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Sound American, not African

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Research Abstract Proposal

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According to Lai (2014), culture is an important element in the foreign language classroom. Some scholars believe that culture is the fifth language skill along with the four traditional skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) of English. Traditionally, learning English required learners to acquire some target language cultural knowledge (e.g. British culture and/or American culture) especially in the context of English as a foreign language. In another context Friday-Out states, a feature characteristic to all languages is “translationability” which has made accessing the texts of all languages largely possible. In the educational sector, translation is inevitable. Apart from subjecting several teaching texts for use in languages different from the source language, it is a linguistic asset in bilingual teachers. Many literary texts now enjoy broad or widespread readership as a result of translation.

Diverse culture was taught on a vague spectrum at G. W. Northcutt Elementary School. The ethnicity that dominated the area was African American. There was diversity but very little. The education was decent but it was not hands on enough. They focused more on disciplinary actions than anything. There seemed to be no middle ground as to what is expected of first generation Africans in America. I spoke English fluently because I was born in America. My Nigerian parents raised me in broken Yoruba at home and in the God fearing house. At that time in my young life learning the standard language was not difficult because I knew how to separate the two languages properly. I dealt with a lot of discrimination based off my last name and the accent that I did not know I had. Without my parents consent, school counselors placed myself and my brother in ESOL classes. ESOL classes were offered to students who were fluent in their native tongue that needed to be taught English. They assumed that just because we had African last names, we did not know English.

My questions would be, why did Black Americans discriminate against African culture? Why was my Nigerian culture an issue when it came to my learning? Why was my culture not embraced?

References:

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