

Investigating the Role of EFL Teachers in Developing Students' Cultural Awareness at University Level

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Received: March 15, 2014 Accepted: April 12, 2014 Online Published: September 25, 2014

Abstract

Learning a foreign language goes well beyond the mere task of assembling lexical items in grammatically accurate sentences. It rather involves learning to communicate with others in the sense that language and communication necessitate engagement with culture. Regarding the need to investigate the role of teachers in developing students' cultural awareness in the different contexts of foreign language teaching, the current study endeavours to carry out a comparison between the role of teachers of College of Arts, College of Education and College of Basic Education in developing their students' cultural awareness. To be more specific, it aims to investigate teachers' opinions of the role of culture in teaching and learning a foreign language. The study is designed in the light of one main null hypothesis, and two sub-hypotheses derived from it. To prove the validity of these hypotheses, a sample of English-as-a-Foreign-Language teachers of *conversation, reading comprehension, poetry, novel and drama* at the departments of English of the aforementioned colleges has been chosen. The sample comprised 32 teachers: 14 from College of Arts, 10 from College of Education and 8 from College of Basic Education; 19 males and 13 females; 16 teachers of linguistics and 16 teachers of literature. The results show that Male Teachers, and Teachers of Linguistics prioritise expanding the linguistic dimension over the (inter)cultural one and teaching linguistic competence more than intercultural competence; a point that is also emphasized by Teachers of College of Basic Education. In the same vein, the latter teachers, and Female Teachers think that an emphasis of foreign cultures can contribute to students' loss of cultural identity. Finally, the study further reveals that Teachers of Literature accentuate that culture teaching increases the students' already existing stereotypes of other peoples and cultures.

Key words: culture, Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, cultural awareness, intercultural competence, third culture, identity.

Introduction

A fact that has long been established is that language and culture are strongly linked to each other, and as such a crucial aspect of learning a foreign language (henceforth, FL) has been learning its

culture. To be more specific, teaching an FL is not the mere impartment of syntactic structures or new vocabulary items and expressions. It rather integrates, or should integrate, the foreign cultural aspects that accompany the language itself. This is so because effective communication is usually more than the memorization of proper grammatical formations and the accumulation of lexical items. To use English effectively, one needs to understand the cultural aspects closely related to the language.

Yet, English Language Teaching (henceforth, ELT), almost everywhere, heavily emphasises the components of the language, i.e. its sounds, words and grammatical structures, and neglects the cultivation of the students' cultural awareness. Accordingly, when meeting people from other cultures, students feel short of the means to communicate appropriately. This is added to the fact that learners of English as a foreign language (henceforth, EFL) are unaware of the foreign culture, usually think according to their train of thought, and duly replace the foreign cultural patterns by ones from their own. In other words, they use their own native cultural norms as criteria to communicate and value people from other cultures.

At university level in Iraq, it is noticed that the main concern of Teachers of English is to enable students pass the exam; an aim that emphasises linguistic competence on account of intercultural competence. This means that teachers do not pay much attention to students' acquisition of cultural knowledge and development of cultural awareness. As a result, students' learning of EFL does not go beyond a set of correct utterances devoid of real situations. Added to that, students can produce grammatically correct sentences, yet their language may appear awkward to English native speakers or even lead to misunderstanding, as they frequently feel helpless to use the FL and understand its appropriate use in normal intercultural communication.

The current research paper aims, in the main, at highlighting the very close pertinence of 'culture' to the process of FL learning and teaching. It also attends closely to the concept of 'cultural awareness' and underpins its positive role in developing both proficiency and success in English. Finally, the current research aims at identifying the extent of EFL teachers' awareness of the importance of culture in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

The present study is conducted to validate the following main hypothesis and its sub-hypotheses:

1. There are no statistically significant differences between EFL university teachers regarding their opinions of the role of culture in teaching and learning an FL, in terms of their various colleges.
 - a) There are no statistically significant differences between EFL university teachers regarding their opinions of the role of culture in teaching and learning an FL, in terms of their sex.
 - b) There are no statistically significant differences between EFL university teachers regarding their opinions of the role of culture in teaching and learning an FL, in terms of their specialisation.

In addition to the theoretical part that attends very closely to many topics relevant to the subject of investigation, and in an attempt to investigate cultural awareness in EFL classrooms at university level, a questionnaire form has been designed. It was administered to three samples of EFL teachers at the departments of English/ College of Arts, College of Education and College of Basic Education/ University of Mosul during the academic year 2012-2013.

The present study is limited to the teachers of *conversation, reading comprehension, poetry, novel and drama* at the departments of English of the aforesaid colleges during the academic year 2012-2013.

Although the current study is not the first of its type, it is hoped that it will contribute to EFL teachers' better understanding of culture and its importance in the FL classroom.

Concept of Culture

Culture is a thorny word, and FL learners face problems that have vastness as that of the concept of culture. It is unanimously considered one of the most obscure and difficult social science terms to define. Williams (1983), therefore, believes that "culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (p. 87). The word 'culture', from the Latin *colere*, with its root meaning 'to cultivate', generally refers to patterns of human activity. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1954), two well-known American anthropologists, revealed approximately 164 different definitions of the word culture in their study. They outline that the first attempt to define culture was made by anthropologists. For instance, in the first lines of his book *Primitive Culture* (1920), originally stated in (1871), Taylor defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (p. 1).

Culture is not innate; rather it is learned through socialisation (interactions with others) and observation. At a broader level, Goodenough (1957) maintains that culture is what every individual must know in order for him/her to operate in a manner acceptable to the members of a certain society. By this definition, one can notice that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour or emotions. It is rather an organisation of these things. It is the formation of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and hence interpreting them.

Brooks (1975) distinguished between "culture as everything in human life" and "culture as the best of everything in human life". He calls the first sense Culture BBV: Beliefs, Behaviour and Values. The second sense is Culture MLA: Music, Literature and Art (p. 20). This distinction is sometimes referred to as culture and Culture, or more commonly, as culture and civilisation. Furthermore, Rivers (1981) maintains that 'civilisation' (or formal culture) traditionally comprises such aspects as history, geography, arts, literary achievements, political, economical, educational and/or religious institutions, and the main philosophical concepts of the society. On the other hand, 'culture' includes aspects of everyday lifestyle of ordinary people and their values, beliefs and prejudices.

According to Kramersch (1995), there are two different ways of understanding culture, viz. culture in form and culture in concept. The first one is derived from the study of humanities. Here, culture is referred to as the way a social group represents itself and others through material production. The other way of understanding culture views the phenomenon as derived from the contributions of social sciences and involves attitudes, beliefs, ways of thinking, behaving and remembering shared by members of a community. Kramersch (1998), later on, defines culture as “membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings” (p. 10). Thus, through culture learning one comes to know and believe whatever one has to do to operate in a manner acceptable to other members in that society.

Viewed from another perspective, culture is defined as an elastic, dynamic concept; a “complex frame of reference that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols and meanings that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community” (Ting-Toomy, 1999: p. 10). On the other hand, Scollon and Scollon (2001) use the word ‘culture’ in its anthropological sense, comprising the “customs, worldview, language, kinship system, social organisation and other taken-for-granted day-to-day practices of a people which set that group apart as a distinctive group” (p. 139). This definition implies that any aspect of the ideas, communications or behaviours of a group of people gives them a distinctive identity and is used to organise their internal sense of cohesion and membership.

Language and Culture

To begin with, the relation of language to culture is that part to whole. It is in the course of learning one’s language and how to use it that every human being acquires the bulk of his/her culture. Hence, language is not only a part of culture; it is a major instrument for learning it (Goodenough, 1957: 169). In the same vein, Brooks (1971) affirms that “language is a segment of and a bearer of culture and should be treated culturally and used by the students with concern for the message it bears” (pp. 57-58). Most accurately, Rivers (1981) states that “language cannot be separated completely from the culture in which it is deeply imbedded” (p. 315). On his part, Byram (1989) believes that language refers to something beyond itself; the meaning it carries frequently seems especially relevant than the language itself, and so a language cannot be used without carrying meaning and referring beyond itself. In this sense, a language maintains and conveys culture. It is a carrier of culture. More specifically, language is a reflection of culture and culture is a reflection of language.

Moreover, Byram (1991) states that “language is not simply a reflector of an objective cultural reality. It is an integral part of that reality through which other parts are shaped and interpreted” (p. 18). He goes on stating that if students are taught language without culture, they would build their knowledge on their stereotypes and they may convey the information they get about English language in the context of their own culture. He believes that if language is taught away from its culture, students “cannot be said to be learning an [FL] in the proper sense; they are learning a

codified version of their own” (Byram, 1991: p. 18). This proves the inevitable interrelated relationship between language and culture.

Underlying the contemporary notion of the language-culture relationship are the writings of Sapir and Whorf. What became known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis suggests that the language one uses determines the way in which s/he views and thinks about the world around him/her; it is a very influential but controversial theory concerning the relationship between language, thought and culture. What this theory suggests is this: one’s language helps mould his/her way of thinking and, consequently, different languages probably express one’s unique ways of understanding the world (Hudson, 1996). Put it differently, according to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, people do not use language just to describe what they say and think; language affects the way people say words and build sentences and the way people see what they describe. That is to say, language and culture are indispensable and they go hand in hand. The theory suggests that one perceives the world in terms of categories found in his/her native language and what is found in one language may not be found in the other because of cultural differences.

Kramersch (1998: 3) summarises the relationship between language and culture stating that language expresses cultural reality, embodies cultural reality and symbolises cultural reality. Hence, language and culture are inseparably interrelated; understanding one requires understanding the other. As a result, learning an FL means more than mere linguistic competence; i.e. language is not about neutral codes or grammatical rules. If one selects language without being aware of its cultural implications, s/he may at best not communicate successfully and at worst send the message. Language learning is culture learning. Thus, language and culture should be taught simultaneously.

The Importance of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Culture and the need to teach it in FL classrooms have been an ongoing debate for many years. Much has been written in favor of, and against teaching culture in language courses. As early as 1959, Politizer stated that language teachers must be interested in the study of culture not because they necessarily want to teach the culture of the other country but because they have to teach it. He goes on stating that “if [one] teaches language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, [s/he is] teaching meaningless symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning” (pp. 100-101). Accordingly, in spite of their awareness of the grammatical structures, vocabulary items and ways of pronouncing words, EFL students, including the Iraqi ones, are still in need of some cultural knowledge.

Damen (1987) explicates that “culture learning is a natural process in which human beings internalise the knowledge needed to function in a certain societal group. It may occur in the native context as enculturation or in a non-native context as acculturation” (pp. 140-141). ‘Acculturation’, according to Acton and Felix (1986), is the process of the gradual adaptation to the target culture without necessarily forsaking one’s native language identity. ‘Enculturation’, contrariwise, is the

process of “learning one’s native culture which is essentially complete for those normal individuals who are able to participate in the environment in which they are reared” (Chastain, 1988: p. 299).

The importance of cultural awareness in FLT emerges fundamentally from the fact that most language students are not exposed to the cultural aspects of the FL in use and, hence, they seem to face considerable hardship while conveying meaning to its native speakers (Bada, 2000). Most importantly, culture should be taught from the very beginning of language learning and is not delayed until students have acquired some of the language. One possible reason is that delaying input about culture does not only delay culture learning, but also leads to false culture learning as a result of a lack of awareness of difference between the foreign culture and one’s own. Taken together, the teaching of language and culture, thereto, leads to an understanding of the different ways language and culture affect how one sees the world, communicates about the world, and reflects upon seeing and communicating (Liddicoat et al, 2003).

In the light of the preceding propositions, the influence of culture on LT can be detected in two ways. First, linguistically, by influencing the semantic, pragmatic and discourse levels of language. Second, pedagogically, by affecting the choice of language materials since the cultural content of language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology will be of considerable importance when deciding upon the language materials (McKay, 2003). However, despite its great importance for language learning, culture as an explicit subject is often neglected in EFL classrooms. On this point, Genc and Bada (2005) believe that “culture classes have a humanising and a motivating effect on the language learner and the learning process” (p. 75).

According to Liddicoat (2008), teaching culture should begin at the very beginning of LT. Thus, if teaching the culture is left, students will have already created their own understanding of context for the language in use; an understanding they suppose not to learn. Language is not learnt away from culture which can be filled in later; rather students create their own cultural hypotheses as they learn. The lack of a cultural input does not leave an unoccupied cultural surplus. Instead, it reinforces a cultural space which is filled by irregular and unanalysed presumptions based on assumptions and understandings from the students’ native culture.

In a nutshell, it can be said that culture and LT cannot be taught separately. As such, by learning about the various aspects of a foreign culture, students typically expand their cultural view into two directions, i.e. they learn their own and the others’ culture.

Cultural Awareness

Students’ cultural awareness toward the FL and its cultural aspects has a great impact on their English learning practice and performance. English learning does not merely mean the memorization of the grammatical formations (or exercises) and the accumulation of the lexical items. The inseparability of the language and culture makes English language teaching and learning a process of acknowledging and accepting the English cultural features and elements. Hall (1959)

believes that cultural awareness involves uncovering and understanding one's own culturally conditioned behaviour and thinking as well as the patterns of others. Thus, the process involves not only perceiving the similarities and differences in other cultures but also recognising the ones of the native culture or our own 'hidden culture'.

Cultural awareness entails an understanding not only of the culture of the language being studied but also of the students' own culture. This is viewed as an intrinsic part of language learning and without it, successful communication may be impossible (Byram, 1989). Accordingly, cultural awareness teaching should involve both viewpoints, making students both ethnographer and informant, and allowing them to gain a perspective through comparison which is neither entirely one nor the other (Byram, 1991). Viewed from another point of view, Kramsch (1993) states that if culture is seen as mere information conveyed by the language, not as a feature of language itself, in this case, cultural awareness becomes an educational objective in itself, separate from language. But, if language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of LT. In this sense, cultural awareness must then be viewed both as enabling language proficiency and as being the outcome of reflection on language proficiency.

According to Tomalin and Stempleski (1993), cultural awareness means "sensitivity to the impact of culturally induced behaviour on language use and communication" (p. 5). There are three qualities concerning cultural awareness suggested by Tomalin and Stempleski, namely

- awareness of one's behaviour influenced by his/her culture,
- awareness of others' behaviour influenced by their own culture, and
- ability to explain one's own cultural point of view.

The implication is that such awareness will lead to empathy; an important step in successful language learning being the capacity to identify with the FL culture.

Thus far, it is obvious that when one talks about cultural awareness, s/he does not mean only his/her culture but also other people's. Lack of cultural awareness will definitely cause miscommunication. Therefore, raising cultural awareness is crucial because it helps promote language learning and communication success. This clearly reflects the relationship between LT and cultural awareness. In consequence, Byram et al (1994) assert that

"a growing awareness of the culture of the people who speak the language of study is intrinsic to the learning of it and it is in this context that the areas of experience have been defined in the second part of the programmes of study. Without the cultural dimension, successful communication is often difficult ... comparison between the learner's own way of life and that of the other language community are an essential means to better understanding of both" (p. 75)

Building on that, Byram (1997: 65) contends that cultural awareness involves a reflexive aspect, a questioning of students' cultural identity and a relativisation of their naturalised, taken-for-granted values, beliefs and actions. It also involves a comparative methodology which, through

juxtaposition, facilitates understanding of others, of foreign cultural values, beliefs and practices. Besides, Krasner (1999) maintains that FL skills require some background cultural knowledge. He explains that students might have difficulties in understanding a foreign text not because of the lack of language skills but because of a missing link in cultural knowledge.

By the way of summary, cultural awareness should not be raised merely to have students understand the culture(s) of the FL only. Students need to be aware of their own culture(s) as well. Thus, cultural awareness should be set as one of the major aims in modern FLT. Additionally, the more profound, skillful and detailed study of the cultural aspects an EFL student gains, the less communicative barriers will occur in his/her actual use of the FL.

Intercultural Competence

After having introduced cultural awareness and cultural knowledge and their relation with FLT, it is worth mentioning that these two concepts constitute important elements of the 'Intercultural Competence' (henceforth, IC). However, to conceptualise IC, it might be useful to think first about cultural competence. Cultural competence is something individuals all have; it is the capacity that enables them to be members within their own society. Like language, this is something not heavily thought about as one has been culturally competent as long as s/he can remember. Also similar to language, cultural competence developed through a gradual process of enculturation beginning at birth (Fantini, 2012: 270).

Meyer (1991) defines IC as the capacity of a person to behave adequately and in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures. IC in addition refers to the ability of "stabilising one's self-identity in the process of cross-cultural mediation, and of helping other people to stabilise their self-identity" (p. 137). On the other hand, Byram (1997: 33) affirms that teaching culture with language strengthens the five so-called 'savoirs' or capacities that constitute IC, or sociocultural competence (Byram, 2003: 60). These 'savoirs' are also complementary to language learners' communicative competence and are believed to be the factors needed for effective communication. They are:

1. The attitude factor (*savoir etre*) refers to interest and clarity, willingness to delay unbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.
2. Knowledge (*savoirs*) of community groups and their outputs and applications in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country and of the common stages of societal and personal interaction.
3. The first skill set, skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), describes a capacity to understand a document or event from another culture, to expound it and link it to documents from one's own.
4. The second skill set, skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre faire*), subsumes the capacity to utilise knowledge, attitudes and skills under the restriction of real-time communication and interaction.
5. Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) is the ability to assess critically, and on the foundation of distinct criteria prospects, applications and outputs in one's own and other cultures and countries (Byram, 1997, 2003).

Most importantly, these five *savoirs* should not be regarded as isolated components but rather as components that are integrated and intertwined with the various dimensions of communicative competence (Sercu, 2002).

Moreover, Byram and Fleming (1998) claim that someone who has IC “has knowledge of one, or, preferably, more cultures and social identities and has the capacity to discover and relate to new people from other contexts for which they have not been prepared directly” (p. 9). In short, IC is the ability to use language in culturally appropriate ways.

Additionally, LT with an intercultural dimension continues to help students acquire the linguistic competence needed to communicate in speaking or writing and to formulate what they want to say/write in correct and appropriate ways. It also develops students IC, namely their ability to ensure a shared understanding with people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality (Byram et al, 2002). Taken together, Liddicoat (2011) believes that IC involves awareness besides the ability of analysing, explaining and elaborating this awareness. The development of awareness and knowing of language and culture, for ‘the intercultural language learner’, is established “through the experience of another language and through this language another culture” (p. 839). Recently, Barrett et al (2013) propose that the components of IC encompass “attitudes, knowledge and understanding, skills and actions” (p. 7-8). Still, it is worthwhile to state that for these components to be effective, they need to be organised and put into practice through action during intercultural encounters.

In a nutshell, IC requires students to develop a view of two cultures (their own and that of FL) and a position where they mediate between these two. Consequently, both EFL students and teachers need to develop IC in order to recognise openly that people are not all the same beneath the skin.

The Role of Foreign Language Teachers in Developing Cultural Awareness

The fact that a noticeable number of FL teachers, including Iraqi EFL teachers, are not native speakers of the language and that most of them have never lived within the foreign culture does not mean that they are unqualified for their role as teachers of language and culture. The culture teacher, as Trivonovitch (1980) argues, has to realise that since his/her own culture has been learned subconsciously and affectively, it is now necessary to become aware of the different patterns of his/her culture. Through this, students can constructively be guided in their own adventure into “discovering, perceiving, and proving their unique values and patterns of behaviour” (p. 554).

Rivers (1981) believes that whether native speakers or FL teachers, they need to acquire sufficient knowledge of the way cultures are organised, their value system, institutions and interpersonal relationships. Where or when possible, teachers should live for some time in both the cultures (i.e. students’ native and the FL culture) to be taught. But if this is not possible, teachers must compensate for this lack by disciplined reading. Teachers need to read what the people living in the

foreign culture read, namely books, newspapers, magazines, etc., listen to radio and watch television broadcasts where accessible and films made for local use. Also, whenever possible, teachers and students should contact with native speakers and discuss all kinds of subjects with them.

Most importantly is that teachers are not in the classroom to focus on the prejudices of their students nor to attack their deeply held beliefs and values. Therefore, “any presentation of cultural material must be objective, analytic, and informative” (Rivers, 1981: p. 340). On the other hand, Dunnet et al (1986) suggest that in addition to training students for appropriate linguistic performance, FL teachers must also lead their students to be aware of the proper linguistic performance in various types of intercultural situations. Viewed from another perspective, Morain (1987) states that if FL teachers are to assist bridging gaps in understanding between cultures, they must teach more than verbal language. They are responsible to help their students be aware of belief systems along with their own and an understanding of the differences in modes of perception and expression.

Byram (1991) portrays an FL teacher as ‘mediator’ whose task is to help students understand themselves and the world around them. That is, the specific task as a teacher of language and culture is to help students realise that the world is neither monolingual nor mono-cultural. Hence, successful students would gain a perspective which is not simply an expansion of their existing horizons but one which enables them to see new and quite different horizons. In other words, EFL teachers should not force their students to admire British and/or American culture but rather show them that English may become a tool for widening their horizons.

The integration of culture into FL lessons is a necessity in order to teach students in the best possible manner and help them learn an FL correctly, successfully and importantly appropriately. Accordingly, Kramsch (1993) advises teachers and students to create what she calls ‘a third culture’ in the FL classrooms which is a conceptual space that identifies the FL classrooms as the crossroads of multiple world of discourse. She further recommends teachers to encourage students to create this third culture while, at the same time, not allowing either the home or the foreign culture to hold them hostage to its certain beliefs and value systems.

Thus far, it goes without saying that FL teachers should be foreign culture teachers. They should have the ability to experience and analyse both the home and foreign cultures through comparative studies (Byram et al, 1994). Likewise, what teachers should always have in mind when teaching culture is the need to raise their students’ “awareness of their own culture, to provide them with some kind of meta-language in order to discuss culture, and to cultivate a degree of intellectual objectivity essential in cross-cultural analyses” (Straub, 1999: p. 19).

A final point suggested by Gonen and Saglam (2012) is that FL teachers should pay close attention to cultural variation within the language classroom, since the classroom itself has its own cultures.

Therefore, ‘culturally responsive teachers’ are those who come to a comprehensive understanding of cultural diversity within the classroom and within the FL. Such an understanding necessitates teachers to focus on cultural differences in the classroom as a starting point; thus driving students to develop intercultural awareness. Once such awareness is produced, the teacher can, subsequently, attend to the similarities and differences between his/her students’ own culture and the foreign one. Moreover, in order for teachers to be culturally responsive, they need to concentrate on their own definitions of culture and pay noticeable attention to the influences that culture can have on the students and teachers’ behaviour.

To sum up, when learning an FL, one will inevitably encounter a new culture. The foreign culture may bear some similarities to the native one but for the most part, they may vary from each other. As such, it is the language teacher’s capacity and responsibility that help his/her students understand others as a basis for the acquisition of intercultural and communicative competence. The teacher is therefore a professional mediator between students and FLs and cultures.

Method

To investigate the role of EFL teachers in developing students’ cultural awareness at university level, a questionnaire that subsumes a number of items was constructed as a means for eliciting data after intensive reviewing of the related literature. Likert scale questions to create a compact questionnaire were used to collect general information and details at the same time (See Appendix (A)).

Participants

EFL teachers at the departments of English, Colleges of Arts, Education and Basic Education/ University of Mosul form the population of the present research. In total, there were 32 respondents. They were 14 from College of Arts (henceforth, CATs) with the percentage of 43.75% as a majority, followed by 31.25% or 10 teachers from College of Education (henceforth, CETs) and 25% or 8 teachers from College of Basic Education (henceforth, CBETs). Also, 19 male teachers (henceforth, MTs); 13 female teachers (henceforth, FTs); 16 teachers of linguistics (henceforth, Ts/Ling.) and 16 teachers of literature (henceforth, Ts/Lit.).

Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

A precise analysis of the collected data for a research work usually comes to the forefront immediately after setting the aims, formulating the hypotheses, identifying and applying the suitable instruments, and scoring the obtained data. As such, t-test and ANOVA test formulas have been used to analyse the data. Such statistical tools are thought to be the most appropriate ones to analyse the responses given by the sample of teachers. In the following pages, the results of the analysis will be outlined and duly discussed in relation to the set hypotheses.

The First Null Hypothesis

The first hypothesis states that:

“There are no statistically significant differences between EFL university teachers regarding their opinions of the role of culture in teaching and learning an FL, in terms of their various colleges”.

Table (1): ANOVA Results for CATs, CETs and CBETs' Opinions of the Role of Culture in Teaching and Learning an FL

Descriptive				
Items	College	N	\bar{M}	SD
1	CATs	14	3.6429	1.39268
	CETs	10	2.1000	1.10050
	CBETs	8	2.8750	1.45774
2	CATs	14	4.6429	1.15073
	CETs	10	4.1000	0.73786
	CBETs	8	4.5000	1.41421
3	CATs	14	4.5714	1.22250
	CETs	10	4.3000	1.56702
	CBETs	8	3.8750	1.35620
4	CATs	14	3.5714	1.15787
	CETs	10	2.7000	1.76698
	CBETs	8	3.0000	0.75593
5	CATs	14	4.3571	1.78054
	CETs	10	4.5000	0.84984
	CBETs	8	5.1250	0.99103
6	CATs	14	4.4286	1.65084
	CETs	10	5.3000	0.67495
	CBETs	8	4.7500	1.03510
7	CATs	14	4.6429	1.08182
	CETs	10	4.0000	1.05409
	CBETs	8	5.5000	0.75593
8	CATs	14	3.1429	1.23146
	CETs	10	2.5000	1.08012
	CBETs	8	3.5000	1.77281
9	CATs	14	4.1241	0.96077
	CETs	10	4.1000	0.56765
	CBETs	8	5.0000	0.75593
10	CATs	14	2.0714	1.07161
	CETs	10	2.3000	1.25167
	CBETs	8	2.7500	1.83225
11	CATs	14	4.7143	0.72627
	CETs	10	4.2000	1.03280
	CBETs	8	4.8750	0.99103
12	CATs	14	5.0714	1.14114
	CETs	10	4.5000	0.84984

	CBETs	8	5.1250	0.64087		
Total	CATs	14	49.8571	5.18663		
	CETs	10	44.6000	5.75809		
	CBETs	8	50.8750	5.38351		
ANOVA Results						
Items	S.O.V	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F cal.	F tab.
1	Between Groups	13.979	2	6.990	3.975	3.33
	Within Groups	50.989	29	1.758		(2,29)
	Total	64.969	31			(0.05)
2	Between Groups	1.761	2	0.880	0.707	3.33
	Within Groups	36.114	29	1.245		(2,29)
	Total	37.875	31			(0.05)
3	Between Groups	2.471	2	1.236	0.659	3.33
	Within Groups	54.404	29	1.876		(2,29)
	Total	56.875	31			(0.05)
4	Between Groups	4.690	2	2.345	1.373	3.33
	Within Groups	49.529	29	1.708		(2,29)
	Total	54.219	31			(0.05)
5	Between Groups	3.129	2	1.565	0.831	3.33
	Within Groups	54.589	29	1.882		(2,29)
	Total	57.719	31			(0.05)
6	Between Groups	4.440	2	2.220	1.369	3.33
	Within Groups	47.029	29	1.622		(2,29)
	Total	51.469	31			(0.05)
7	Between Groups	10.004	2	5.002	4.966	3.33
	Within Groups	29.214	29	1.007		(2,29)
	Total	39.219	31			(0.05)
8	Between Groups	4.754	2	2.377	1.320	3.33
	Within Groups	52.214	29	1.800		(2,29)
	Total	56.969	31			(0.05)
9	Between Groups	5.569	2	2.784	4.272	3.33
	Within Groups	18.900	29	0.652		(2,29)
	Total	24.469	31			(0.05)
10	Between Groups	2.346	2	1.173	0.648	3.33
	Within Groups	52.529	29	1.811		(2,29)
	Total	54.875	31			(0.05)

11	Between Groups	2.387	2	1.193	1.483	3.33
	Within Groups	23.332	29	0.805		(2,29)
	Total	25.719	31			(0.05)
12	Between Groups	2.415	2	1.208	1.331	3.33
	Within Groups	26.304	29	0.907		(2,29)
	Total	28.719	31			(0.05)
Total	Between Groups	222.979	2	111.490	3.799	3.33
	Within Groups	850.989	29	29.344		(2,29)
	Total	1073.969	31			(0.05)

Discussion

As the preceding table indicates, it is obvious that items 1, 7 and 9 have computed 'f' values that are higher than the tabulated value (3.33) at (0.05) alpha level of significance and (2,29) degrees of freedom.

Regarding item 1 which reads that "In an EFL classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching language", the statistically significant difference is for the benefit of CATs, as its mean score (3.6429) is higher than that of CETs and CEBTs which is (2.1000) and (2.8750) respectively. As such, CATs think that teaching culture is as important as teaching language in EFL classroom. Whereas for the items 7 and 9, the statistically significant difference is in favour of CBETs, as their mean scores (5.5000, 5.0000) are higher than that of CATs and CETs, which are (4.6429, 4.1241) in item 7 and (4.1241, 4.1000) in item 9. With regard to item 7 which states that "An emphasis on the study of foreign cultures can contribute to the student's loss of his/her cultural identity", CBETs believe that emphasis on the study of foreign cultures can contribute to students' loss of their identity. Such a result is not in agreement with Dunnet et al (1986) who confirm that an EFL teacher, while introducing some aspects of the culture to his/her students, must encourage them to preserve their own cultural identity. Thus, it is the teachers' role to emphasise culture teaching while at the same time preserving students' own cultural identity. What is more, to learn a foreign culture is to develop from an ethnocentric to a relativist standpoint and thereby become conscious of one's own identity.

As for item 9 which reads that "With a limited number of teaching periods, I would teach linguistic competence over intercultural competence", CBETs, given limited time, prioritise teaching linguistic competence over IC. In fact, finding time in the class period to teach various cultural aspects is held to be one of the problems in teaching culture. With this in mind, it is thought, and based on Chastain's (1988) argument, that many of the techniques proposed for teaching culture take reasonably little class time. Furthermore, even if such techniques take more time than the teacher might desire, then "the ends justify the means in this case". Culture is an important

component of the language in such a way that separating between them is infertile. More time, unquestionably, can be spent on culture without jeopardising the students' language skills, because culture will help them combine their language skills with communicative skills and, as a result, have a complete mastery of communication.

Irrespective of these three items, there are no statistically significant differences between CATs, CETs and CBETs with regard to the rest of the items. Accordingly, the first hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is accepted.

The First Sub-hypothesis of the First Hypothesis

This sub-hypothesis, as related to the first hypothesis, states that:

“There are no statistically significant differences between EFL university teachers regarding their opinions of the role of culture in teaching and learning an FL, in terms of their sex”.

Table (2): MTs and FTs Opinions of the Role of Culture in Teaching and Learning an FL

<i>Items</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t cal.</i>	<i>t tab.</i>
1	MTs	19	3.0000	1.20185	0.145	2.042 (30) (0.05)
	FTs	13	2.9231	1.80100		
2	MTs	19	3.3684	1.01163	5.382	
	FTs	13	5.5385	1.26592		
3	MTs	19	4.5158	1.24956	2.841	
	FTs	13	3.1077	1.54837		
4	MTs	19	3.3158	1.24956	0.821	
	FTs	13	2.9231	1.44115		
5	MTs	19	5.7368	1.28418	4.751	
	FTs	13	3.3846	1.50214		
6	MTs	19	4.9674	0.91127	4.831	
	FTs	13	2.7185	1.71345		
7	MTs	19	4.1168	0.99119	2.492	
	FTs	13	5.1385	1.33012		
8	MTs	19	3.0526	1.12909	0.106	
	FTs	13	3.0000	1.68325		
9	MTs	19	5.4368	0.93346	4.445	
	FTs	13	3.9923	0.85485		
10	MTs	19	2.3684	1.38285	0.283	
	FTs	13	2.2308	1.30089		
11	MTs	19	4.5263	0.84119	-0.500	
	FTs	13	4.6923	1.03155		
12	MTs	19	5.0526	0.84811	1.041	

	FTs	13	4.6923	1.10940		
Total	MTs	19	49.4577	5.56041	2.401	
	FTs	13	44.3417	6.42411		

Discussion

It is clear from table (2) that items 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 have computed 't' values that are higher than the tabulated value (3.33) at (0.05) alpha level of significance and (30) degrees of freedom. Regarding items 2 and 7, the statistically significant difference is in favour of the FTs, whereas for items 3, 5, 6 and 9, the statistically significant difference is in favour of MTs. In terms of item 2 which reads that "An EFL teacher should present a positive image of a foreign culture s/he is teaching", the result implies that FTs support the claim that an EFL teacher should present a positive image of a foreign culture s/he is teaching. This is so because FTs may think that it is not allowed to tackle the negative aspects of the FL culture which may be taboo in Iraqi society's norms and conventions. In this respect, teachers will instill in students an unrealistic image of the nature of the FL culture, and through classroom examples and exercises they create the impression that their own target language use should follow these patterns; often a recipe for frustration and failure. However, it is theorised that teachers should be responsible for conveying realistic cultural aspects of an FL. Their task is to make students aware of cultural differences, not to pass value judgments on these differences. To put it bluntly, the kind of English they are teaching is effective for survival in certain situations, but it lacks much of the cultural resonance required to make it fully meaningful for native speakers.

With respect to item 3 which states that "Fostering cultural awareness has a negative effect on students' attitudes towards their culture", MTs think that developing cultural awareness has a negative effect on students' attitudes towards their own culture. One possible explanation may be attributed to the educational and pedagogical variation between MTs and FTs as their beliefs may highly be affected by the training they have received during their undergraduates studies. In reality, one of the problems in teaching culture is that it involves dealing with students' attitudes. In this sense, it is thought that the purpose of teaching culture is not meant to make EFL students act, think or behave in an American or British way. It rather stresses the fact that they cannot render their native cultural traditions, attitudes, behaviour, values and way of life into other foreign cultural contexts. A further problem lies in students' negative attitudes towards the foreign culture as they think that the foreign culture phenomenon consists of new patterns of behaviour; therefore they attempt to understand the foreign culture according to their native culture framework.

In terms of item 5 which reads that "The linguistic and not the (inter)cultural dimension in foreign language classes should be expanded", MTs necessitates the expansion of the linguistic dimension in EFL classrooms. This may be attributed to Allen's (1985) claim who comments on language teachers' tendency to prefer teaching grammar by stating that grammar puts forward several advantages over culture. Firstly, it is the concept around which most textbooks and materials are organised. Secondly, it is finite and can be ordered in either a chronological plan of study or else in

a recurring one. Thirdly, mastery of grammar can be easily tested and evaluated. Fourthly, and finally, it is a subject matter the classroom teacher can teach using an advanced grammar text, and which, once mastered, is unlikely to change. Culture, on the other hand, is widespread, difficult to grasp, translate into instructional goals, test, evaluate and in a process of continuous change.

With regard to item 6 which states that “The study of culture in language classes can hinder progress in linguistic accuracy”, the result reveals that MTs affirm the hindrance that culture can represent in the progression of linguistic accuracy. As such, they believe that culture is not a bearer of progress in language. On this point, Kramersch (1993) states that every linguistic practice in itself is a cultural practice. More precisely, every speech act is a cultural act. In the same vein, Crozet and Liddicoat (2000) postulate that a linguistic practice always contains a cultural practice; they affirm that LT must be related to culture from the very first lessons. Based on that, it can be inferred that LT and language learning are culture teaching and culture learning. Hence, the study of culture in FL classes will enhance students’ mastery of linguistic skills.

Concerning item 7 which reads that “An emphasis on the study of foreign cultures can contribute to the student’s loss of his/her cultural identity”, the result indicates that FTs think that an emphasis on foreign cultures can contribute to students’ loss of cultural identity. Contrary to this result, it is believed that teaching culture would develop students’ cultural identity, but (one may question how is that possible?). Teaching culture involves trying to develop the students’ ability to see the world from different perspectives. Likewise, does a teacher want students to give up their Iraqi identity in order to become an American or a British person? The answer is emphatically no, even if it were possible. The most successful learners of language do not impersonate a native, they are very much themselves; therefore what they have done is to enlarge their intellectual knowledge of other identities and personalities. This point is also referred to by Kramersch (2013) when she states that language learners do not change their identity by learning an FL but rather they might be led to change subject positions. Apart from that, culture teaching does not aim at any change in the students’ behaviour and/or attitude towards the FL culture, but with an intention to increase the students’ awareness of other cultures and people for better intellectual development.

MTs, as far as item 9 which states that “With a limited number of teaching periods, I would teach linguistic competence over intercultural competence” is concerned, advocate teaching linguistic over IC. This is so because of the traditional methods teachers follow when teaching EFL, which heavily rely on teaching grammatical formations (or exercises) and the memorization of vocabulary items. On this point, it is worth noting that teaching language is not only teaching what people say and how they say it in a grammatically appropriate way. Rather, it is issued to clarify why people say this rather than that to whom and for which purpose and how they express, for example, sarcasm, anger or disdain.

Irrespective of these six items, there are no statistically significant differences between MTs and FTs with regard to the rest of the items. Accordingly, the set relevant hypothesis is rejected and the

alternative one is accepted.

The Second Sub-hypothesis of the First Hypothesis

This sub-hypothesis, as related to the first hypothesis, states that:

“There are no statistically significant differences between EFL university teachers regarding their opinions of the role of culture in teaching and learning an FL, in terms of their specialisation”.

Table (3): Ts/Ling. and Ts/Lit. Opinions of the Role of Culture in Teaching and Learning an FL

<i>Items</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t cal.</i>	<i>t tab.</i>
1	Ts/Ling.	16	3.9125	1.53704	3.144	2.042 (30) (0.05)
	Ts/Lit.	16	2.3250	1.31022		
2	Ts/Ling.	16	3.9375	1.12361	2.834	
	Ts/Lit.	16	4.9375	0.85391		
3	Ts/Ling.	16	3.9375	1.34009	1.605	
	Ts/Lit.	16	4.6875	1.30224		
4	Ts/Ling.	16	3.0000	1.36626	1.457	
	Ts/Lit.	16	2.3125	1.30224		
5	Ts/Ling.	16	5.2625	1.26326	2.728	
	Ts/Lit.	16	3.925	1.50000		
6	Ts/Ling.	16	5.0000	1.26326	4.248	
	Ts/Lit.	16	3.0625	1.31656		
7	Ts/Ling.	16	4.5000	1.1547	0.718	
	Ts/Lit.	16	4.2125	1.10868		
8	Ts/Ling.	16	2.8750	1.25831	1.421	
	Ts/Lit.	16	2.1875	1.47054		
9	Ts/Ling.	16	4.3152	0.81394	2.903	
	Ts/Lit.	16	3.4375	0.89443		
10	Ts/Ling.	16	2.4375	1.45917	1.576	
	Ts/Lit.	16	3.1875	1.22304		
11	Ts/Ling.	16	4.2125	0.95743	2.402	
	Ts/Lit.	16	4.975	0.83417		
12	Ts/Ling.	16	4.6250	1.02470	1.324	
	Ts/Lit.	16	4.1875	0.83417		
Total	Ts/Ling.	16	46.2489	5.75000	2.938	
	Ts/Lit.	16	40.3797	5.54827		

Discussion

As shown in table (3), items 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 11 have computed ‘t’ values that are higher than the

tabulated value (3.33) at (0.05) alpha level and (30) degrees of freedom. Regarding items 1, 5, 6 and 9, the statistically significant difference is in favour of the Ts/Ling., whereas for the items 2 and 11, the statistically significant difference is in favour of Ts/Lit. Concerning item 1 which reads that “In an EFL classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching language”, Ts/Ling. equalise the importance of LT with culture teaching. In terms of item 2 which states that “An EFL teacher should present a positive image of a foreign culture s/he is teaching”, the result indicates that Ts/Lit. confirm that teachers should present a positive image regarding the FL culture. However, it is argued that teachers should present a realistic image of the FL culture being studied; because if not this would lead students to stereotypical perceptions, unjust judgments and false generalisations. An FL teacher should present a realistic image of a foreign culture and so should also touch upon the negative sides of the foreign culture and society.

With regard to item 5 which reads that “The linguistic and not the (inter)cultural dimension in foreign language classes should be expanded”, Ts/Ling. prioritise expanding the linguistic over the (inter)cultural dimension. As such, the result implies that Ts/Ling. are unaware of the importance of increasing the (inter)cultural dimension which encompasses three inter-related elements (Byram & Risager, 1999) which are located in learning, namely

1. that aspect of communicative competence which puts a student in touch with the cultural world of a particular group of native speakers,
2. the capacity for analysing one’s own and the FL culture from an external perspective and understanding its relationship with other cultures in order to facilitate communication, and
3. the language teacher’s ability (and responsibility) to help students understand others as a basis for the acquisition of (inter)cultural and communicative competence.

As such, if teachers’ aim of TEFL is communication, developing the (inter)cultural dimension should be their prime goal.

With respect to item 6 which states that “The study of culture in language classes can hinder progress in linguistic accuracy”, Ts/Ling. affirm that the study of culture in EFL classrooms can hinder progress in linguistics. One possible reason of this may be the problem of time allowance. In reality, teachers are usually under constant pressure to cover materials and hardly save any time to deal with cultural issues. Time allowance for culture teaching is regarded as a big issue for teachers as lessons are already very loaded. In spite of that, if teachers know how to incorporate language and culture in LT in a flexible way, they can solve the problem easily and even make their lessons more interesting.

As for item 9 which reads that “With a limited number of teaching periods, I would teach linguistic competence over intercultural competence”, Ts/Ling., for the same reasons referred to earlier, give the advantage for teaching linguistic over intercultural competence, and also because of the traditional methods teachers follow when teaching EFL which heavily rely on teaching grammatical formations and the memorization of vocabulary items. Having this in mind, it is thought that students may have excellent pronunciation, good vocabulary items and a thorough knowledge of

grammar but may lack the cultural understanding to be able to decipher the actual meaning of particular utterances. Nonetheless, one may ask the following question: what happens in case of absence of IC? The answer is that this would lead to negative consequences and impacts at different levels. One of them is that the lack of IC might damage one's self-esteem and his/her ability to see things from different perspectives.

Concerning item 11 which reads that "Teaching the FL culture reinforces the students' already existing stereotypes of other peoples and cultures", Ts/Lit. assert that culture teaching increases the students' already existing stereotypes of other peoples and cultures. Conversely, it is thought that by not teaching culture, stereotypes will develop in the students' minds, and this is one of the consequences of not teaching culture.

Irrespective of these six items, there are no statistically significant differences between Ts/Ling. and Ts/Lit. with regard to the rest of the items. Accordingly, the set relevant hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is accepted.

Conclusions

In the light of the data analysis and discussion of results, the following conclusions have been arrived at:

1. MTs, and Ts/Ling prioritise expanding the linguistic dimension over the (inter)cultural one and teaching linguistic competence more than intercultural competence. This latter point is also stressed by CBETs.
2. FTs, and Ts/Lit. support the claims that an EFL teacher should present a positive image of a foreign culture s/he is teaching, and that focusing on the study of foreign cultures can contribute to students' loss of their cultural identity. This latter point is also highlighted by CBETs.
3. MTs, and Ts/Ling. affirm that culture can play a negative role, i.e. as an obstacle against the progression of linguistic accuracy. MTs further think that developing cultural awareness has a negative effect on students' attitudes towards their own culture.

Recommendations

In view of the conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations are presented:

1. Teachers in their selection of teaching materials should be aware of the importance of culture in teaching and learning an FL and the role culture teaching plays in developing students cultural awareness and increasing their IC.
2. Teachers are highly recommended to participate in the international programmes aiming at raising cultural awareness and IC levels.
3. Cultural instruction in the classroom should not just happen incidentally or be taught spontaneously. Instead, it should be explicitly planned and integrated within a language syllabus for the purpose of developing students' cultural awareness and the ease of (inter)cultural interaction.

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Appendix (A)

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	In an EFL classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching language.					
2.	An EFL teacher should present a positive image of a foreign culture s/he is teaching.					
3.	Fostering cultural awareness has a negative effect on students' attitudes toward their culture.					
4.	The more students know about the EFL culture, the more tolerant they become.					
5.	The linguistic and not the (inter)cultural dimension in foreign language classes should be expanded.					
6.	The study of culture in language classes can hinder progress in linguistic accuracy.					
7.	An emphasis on the study of foreign cultures can contribute to the student's loss of his/her cultural identity.					

8.	Iraqi EFL students are more interested and motivated in learning the language with some background knowledge in culture.					
9.	With a limited number of teaching periods, I would teach linguistic competence over intercultural competence.					
10.	Language and culture cannot be taught in an integrated way.					
11.	Teaching the FL culture reinforces the students' already existing stereotypes of other peoples and cultures.					
12.	The development of cultural awareness should be kept only for the most advanced levels.					