcast in the second language. Finally, the Semiotic Approach enlightens students to know about what certain signs, words, phrases represent in the culture of the second language. Thus, teachers of English can avoid any breakdown in communication in the target language.

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