School Teachers' and University Professors' Perceptions: Teaching Culture in Focus

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Abstract

The current research paper aimed at investigating school teachers' and university professors' perceptions of cultural aspects of language teaching, their understanding of the culture, their attitudes towards intercultural communicative competence, the cultural topics they favor to teach in the classroom, the time allocated to the cultural aspects of language, and the techniques used to instruct culture. To do so, a variety of research instruments were used to collect the data. This study encompassed a brief review of the related literature, a desk-based analysis of the curriculum, and a questionnaire. After the pilot study, the questionnaires were distributed among high school English teachers and the university professors of the teaching colleges in Esfahan, Iran. The analysis of the data revealed encouraging signs of school teachers' and university professors' willingness to engage in culture teaching. Besides, the results reflected problems of fully engaging in cultural communicative competence activities in the classrooms. Some of the problems in culture teaching were the highly examination-based environment, the practical approach of instructors and learners, and the academic qualification and experience of teachers in the classroom. The policy of the College Teachers was an important factor which changed the perception of cultural teaching of teachers and the findings indicated a need to build the realization and confidence of teachers.

Key words: teachers' perception, university professors' perceptions, cultural or intercultural teaching (ICT), intercultural communicative competence (ICC), curriculum, cultural awareness, teacher training courses.

INTRODUCTION

The origins of the current paper lie primarily in the experience of most Iranian students who learn English. The Grammar Translation Method is used to teach English, the most common method of teaching/learning English in schools of Iran for quite a while. Almost all students in Iran learn English in high schools and universities by such a

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method and the researchers themselves are not exceptions. It does not seem to be any problem until some students go abroad (e.g., the US) to continue their courses of study.

Furthermore, students have to adapt themselves to the culture of English speakers (i.e., the American way of life), which is inevitably a time-consuming and arduous task. It makes them encounter one challenge after another. A completely new set of language and culture learning priorities may rise up to meet them. This is a very new experience that they have to handle cautiously and makes them feel confused. They should try to adjust themselves to foreign culture and probably establish themselves somewhere on a continuum between an insular expatriate of Iranian culture on the one hand and full assimilation into foreign culture, while leaving their own culture and language behind, on the other. This situation of learning language and culture is mentioned because the researchers want to understand and emphasize the importance of culture teaching with language teaching. Moreover, learning about other cultures is inherently fascinating. Therefore, new research areas of culture studies and intercultural communication became a new curiosity for the researchers and made them think about language education in Iran.

Graddol (2006, p. 12) stated that "the phenomenon of English being a global language lies at the heart of globalization." There are global economic flows and global cultural flows in the global village, today. Crystal (2003, p. 13) suggests that "there has never been a time when so many nations needed to talk to each other so much". Likewise, Alptekin (2002) argued that "social and economic globalization has necessitated the use of an intercultural means of communication in the world. English has become the language of international communication" (p. 32). Therefore, the goal of English education is to develop learner's communicative competence. To this end, researchers should seek a program that best fits this aim, although it seems not to be smooth sailing. Graddol (2006) states that English is often used between nonnative speakers of English, (e.g., between the Japanese and the German). They bring their distinctive cultural backgrounds, so it is not realistic to suppose that English would remain the same as the *Standard English* and that nonnatives would share "the beliefs and conventions of the British and Americans". Now, these questions may pop up in language users' mind that: (a) should the learners follow the cultural values of English speaking countries (ESC) even when they are against those of their own? and (b) how can we help learners develop the ability to communicate appropriately with people of different beliefs and ways of life? These questions may point at the complexities of English teaching. Cultural values of countries which deviate from British and American norms begin to play a more important role in today's intercultural communications. In this paper, the attitudes of teachers' in Esfahan, Iran toward language/ culture teaching objectives and cultural contents of the language teaching curriculum was investigated to see whether or not they are able to encounter the challenge of language learning in Iran.

Although modernization is somehow limited in Iran due to political issues, ELT researchers and educational authorities face a challenge since a large number of

Iranians learn English for academic and nonacademic purposes and still modernization as an inevitable phenomenon require them to have a high proficiency.

Although Iranian language learners have spent more than seven years in studying English, the results show that most of them cannot communicate well with foreigners. Sometimes, the students' English is perfect without any grammatical mistakes, but they do not know how to use English properly in spoken or even written discourse. Failure in communication with people with different cultural backgrounds is a very frequent event. The main reason may be the fact that they do not know the cultural values associated with the culture and the important role(s) that such values play in foreign language learning. Since language learners do not apprehend the foreign culture, that is, the pragmatic aspect of language, they do not know what should be said or done in a given situation.

Research Questions

Apart from the researchers' personal interest in cultural aspects of language teaching, based on the new situation in language teaching and the students' experiences of cultural shock, the aim of this study was to explore the school teachers' and university professors' perception of culture teaching in Esfahan, Iran. To achieve this aim, the following research questions were set:

- What is the school teachers' perception of culture teaching in the classroom in Esfahan, Iran?

- What is the university professors' perception of culture teaching in the classroom in Esfahan, Iran?

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Brown (2007) described the relationship between language and culture as follows: "A language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of language: The two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate them without losing the significance of either language or culture" (p. 189).

Genc and Bada (2005) investigated the role of culture in language learning and teaching. The study was conducted with the participation of the students of the ELT department of Cukurova University in Turkey. A significant similarity between the students' views and the theoretical benefits of a culture class as argued by some experts in the field was observed. With regard to the benefits of learning about culture, attending the culture class has raised cultural awareness in ELT students concerning both native and target societies. The study illustrated how arguments of language teaching experts in favor of a culture class in language learning and teaching are justified by some evidence provided by the participants under investigation. The results of the study also depicted that culture teaching affects language learning and helps students improve communicative ability.

In another study, Tsou (2005) investigated the effects of culture teaching on foreign language learning. To this end, the combination of an anthropology process and task-oriented approach was applied to conducting the cultural lessons. Culture instruction was implemented within two elementary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms for the period of one semester in order to see the effects of culture teaching on foreign language learning. When culture lessons were integrated into EFL instruction, students' language proficiency was significantly improved. In addition, they had better interests in language learning.

Farahani and Abdelkarim (2012) conducted a cross-cultural study to investigate EFL teachers' perception of culture teaching and practices in Tehran, Iran and Khartum, Sudan. Recorded interviews were conducted with EFL teachers in Khartum and Tehran in a qualitative study. When ELT teachers were asked about the relationship between the language and culture, they indicated that language and culture are perceived to be inseparable. Language is seen as a medium for transmitting culture. The teachers all believed that associated culture should be taught alongside the language. Based on the findings, culture teaching is a necessity and an inseparable part of teaching language which influences students' language proficiency significantly.

Dahmardeh and Wray (2011) conducted another investigation considering English language teaching in high schools in Tehran, Iran which aimed at discussing the role of culture within English language teaching in Iran. It was explained while the issue of culture has been addressed and considered within the newly designed national curriculum in Iran, this issue appears not to play any role in either the textbooks or the ELT program. It could be claimed that changes should be made if we want to prepare the students to communicate appropriately in the international world of English. Cultural concepts in ELT program should be included in Iran if we want to improve the language skills of the students and make them develop their communicative ability.

Aliakbari (2004) focused on the way culture is addressed in ELT in Iran in general and the place of culture in ELT at the high school level of education in particular. Through the study, with reference to the relevant theoretical background, the content of prescribed English textbooks was analyzed. The research findings made it clear that culture materials or textbooks are shallow and superficial with respect to their treatment of culture. The major objective of the analysis of the textbooks was an investigation of their contribution to the improvement of students' intercultural competence. The results of the textbooks analysis do not confirm this feature and the results of the study signify that the textbooks in use in Iranian high schools do not prove to be helpful in developing intercultural competence and cultural understanding. Accordingly, some changes in ELT textbooks regarding cultural concept are called for provided that we want to prepare students to communicate appropriately in a real situation.

METHOD

Participants

The researchers aimed at investigating the school teachers' and university professors' perspectives about culture teaching in the language curriculum in Esfahan, Iran.

Instrument

The method of this study involved a survey. Questionnaires were used as the instrument to elicit information from school teachers in high schools in Esfahan, Iran. The researchers adopted the questionnaire from the survey conducted in China (Hui, 2009). There were some modifications and changes in the questionnaire to adjust it to Iranian culture. In other words, in order to validate the questionnaire, they were accommodated to Iranian culture. Some sentences were paraphrased and simplified for easy comprehension by English language teachers and university professors. However, the concepts remained unchanged. The questionnaire consisted of six sections which embedded 25 questions. The closed-response questions had been used in the survey. It was used in the different forms of checklist questions, alternative answer questions, and Likert-scale questions.

Procedures

Having prepared the questionnaire, two raters were asked to make comments about the questions and then the researchers distributed the questionnaires among three English language teachers to make sure about technical matters (clarity, layout, appearance, timing, length, ease or difficulty, etc.); questions (validity, elimination of ambiguities, types of questions), response categories and identifying redundancies prior to performing the actual field work. The researchers got feedback form on which respondents could criticize the questionnaires and made suggestions, so they were revised and sent to the intended group of respondents. Comments from respondents were valuable and lead to some changes of format; modifications of the wording, simplification of the English language and reconstruction of some questions. Throughout the pilot study, a lot of fruitful information was gathered with regard to the reliability, validity, and practicality of the research method. In addition to generating a clear and logical questionnaire in the main study, a number of changes were made to the design of the research approach following the completion of the pilot study.

The researchers decided to use the group-administered approach to administer the questionnaire in this research. That is the questionnaires were given to groups of individuals all at one time and place. The respondents generally felt obliged to fill out the questionnaires. Therefore, the return rate was high. Furthermore, any ambiguity or confusion in the questionnaires could be explained on the spot. The teachers' meeting time was used to collect the data on the spot. Therefore, the questionnaires were prepared and distributed in one of the teachers' meetings and after the teachers fill them out, the questionnaires were collected. Almost the same approach to the data collection was adopted for university professors in the teaching colleges.

The target population, about whom generalization was made in this research, was that of English language teachers in high schools in Esfahan, Iran. The whole population was stratified into two groups: (a) the school teachers at the urban areas, (b) the school teachers at the rural areas. Stratified random sampling was used in this study.

Concerning the data collection within schools, one option was visiting schools in person and the other was to visit the high school English language teachers' meetings in Esfahan to hand the questionnaires. In the teachers meetings, 30 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among English language teachers. Moreover, 30 completed questionnaires were gathered by this method.

The researchers therefore fed the data from 90 items in the 25 questions included in the questionnaire into the SPSS for reliability, which yielded alpha coefficient of 0.93. Therefore, the researchers were satisfied that the questionnaire used in this research was reliable. Moreover, it should be mentioned that since the current questionnaire was a lengthy one, including 90 items, and that this in itself increased the reliability of the methods. According to Hatch and Farhady (1982, p. 246), "the longer the test, the more reliable it will be.

Besides, According to Brown (2001), one way to defend the content validity of the items is to explain how you planned the questions, which was done before in this section. In order to achieve construct validity, the researchers consulted some experts at Islamic Azad University, Esfahan branch, to seek their views on whether the goals of this research were covered by the survey questions. They approved that the survey questions did indeed meet the research objectives. Thus, the claim for the construct validity of this survey is strong. Eventually, to make sure that it is the target respondents who fill out the questionnaire rather than someone else, they were asked to do it in front of the researchers. "The validity of information hinges upon the honesty of the respondents" (Mertens, 1997, p. 105).

RESULTS

The data collected in this study provided the researchers with the general information about school teachers and university professors in Esfahan. From their personal profile, macroscopic information was gained in terms of their age, educational background, teaching hours, etc.

Table 1. The General Information of English Teachers and University Professors

General information of teachers	Number/ Percentage			
By age	School teachers		University professors	
	F	P	F	P
20-39	19	64	17	56.6
40-49	6	20	9	30
Over 50	3	10	4	13.3
Missing data	2	6	0	0

	School teachers		University professors	
Total	30	100	30	100
By years of teaching	School teachers		University professors	
	F	P	F	P
1-10	6	20	17	56.6
11-20	14	46.6	7	23.3
Over 21	8	26	6	20
Missing data	2	6	0	0
Total	30	100	30	100
By grades they teach	School teachers		University professors	
High School	21	70	0	0
Pre university	7	24	0	0
University	0	0	30	100
Missing data	2	6	0	0
Total	30	30	30	100
By records of Formal Schooling	School teachers		University professors	
B.A	22	73.3	0	0
M.A	6	20	21	70
PhD	0	0	9	30
Missing data	2	6	0	0
Total	30	30	30	100
By teaching hours	School teachers		University professors	
1-10	10	33	8	26.6
11-20	10	33	17	56.6
Over 20	8	27	5	16.6
Missing data	2	6	0	0
Total	30	100	30	100

As table 1 indicated, the age group from 20-39 of the school teachers (19/64%) and the university professors (17/56.6%) are the majority who are in their younger-middle age full of vitality and energy to accumulate considerable teaching experience through years of professional practice. The data also revealed that most of school teachers (20/79.9%) and the university professors (24/66.6%) have teaching experience less than 20 years. It may be ascertained that they must become the major teaching backbones in their schools and universities. The data demonstrate that a majority of teachers (20/66.6%) teach 1-20 hours per week. Apart from actual teaching hours in the classroom, teachers have to mark homework every day and test papers every week. As for the university professors, most of them (25/83.2%) teach 1-20 hours a week. Moreover, they are required to accomplish their academic tasks like publishing papers, completing projects,etc. If they are unable to finish what they are asked to do academically, their yearly evaluation and professional promotion will be affected.

With regard to their age, years of teaching experience, the grades they teach, the teaching hours per a week, and educational background, the general information from

the school teachers and university professors in Esfahan was obtained. The findings indicate that most of the school teachers and university professors are in their middle age and have accumulated considerable teaching experiences.

The School Teachers' and University Professors' Attitudes toward Culture Teaching (Q1, Q2, Q3, & Q9)

Question number 1 and question number 2 require the school teachers and university professors to answer: Are your students interested in learning culture(s) of ESC? and Are you interested in teaching culture(s) of ESC?

Table 2. The School Teachers' and University Professors' Interest in Culture Teaching

Interest in culture teaching		School teachers			University professors		
		F	P	M	F	P	M
	1	21	70	1.43	26	86.6	1.13
Q1	2	5	16.6		4	13.3	
	3	4	13.3		30	0	
Total		30	100		30	100	
	1	24	80	1.26	27	90	1.13
Q2	2	4	12		2	6.6	
	3	2	4.8		1	3.3	
Total		30	100		30	100	

Note: (1+2=Very Interested; 3=Undecided, 4+5=Not Interested, F= Frequency; P=percentage, M=Mean

It can be seen either from the school teachers' or university professors' everyday teaching in the classroom, most school teachers(21/70%) and university professors (26/86.6%) state that their students are interested in learning cultures of English speaking countries. The school teachers and university professors themselves are also interested in culture teaching when teaching English as a foreign language.

Question 3 aimed at answering if university professors and school teachers think culture teaching is important in English teaching.

Table 3. The School Teachers' and University Professors' Opinion of the Importance of Culture Teaching

Q3	School teachers			University professors		
	F	P	M	F	P	M
1	6	20	2.2	11	36.6	1.76
2	17	56.6		16	53.3	
3	3	10		2	6.6	
4	3	10		1	3.3	
5	1	3.3		0	0	
Total	30	100		30	100	

Note: 1=Very Important; 2=Important 3=Undecided; 4=Less Important; 5=Not Important; P=Percent; F=frequency; P=percent; M=mean

The results again showed that the school teachers and university professors have positive opinions about cultural dimension of language teaching. Putting answers 1 and 2 together, almost 76% of the school teachers and 90% of the university professors think that culture teaching is important and only 3.3% feel it is not important in this respect. Therefore, it is evident that the school teachers are greatly interested in culture teaching when teaching English as a foreign language and accept the significance of the cultural dimension of language teaching.

In question number 9, the researchers asked if it is necessary to have a cultural item included in the English curriculum.

Table 4. The Necessity of Having a Cultural Item in the Curriculum

Q9	School teachers			University professors		
	F	P	M	F	P	M
1	5	16.6	2.2	6	20	2.06
2	18	60		18	60	
3	4	13.33		4	13.3	
4	2	6		2	6	
5	1	3		0	0	
Total	30	100		30	100	

Note: 1=Very Necessary, 2=Necessary, 3=Undecided, 4=Less Necessary, 5=Not Necessary, F=frequency, P=percent, M=mean

From the results obtained from Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q9, it can be seen that the majority of teachers expressed the importance of culture teaching when teaching English as a foreign language and the necessity of having some items with regard to culture teaching in language learning.

The School Teachers' and University Professors' Perceptions of Language Teaching Objectives (Q4)

Q4 requires the university professors and school teachers to answer how do you perceive the objectives of English teaching?

Table 5. The Result of the School Teachers' and University Professors' Beliefs on Objectives of English Language Teaching

School teachers			University professors		
Item	N	M	Item	N	M
Q4-3	27	1.4	Q4-3	28	1.3
Q4-1	26	1.6	Q4-1	25	1.6
Q4-4	26	1.6	Q4-4	24	1.7
Q4-2	24	1.8	Q4-2	25	1.8
Q4-6	22	1.9	Q4-6	24	1.9
Q4-5	22	2	Q4-5	22	2

Note: N= Number of participants; M= Mean

It can be inferred that the school instructors still considered language teaching rather than culture teaching as the important aims to be accomplished. This result may be related to many factors in the current situation of language teaching in Iran. First,

English language knowledge is one of the objectives in education. Second, the examinations do not include much culture content.The university professors also attach greater importance to general language teaching objectives than culture teaching. However, they placed cultural teaching objectives (Q4-2) in the middle showing that they were more aware of the importance of culture teaching than the school teachers.

The School Teachers' and University Professors' Perception of Objectives of Culture Teaching (Q5)

It can be observed that a clear tendency was given to the general aims of teaching culture. It can be easily noticed that the school teachers and university professors believed that the purpose of culture teaching is to promote the understanding of students' own culture (Q5-f) and to promote students' ability to manage intercultural contact situations (Q5-g).

It may suggest that teaching culture could help students learn to communicate with people from different cultural background(s). This also showed that they are aware that giving the students something of their own cultural identity through the teaching of English is what they aim to achieve in language teaching.

Possible Topics in Culture Teaching (Q8)

Question number 8 asks teachers and university professors what part of culture associated with the English language do you think should be taught at the middle school levels? The following list is the 10 most favorable topics teachers chose.

Table 6. Possible Culture Topics

| Possible Culture Topics	School teachers		Possible Culture Topics	University professors	
	F	P		F	P
Daily life	27	90	School and education	26	86.6
Festivals and customs	24	80	Festivals and customs	23	76.6
School and education	22	73.3	Daily life	27	90
Shopping, food and drink	22	73.3	Our own culture &identity	26	86.6
Environmental issues	21	70	Shopping, food and drink	23	76.6
Body language	18	60	Environmental issues	22	73.3
Our own culture & identity	24	80	Values and beliefs	26	86.6
Values and beliefs	20	66.6	Social & living conditions	25	83.3
Social & living conditions	19	63.3	Religious life & tradition	24	80
Tourism and travel	17	56.6	Youth culture	23	76.6

Note: F=frequency, P=percent.

They both thought topics like daily life, festivals and customs, environmental issues, school life, and education should be taught. The interpretation is that they gave more support to "Little c" culture. It should be also mentioned that topics like history, literature, gender, political systems,etc. are not included. This indicated that neither the school teachers nor the university professors are interested in "Big C" culture.

Teaching Techniques for Culture Teaching (Q10)

Q10 asked how often university professors and school teachers practice a number of possible language/cultural teaching activities.

Table 7. The Activities From Most Often Used to Least Often Used

|		
1. I teach culture in English class based on the textbook I am using.	28	93.3
2. I ask my students to recite some dialogues.	26	86.6
3. I focus my attention on some culture-loaded new words teaching.	22	73.3
4. I tell my students what I heard or read about the foreign country or culture.	21	70
5. I teach them some English songs or poems to let them experience the different cultures.	12	40
6. I ask my students to compare their own cultures with foreign cultures.	11	36.6
7. I ask my students to discover the aspects of the foreign culture.	9	30
8. I download some pictures or cartoons having cultural images and let them discuss them.	8	26.6
9. I use audio tapes in my class and ask them to mime according to what they hear.	6	20
10. I show them film videos and discuss what they watch.	5	16.6
11. I ask my students to act out what they learn in terms of learning culture.	2	6.6
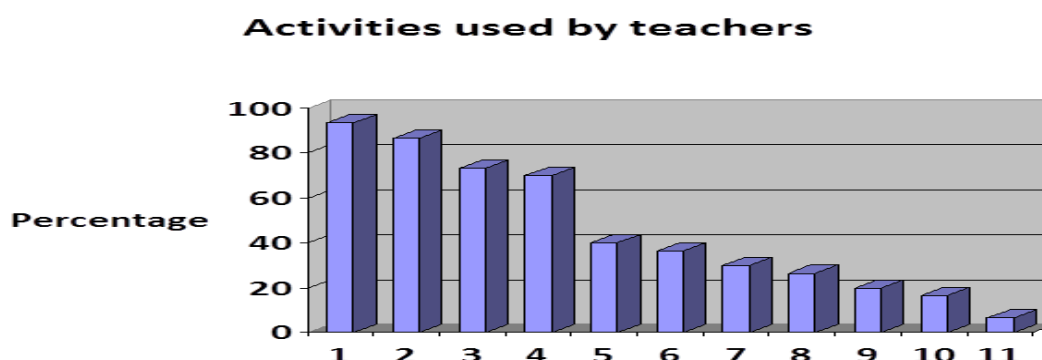
Figure 1. Activities Used by Teachers

The results clearly showed that the technique which teachers often used to teach culture is through the textbook (28/93.3%) while teaching English. This is the situation in Iran where the textbook is the law code for teachers to follow and examinations are based upon the content of the textbooks.

Asking students to recite some dialogues is the second often-used technique (26/86.6%). Memorization of short dialogues and some useful expressions are useful for students. They can apply the language they learned. Some activities like telling students what teachers have heard and read about the foreign countries or related culture(s) (22/73.3%) were also used. Teaching cultural-loaded vocabulary (21/70%) is comparatively often used activity to teach culture. Asking students to play cultural roles (2/6.6%), asking students to compare their own culture with foreign cultures (11/36.6%), discovering the aspect of the foreign culture (9/30%) are clearly less often

used activities. Mentioning additional cultural teaching materials like using cultural images (8/26.6%), audiotapes (6/20%) and film videos and multi-media (5/16.6%) to teach culture are not often employed.

The researchers aimed at uncovering if there was any difference between university professors' and teachers' choices of activities often used in the classroom and the result is shown as follows:
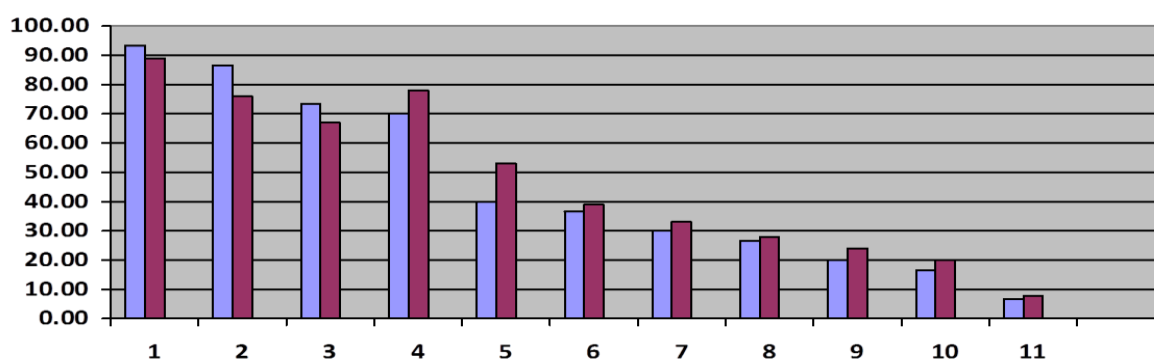
Figure 2. Comparison of the Activities Used by the School Teachers and University Professors

Figure 2 depicts clearly the same tendency toward the activities used by the school teachers and university professors.

The School Teachers' and University Professors' Perceptions of Time Devoted to Culture Teaching (Q7 & Q8)

Q6 asked "how is your teaching time distributed over language teaching and teaching culture?"

The majority of the school teachers and university professors dedicated more time to language teaching than to teaching culture.

(a) The EFL lessons in Iran are text-oriented and the contents of examination are extracted from the textbook focusing on language knowledge,

(b) The acquisition of English knowledge is still considered an important factor for educational and occupational purposes, and

(c) Culture contents estimated in the exams by the school teachers and the by university professors are approximately 1-20% (See Section 4.7).

The researcher then wanted to investigate teachers' willingness and attitudes toward whether they wanted to spend more time on 'teaching culture' or not.

There were more than 7/8 out of 10 school teachers and university professors who expressed their willingness to spend more time on teaching culture.

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The School Teachers' and University Professors' Perceptions of Cultural Teaching Materials in Textbooks (Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, & Q15)

The views of the English teachers with regard to the cultural dimension of textbooks used in their classes were examined.

Q11 asked who chooses the textbook(s) for you.

Table 8. Textbook Choice

Q11: Who chooses the textbook(s) for you?	School teachers		University professors	
	F	P	F	P
You yourself	0	0	30	100
The school/college	0	0	0	0
The Ministry of Education	30	100	0	0
I do not know.	0	0	0	0
Total	30	100	0	100

Note: F=frequency, P=percent.

The Ministry of Science, Research, and Education in Iranchooses the same textbooks for all schools all over the country. They claim that teachers can approach teaching English in a systematic way, and guarantee that all levels of unified examinations can be carried out based on a unified textbook, but on the other hand there is no unified examination for the textbooks chosen by the university professors at the university level.

Q12 asked are you free to use additional materials you think useful for culture teaching in your class.

Table 9. Freedom of Using Additional Materials

Q12: Are you free to use additional materials you think useful for culture teaching in your class?	School teachers		University professors	
	F	P	F	P
Yes, I can.	5	16.6	27	90
No, I cannot.	21	70	0	0
I do not know.	4	13.3	3	10
Total	30	100	30	100

F=frequency P=percent

The majority of the school teachers cannot use additional materials for teaching (21/70%). Teachers primarily rely on the textbook to teach language and culture. The majority of the university professors can use additional materials in teaching language (26/86.6%).

Q13 asked "does the textbook you use contain information (for example texts, pictures) about English language culture?"

Table 10. The P of Cultural Contents in the Textbooks

Q13: Does the textbook you use contain information (for example texts, pictures) about English language culture?	schoolteachers		university professors	
	F	P	F	P
A lot.	2	6	3	10
Bits here & there.	21	70	18	60
I do not know.	1	3.3	1	3.3
Little.	5	16.6	8	26.6
Not that much.	1	3.3	0	0
Total	39	100	30	100

Note: F=frequency, P=percent.

Table10depicts that 21/70% of the school teachers and 18/60% of the university professors thought that the amount of cultural contents in the textbook is to a certain extent enough though there are bits here and there in the textbook.

Results obtained from Q14, i.e. do the cultural contents of the textbook(s) you use meet your expectations? illustrated in table 11.

Table11. The School Teachers' and University Professors' Degree of Satisfaction With the Cultural Contents of the Textbooks

Q14: Do the cultural contents of the textbook(s) you use meet your expectations?	School teachers		University professors	
	F	P	F	P
Yes, very much.	2	6.6	1	3
Yes, up to a certain extent.	16	53.3	15	51
I do not know.	2	6.6	0	0
No, not at all	9	30	13	44
No, not enough.	1	3.3	1	3
Total	30	100	30	100

F=frequency P=percentage

Table 11 indicates that 16/ 53.3%of the school teachers are satisfied at least to a certain extent with the cultural contents in the textbooks. 13/44% of the university professors are not happy with the cultural contents.

The prevailing majority estimated that only 1- 20% of cultural contents are included in the exams of English language shown by the school teachers (25/83%) and the university professors (27/90%).

The School Teachers' and University Professors' General Opinions Regarding IC Teaching

Most school teachers (22/73.3%) and university professors (26/86.6%) consider the introduction of cultural awareness into the English curriculum as an important reform in the 18th statement.

Table 12. Estimation of Culture Contents Included in the Exam

Q15: What is your estimation of culture proportion included in the exam?	School teachers		University professors	
	F	P	F	P
0%	2	6.6	1	3.3
%10-1	16	53.3	19	63.3
1-20%1	9	30	8	26.6
21-30%	2	6.6	2	6.6
31-40%	1	3.3	0	0
Total	30	100	30	100

Note: F=frequency, P=percent.

Table 12 depicts that 23/76.6% of the school teachers and 24/80% of the university professors think that culture teaching is as important as teaching English.

The majority of the school teachers (21/70%) and the university professors (27/90%) agreed that foreign language teaching may deepen students' understanding of their own culture and identity.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The responses gathered from the survey highlighted several contradictions in high schools in Esfahan, Iran. First, the teachers responding to the survey seemed to figure out the aim of integrating culture in language teaching yet, in practice, the time allocated for culture awareness is restricted; second, although teachers have declared their desire to include a cultural element intheirclassroom teaching, in practice the effectiveness of it is limited by their owninadequacy; and last, the official document may have set the direction for schools with regard to students' ICC but the current state of affairs does not adequately prepare thestudents for the future. This is made worse in view of the impact of globalization that has inevitably elevated the pace of change in societies and heightened the differences among human beings that increasingly have the need to create understanding, respect, and tolerance.

The Official Document

The school instructors participating in the survey indicated that they realized the goal of including cultural awareness in language teaching. The official document had achieved its goal in setting the direction for the schools. However, in the language curriculum in Iran, linguistic skills and knowledge acquisition tookprecedence, and the level of competence cannot be compromised because it would influence the career choice of the students. It is interesting to note from the feedback of the survey that the school teachers believed that the development of the students' ICC should be the ultimate objective of language learning. The school teachers felt that these statements of belief are not clearly defined in the curriculum.

The School Teachers' and University Professors' Background

The current state of affairs in the classroom is very much influenced by the school teachers' and university professors 'own academic background. They understood the objective of culture teaching in language acquisition. However, their enthusiasm was weakened by their own inadequacy in culture teaching when teaching English as a foreign language because of their academic background and life experiences. The responses collected from the survey showed a hint of teachers feeling inadequate in culture teaching. It is interesting to note that from the data collected, the school teachers mentioned a lack of classroom time to teach culture. Part of the reason could be attributed to the Iranian view of the role of the teacher.

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