The Evolving Role of Culture in English Language Teaching: Historical Insights and Contemporary Implications

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Abstract

This study delves into the changing function of culture in English language teaching (ELT) approaches, tracking its development from the late 19th century to the current day. The research shows that students can greatly benefit from developing their intercultural competence and understanding through the incorporation of cultural elements into language classes. Recognizing culture as an integral component of language proficiency is being more and more highlighted in this paper through a critical examination of distinct historical phases, regional variations in culture pedagogy (e.g., USA and Europe), and contemporary trends. Furthermore, it stresses the significance of ongoing research and collaboration in developing culture pedagogy, which is crucial for keeping language education adaptable to the demands of varied students in an increasingly globalized society. By shedding light on regional differences and current tendencies that encourage intercultural understanding and diverse viewpoints, this study adds to our knowledge of the development and current state of culture pedagogy in ELT. The research highlights the importance of culture as a transformative force in creating ELT settings that are welcoming to all students and sensitive to their cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: ELT, culture, historical, development

1. Theory and Literature Review

1.1 ELT Interaction between Culture and Language

The foundation of ELT is the complex web of relationships between language and culture, which in turn shapes pedagogical strategies and impacts language acquisition. A people's language is a reflection of their culture; it conveys the norms, values, and principles held by its speakers (Hurley & Chater, 2005). On the flip side, cultural expressions take many forms in language and speech (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012).

Culture differentiates one society from another by providing a foundation for interaction and identity formation based on shared experiences and traditions (Lee, 2006). It influences every part of human life, from creative expression to social dynamics, and shapes both individual actions and group views (Adaskou et al., 1990). Through its subtleties and communicative functions, language serves as a conduit for cultural transmission and both reflects and perpetuates cultural heritage (Jiang, 2000). Linguistic structures reflect cultural subtleties and social values through their semantic richness and contextual meanings, demonstrating the interaction between language and culture (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009).

Language and culture in today's globally interconnected world are constantly evolving, serving as means of communication across cultures as well as unique expressions of individual identities (Lee, 2006). Yet, according to Elmes (2013), the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that language does more than just reflect culture; it also influences our perceptions, interpretations, thoughts, and worldviews.

The importance of incorporating cultural elements into ELT has grown in light of this interconnectedness. Teachers can help their students become more fluent and sensitive interlocutors by placing them in authentic cultural situations where they can use the target language (Byram & Grundy, 2003).

Culture in ELT has gone through a lot of changes over the years, going from being a minor to a major focus of the field. This study seeks to promote inclusive and culturally responsive language learning environments by delving into the reciprocal nature of language and culture in order to shed light on the transformative power and pedagogical consequences of incorporating culture into ELT practices.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How has the portrayal of culture in ELT changed from the late 1800s to now?

2. When it comes to the incorporation of culture into ELT practices, what are the important historical phases?

3. How has the way culture been taught in English as a Second Language (ESL) changed over the years, especially in the United States, Europe, and other parts of the world?

4. How is culture being included in language classes today, and what are the current arguments and approaches to this topic?

5. How can we create language learning environments that are inclusive and responsive to different cultures by incorporating cultural practices into ELT practices? What are the pedagogical implications of this?

2. Methodology

Through the use of a qualitative methodology, this research delves into the past, present, and future of culture in ELT. The foundation of this approach is a comprehensive literature analysis of academic publications, books, conference proceedings, and government records spanning the period from the late 1800s to the current day. The purpose of this study is to bring together different points of view in order to better understand the pedagogical consequences and transformational power of incorporating culture into language classes. The research process encompasses the following key steps:

- Thorough Literature examination: Authors' seminal works, important ideas, historical developments, and current trends in ELT cultural education are recognized via a thorough examination. To provide a complex picture of culture's function in language instruction, this study draws on a variety of theoretical frameworks, empirical investigations, and regional viewpoints.

- Thorough Data Collection: Scholarly journals, libraries, databases, and online repositories are systematically combed for relevant material. Researchers use phrases like "culture in language teaching," "history of culture pedagogy," and "contemporary perspectives on culture in ELT" to find relevant articles to analyze.

- Thematic Data Analysis: The gathered literature is carefully examined to find commonalities, differences, historical periods, geographical variances, and current methods of cultural pedagogy in English language teaching. Sorting and combining data, finding trends, and establishing relationships between different perspectives are all part of this study.

- Interpretation and Synthesis: A unified story of culture in ELT, both historically and in the present day, is constructed by synthesising the results of the data analysis. This review brings together different points of view, focuses on important advancements, and explains the educational consequences of incorporating culture into language classes.

- Reflexivity and Ensuring Validity: It is important to remain reflexive throughout the research process in order to critically evaluate any biases, assumptions, or viewpoints that might impact how the results are interpreted. Furthermore,

stringent methodological processes are adhered to, as well as triangulation of sources and peer debriefing, to guarantee the research's validity.

This study sheds light on the origins, geographical differences, and current trends of cultural pedagogy in ELT by using a qualitative method and doing a thorough assessment of numerous sources. The study adds to our knowledge of the pedagogical importance and transformational potential of incorporating culture into language training by synthesizing

3. Discussion

3.1 History of Culture in Language Teaching

Cultural representation in language classrooms is ephemeral. There have been periods of greater or less cultural representation in language classrooms throughout history. Using a chronological format, many writers trace the evolution of cultural representation in second language instruction. Using Risager's (2007) taxonomy of cultural pedagogy as a guide, the following is a chronology of cultural representation in language instruction that pertains to the current study: The study of culture from the 1880s until the 1960s Pop culture education in the '70s.

Question: How culture is portrayed in language instruction back in the '80s in the 1990s, cultural representation in language classes and how culture is portrayed in language instruction now, in the twenty-first century.

The following is an analysis based on the identified stages that will help us better understand the historical evolution of ELT teaching culture.

Table 1.

Phase	Key Characteristics	Examples and Influential Figures
1880s - 1960s	- Debate over the incorporation of culture into language teaching	- Emergence of concepts like Realia and Realienkunde (Vietor, 1880)
	- Shift from emphasis on oral proficiency to systematic teaching of culture	- Jespersen's advocacy for teaching national ideologies (Germany, 1924)
	- Rise of the "Brotchen-Gretchen" model to analyze German cultural representation	- Leon Verlee's hierarchical structuring of culture teaching
1960s	- Increasing globalization necessitates intercultural communication	- USA begins representing culture in language teaching, influenced by geopolitical factors and social movements
	- Emergence of influential works like	- Development of practical methods

	Lado's "Linguistics Across Cultures" and Nelson's "Language and Culture"	for teaching culture (Lado, 1964; Nelson, 1964)
1970s	- Culture in language teaching movement gains momentum with focus on communication approach	- USA: Introduction of anthropological view of culture, development of practical teaching methods
	- Europe: Council of Europe promotes communicative language teaching, emergence of multiple views in language pedagogy	- Germany: Shift from nationalist to socially oriented approaches in language teaching, rise of linguistically oriented Landeskunde
	- France: Development of cultural-anthropological and society-oriented approaches to culture pedagogy	

"Realia" (things) and "Realienkunde" (cultural knowledge) gained popularity throughout the 1880s and 1890s, marking the beginning of the understanding of the role of culture in second language acquisition.

Pedagogical Implications: Students' comprehension and involvement with the language may be improved by exposing them to authentic cultural items and encouraging cultural awareness. Traditional cultural presentations may include prejudices and preconceptions, which educators should be aware of.

In the 1960s, there was a change in emphasis from teaching languages for specific cultures to teaching languages for intercultural communication, which allowed students to more easily and effectively communicate with individuals from other backgrounds.

On a pedagogical note, it is important that language learning activities foster an awareness of cultural diversity and an appreciation for the value of mutual respect and tolerance.

Analysis: Cultural pedagogy expanded and diversified substantially in the 1970s. While Germany moved away from nationalist to socially oriented ways, Europe experimented with different approaches, while the United States embraced anthropological viewpoints.

Implications for the classroom: Teachers should go beyond the textbook to include students' different cultural backgrounds into their lessons. Case studies, simulations, group work, and exposure to real-life cultural artifacts like movies, songs, and books are all part of the process. Students may get a deeper appreciation for diverse cultural behaviors and values via the use of anthropological viewpoints.

3.2 Pedagogical Implications (1980s): Culture Pedagogy in the USA

Table 2.

Culture Pedagogy in the USA (1980s)	Characteristics
Shift towards practical orientation and dynamic culture teaching	Crawford-Lange and Lange proposed a theme-and-problem oriented language program focusing on cultural themes (Risager, 2007)
Integration of culture with intercultural communication	Louise Damen emphasized culture teaching as part of intercultural communication in "Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension in the Language Classroom" (Risager, 2007)

A more pragmatic and student-focused approach emerged in the 1980s, as seen by the theme-and-problem-oriented model developed by Crawford-Lange and Lange. It is in line with the idea that culture and language instruction should be integrated. Louise Damen's work on cross-cultural dialogue only served to reinforce this pattern.

Pedagogical Considerations: One important thing for educators to do is to create theme units. Motivate students to think critically and actively by including real-world cultural topics into language classes.

Create educational opportunities that encourage students to engage in meaningful conversation about their cultures, a practice that promotes mutual understanding and appreciation.

Leverage original resources: Create genuine cultural experiences by including films, music, and literature from a variety of sources.

3.3 Culture Pedagogy in Europe

Europe made a shift towards valuing cultural variety and encouraging cultural identity, according to the analysis. The use of varied cultural elements in pedagogy demonstrates a more inclusive approach. Educators should not limit themselves to teaching about dominant cultures; they should also include cultures that are not part of the target language in order to provide an environment where students may learn about and value variety. Encourage pupils to reflect on and understand their own cultural origins while also learning to value and respect the many cultural identities of others. Promote critical thinking on cultural portrayals in order to dismantle prejudice and create an environment where all people feel valued and understood.

3.4 Role of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe advocated for the development of students' communicative ability and the incorporation of cultural elements into language curricula. According to Van Ek's concept, knowing one's own culture is crucial to become fluent in a language.

Implications for the classroom: teachers should create lessons and exercises that focus on: Encouraging students to gain understanding of many cultural backgrounds and viewpoints may help them become more culturally competent.

Make use of the materials provided by the Council of Europe: investigate their models and recommendations for successfully integrating cultural elements into their curricula.

3.5 Culture Pedagogy in West Germany

An analysis reveals that West Germany participated in critical conversations on culture pedagogy, researching alternative approaches such as "Alltagswissen" (which translates to "everyday life knowledge") and intercultural instruction. There were some that stressed the political and social issues (Doye), while others concentrated on the cultural experiences that people have on a daily basis (Firges, Melenk). Through this time period, a variety of viewpoints and continuous discussion were expressed.

Pedagogical Implications: in order to be effective, educators should embrace varied perspectives: There are many different methods to cultural education, and it is important to recognize.

Engage in critical self-reflection on their own activities, including the examination of any biases and the promotion of inclusiveness in their cultural education. Participate in professional development by keeping abreast of current conversations and research in the field of cultural pedagogy.

3.6 France's Approach to Teaching Culture

According to Louis Porcher, France made a move toward seeing culture via a factual lens, placing an emphasis on objective analysis. The conflict that exists in cultural teaching between sociological and fact-oriented viewpoints is reflected in this method. The following are some pedagogical implications: o Educators should strive to maintain a balance: Complement the presentation of factual information with chances for critical debate and personal reflection on problems pertaining to culture. Avoid only giving

"facts" about other cultures and instead urge students to critically assess how different civilizations are represented. This will help pupils develop their critical thinking skills.

Recognize the intricacy of that: Moving beyond basic generalizations, it is important to place an emphasis on the diversity and dynamic nature of cultures.

3.7 Pedagogical Implications (1980s - USA):

3.7.1 Characteristics

A move away from conventional, static techniques, with the goal of fostering student engagement with cultural topics; a shift toward practices that are both dynamic and practical in nature. Recognizing culture as the most important aspect of communication and placing an emphasis on contact and understanding between people who come from different backgrounds is an example of the integration of culture and intercultural communication.

This framework encourages critical thinking and conversation around meaningful cultural issues, and it also encourages interaction with a variety of views. It is a theme-and-problem focused curriculum, which was developed by Crawford-Lange and Lange.

This notion highlights the significance of integrating cultural information and abilities with the four standard language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in order to achieve successful communication. Culture learning is referred to as the fifth dimension (Damen). In terms of pedagogical implications:

- Developing thematic units involves designing interesting courses that revolve on topics that are both culturally meaningful and relevant, with the goal of fostering critical analysis and constructive debate.

- Make use of real materials: include multiple cultural voices and viewpoints via the use of cinema, music, literature, and other resources.

- Encourage intercultural discourse by providing many opportunities for students to engage in conversation and share their thoughts with people hailing from a variety of cultural backgrounds, so building an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. It is important to provide students with chances to exercise the skills and knowledge that are necessary to successfully traverse different cultural situations in order to develop multi-cultural competence.

Table 3.

Culture in Language Teaching during the 21st Century
Overview
With the expansion of English as a second language, culture pedagogy in language teaching has become a well-established network with numerous PhD scholars, international conferences, and associations dedicated to it (Risager, 2007). Europe, particularly, has been credited with housing the most publications on culture pedagogy in foreign language teaching, showcasing the diversity of approaches present in the region (Buttjes & Byram, 1991; Risager, 2007).
Culture Pedagogy in the USA during 21st Century
In the USA during the 2000s, scholars like Claire Kramsch focused on the relationship between language and culture, particularly emphasizing socialization and multilingualism in linguistics (Kramsch, 2013; Risager, 2007). Aneta Pavlenko's work in 2003 delved into the cognitive aspects of language teaching, highlighting the influence of a country's geopolitical situation on foreign language teaching content and status (Risager, 2007). The aftermath of 9/11 led to the launch of The National Security Language Initiative by President Bush, aimed at promoting reform, understanding, and respect for cultures (Waters, 2007; Risager, 2007).
Culture Pedagogy in Europe during 21st Century
The Council of Europe's publication of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEF) in 2001 served as a guideline for language teaching and assessment across Europe, emphasizing an integrative view (Buttjes & Byram, 1991; Risager, 2007). In Great Britain and France, research projects on culture pedagogy explored national paradigms where two cultures interacted, contributing to the evolving landscape of culture teaching (Risager, 2007). Michael Byram's influential publications addressed the representation of culture in language teaching, emphasizing intercultural understanding (Buttjes & Byram, 1991; Risager, 2007). Germany continued its debate on Didaktik des Fremdverstehens, with a focus on the role of literature in foreign language teaching (Buttjes & Byram, 1991; Risager, 2007). Sweden and Portugal also saw initiatives promoting intercultural awareness and internationalization in language teaching (Risager, 2007). Denmark initiated projects to redefine language teaching in the context of globalization, with a focus on culture in language pedagogy (Buttjes & Byram, 1991; Risager, 2007).
Culture Pedagogy outside USA and Europe during 21st Century
Australia witnessed increasing interest in culture pedagogy, with publications emphasizing critical culture representation in language teaching (Risager, 2007).
Present-day Approaches/Views on Incorporating Culture in Language Teaching
The Home Culture and the Target Culture Debate
Views vary regarding the incorporation of both home language culture and target language culture in language teaching. Some advocate for using students' home language culture to aid in second language acquisition, while others emphasize exposure to the target culture. Incorporating both cultures, termed an intercultural approach, is seen as fostering cross-cultural understanding and tolerance (Ariffin, 2006; Dordevic, 2009; Rodliyah & Muniroh, 2013).

3.7.2 21st Century Trends

- It is important to place emphasis on the connection that exists between language, culture, and social interaction (Kramsch).

- The recognition of cognitive components and the effect of geopolitical factors on language instruction (Pavlenko).

- A focus on promoting mutual respect and understanding amongst people of different cultural backgrounds (The National Security Language Initiative).

- Comprehensive approach to language instruction and evaluation (also known as CEF).

- The investigation of national paradigms in the context of cultural interaction (the United Kingdom and France).

- In Germany, there is ongoing discussion over the significance of literature in fostering intercultural understanding.

- Initiatives on a global scale that facilitate internationalization and intercultural understanding (Sweden, Portugal, and Denmark).

- A greater emphasis must be placed on critical cultural representation (Australia).

3.8 Present-day Approaches

3.8.1 The Home Culture and the Target Culture Debate

Emphasis on the home culture: makes use of the cultural information that is already there in order to enable language learning. Learners are immersed in the culture of the target group when the focus is on the target culture Intercultural approach: This strategy integrates both cultures in order to promote tolerance and understanding between different civilizations.

3.8.2 Pedagogical Implications

- It is recommended that you use an integrated approach, which involves incorporating language and culture learning into the overall curriculum.

- Use resources that represent a variety of cultural viewpoints and include real materials into your project.

- Encourage pupils to study cultural representations and challenge prejudices in order to foster critical thinking and encourage them to think strategically.

- Creating chances for children to connect with and learn from people of diverse cultures is an important step in fostering intercultural conversation at the school.

- When deciding on a cultural emphasis (home, target, or intercultural), it is important to take into account the learning setting, the requirements of the students, and the results that are intended.

- Consider the prejudices that you hold yourself: When developing teaching, don't forget to take into account your own cultural experience and any possible prejudices you may have.

- Maintain your awareness: Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of the most recent research and trends in the field of cultural pedagogy.

3.8.3 Approaches

Table 4.

Approaches to Incorporating Culture in Language Teaching
Communicative View
This approach views cultural elements in language teaching as merely serving the function of conveying teaching contents to learners, marginalizing the importance of cultural content (Byram & Grundy, 2003).
Classical Curriculum View
The classical curriculum view emphasizes language itself as a means to access the rich ideas of target communities, also assigning marginal importance to the function of language in providing cultural information (Byram & Grundy, 2003).
Instrumental or Culture-Free-Language View
This perspective sees foreign languages as carrying hidden political and cultural agendas of their respective target culture communities. It advocates for using the learners' home language to avoid exposing them to foreign cultural elements (Byram & Grundy, 2003).
Deconstructionist View
The deconstructionist view emphasizes the importance of understanding foreign language within its cultural context, drawing from critical discourse analysis to make learners aware of cultural influences on language (Byram & Grundy, 2003).
Competence View
The competence view stresses the significance of understanding a foreign language in its cultural background, believing that comprehension of language is intertwined with understanding its culture. It acknowledges the inseparability of language and culture (Byram & Grundy, 2003).

As defined by Holme (quoted in Byram & Grundy, 2003), this table provides an overview of the five effective methods that may be used to include culture into the teaching of language. We provide a concise explanation of each method, focusing on the viewpoint that each approach has on the function of culture in language instruction.

3.9 Five Key Approaches

- The communicative view perceives culture as a medium through which linguistic content may be communicated, hence downplaying the significance of culture in and of itself.

- The use of culture as a means to a goal should be avoided at all costs, since this has pedagogical implications. Explore different aspects of culture in its own right, with the goal of fostering awareness that goes beyond language abilities.

- Traditional Curriculum Perspective: o Analysis: Places an emphasis on language as a doorway to ideas about the target culture, while downplaying the function that language plays in communicating cultural knowledge. Recognize the intrinsic cultural context that is present within language itself. This is an important pedagogical consideration. Explore the cultural values and viewpoints that are contained within language via the use of language analysis.

- Third, the Instrumental or Culture-Free-Language View: o Analysis: Considers foreign languages to have the ability to impose hidden cultural agendas, and advocates for the use of one's own language in order to avoid being exposed to other cultures.

- Concerning the implications for education, it is important to recognize and talk about the possibility of cultural bias in language learning resources. Develop your ability to think critically and be aware of the cultural differences and the misconceptions that may occur.

- Deconstructionist Perspective: o Analysis: Places an emphasis on comprehending language as well as the cultural environment in which it is used by means of critical discourse analysis, therefore revealing the cultural effects that are exerted on language.

- Implementing activities that require critical thinking in order to investigate and deconstruct cultural representations that are encoded in language is an important pedagogical consideration. Encourage children to examine and confront their own prejudices and preconceptions about the world.

- Competence View: o Analysis: Brings attention to the inseparability of language and culture, highlighting the significance of having a grasp of both in order to successfully communicate in a language.

- Pedagogical Implications: Create courses that combine language learning with cultural learning in order to cultivate a comprehensive awareness of how language operates within a particular cultural setting.

4. Findings

4.1 Historical Development

As a result of the effect of a variety of variables, such as globalization and shifting social viewpoints, culture pedagogy has experienced continual transformation over the course of its historical development.

A substantial change toward an emphasis on intercultural communication and critical engagement with a variety of cultural views occurred throughout the decade of the 1970s. The intricacy of the area has been brought to light by the fact that throughout history, there has been a continuous argument and conversation on the most successful methods of teaching culture.

4.2 Pedagogical Implications

- Develop learning settings that encourage cultural sensitivity, respect, and critical thinking abilities. This is something that educators should do.

- Utilize cultural representations that are genuine, varied, and inclusive in the activities and resources that they use for teaching.

- Case studies, simulations, conversations, and interaction with real cultural resources are some examples of the types of teaching techniques that should be used in addition to the more conventional practices.

- Develop intercultural competency by providing students with chances to investigate their own cultural origins, engage in critical thought on cultural representations, and learn about other cultures.

- Take a moment to examine their own prejudices and make sure that their teaching of culture is an inclusive experience.

4.3 Contemporary Trends

Over the course of the 21st century, there has been an increasing focus placed on the following: Integrating language and cultural learning across the curriculum. To encourage critical thinking and to challenge preconceived notions about other cultures.

Improving the ability of people from different backgrounds to communicate and understand one another across cultural boundaries.

4.4 Approaches to Culture Teaching

The incorporation of culture into language instruction encompasses a variety of techniques, each of which offers important views.

There is no one strategy that can be used everywhere; thus, teachers should choose the approach that best suits their students' needs, learning objectives, and cultural settings, or blend features from a variety of techniques. The following are some important approaches:

The communicative view is one that emphasizes the use of culture in order to transmit linguistic content. "Explore cultural elements beyond merely using them as a tool," is the pedagogical connotation of this statement.

Language is emphasized as a bridge to thoughts about the target culture in the classical curriculum view. Pedagogical implication: Apply language analysis in order to investigate the cultural values and views that are entrenched in the language.

Advocates supporting the use of one's native language in order to eliminate the possibility of cultural bias in the process of learning the target language have the instrumental or culture-free language view. In the context of education, this means that it is important to discuss the possibility of cultural prejudice and to encourage critical thinking about cultural differences.

Critical discourse analysis is used by the deconstructionist viewpoint in order to get an understanding of the cultural effects that are exerted on language. Encourage pupils to engage in critical analysis and deconstruction of cultural representations. This is an important pedagogical aspect.

Concerning language ability, the Competence View places an emphasis on the relationship that exists between language and culture. Pedagogical implication: curriculum should be designed to include cultural and linguistic learning.

5. Conclusion

The fascinating history, many approaches, and current developments of culture in language instruction have all been covered in this research. Culture pedagogy has evolved into a dynamic and complex field since its beginnings as a means of teaching languages via the incorporation of cultural components. A number of critical sectors have seen significant change over this journey.

To begin, there has been a shift in focus toward intercultural communication, which places an emphasis on the value of genuine, courteous dialogue between people of different cultural backgrounds. Secondly, there is an increasing push to help students develop their critical thinking abilities by having them investigate more complex cultural narratives and examine cultural stereotypes. Thirdly, educators are becoming more and more vocal about the need of valuing other points of view and recognizing the depth and variety of cultural practices.

This investigation has shown that there is no one best way to include culture into language instruction, but rather a wide variety of techniques. Learning goals, student demographics, and cultural context are more important considerations for determining the best method. Teachers are able to personalize their lessons and create engaging classrooms because of this adaptability. Several important takeaways for language teachers are apparent when considering the future

To begin, we must accept that language is inseparable from its cultural setting and fully embrace the inherent relationship between the two. Facilitating a comprehensive grasp of both culture and language may be achieved by educators via the integration of cultural insights into language training.

Second, teachers should help students develop analytic thinking and tolerance by exposing them to a variety of cultural representations and urging them to analyze them critically while also appreciating the value of other points of view.

At last, teachers can use technology to their advantage by connecting their pupils with people all over the globe and giving them real cultural experiences. Teachers may help their pupils succeed in today's multicultural and more globalized society by adopting these concepts and putting them into practice in the classroom. In the end, learning a new language opens doors to a world of shared understanding and connection, encouraging an attitude of gratitude and respect for the diverse range of human experiences.

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