The Role of Intercultural Dimension in Developing EFL Students' Negotiation of Meaning in Salahaddin University-Erbil

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ABSTRACT

The recognition of the intercultural dimension as a key component in language learning and teaching has been one of the most significant changes in the last few decades. The nature of the experience of teaching and learning languages has significantly changed as a result of this transition. This quantitative study presents the results of an investigation of the role of the intercultural dimension in developing EFL students' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and negotiation of meaning at Salahaddin University-Erbil (SUE). The aim of the study is to find out teachers' and students' perceptions about the intercultural dimension in language teaching and to discover the role of the intercultural dimension in developing students' negotiation of meaning. That is to say, to what extent does being aware of other cultures, especially the target culture develop students' knowledge, skills, awareness and attitude to effectively and meaningfully negotiate? This study attempts to find out whether EFL teachers in SUE integrate culture into classes or not. For the purpose of data collection, a total of 148 EFL students and 30 EFL teachers in the College of Education, College of Languages, and College of Basic Education at Salahaddin University-Erbil were selected as the study participants. Instruments such as teachers' and students' questionnaires were used to collect data from the participants. The result of the study revealed students' and teachers' positive perceptions towards the intercultural dimension of language teaching. Also, the findings confirmed that the intercultural dimension in language teaching develops students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness of students' own culture and others which are fundamental for students to negotiate meaningfully and effectively with speakers of other cultures. The result also revealed that despite teachers' positive attitude towards the intercultural dimension in language teaching they do not fully integrate culture into their classes due to the shortage of time and being obliged to follow and finish the curriculum.

Keywords: Intercultural Dimension, Intercultural Communicative Competence, Negotiation of Meaning.

1-Introduction

The recognition of the intercultural dimension as a key component in language learning and teaching has been one of the most significant changes in the last few decades. The nature of the experience of teaching and learning languages has significantly changed as a result of this transition. That is to say, the aim of foreign language learning and teaching is no longer defined in terms of the acquisition of linguistic competence or communicative competence; rather it is defined in terms of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which refers to the ability to communicate appropriately with speakers from different social or cultural backgrounds (Byram et al., 2002; Byram, Holmes, and Savvides,2013).

In today's world, intercultural contacts have been facilitated due to increased globalization, migration, international education, internet and technology advancements (e.g. social networking sites). That means people can establish connections and negotiate with each other all around the world regardless of the differences in social backgrounds, race, education and culture. Therefore intercultural awareness is crucial for constructing a relationship of acceptance and common grounds among various and different backgrounds (Williams, 2005).

Until the present date, this issue has attracted the attention of researchers, especially in the fields of applied linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychology and communication studies. Consequently, due to the increase of multicultural societies and interaction facilities, the ability to communicate effectively across cultures has always been the focus of modern research, especially in the field of foreign language teaching. The way people negotiate with each other reveals important information about the identities and social backgrounds of the speakers. That is, when people talk, they do not only talk to each other to exchange information, they also see each other as individuals and as someone who belongs to a particular social group, such as a "teacher" or a "student", an "employer" with his/her "employee". When they talk to each other,

their social identities are inevitably part of the social interaction between them which affects what they say and how they say it (Byram et al., 2002).

Nowadays the majority of people speak English (Lyon,2017), therefore, English has spread to all sectors of life including workplaces, health, technology and education, which is why there is a great demand for learning and speaking English. As with the expansion of communities and the prevalence of multicultural societies, people with different cultural backgrounds interact with each other. Thus, knowledge of the grammar of the language alone is not enough to create an appropriate conversation; instead, it is the knowledge and awareness of other cultures that paves the way for speakers to engage effectively in conversation and this knowledge and awareness or 'intercultural competence' help them to communicate appropriately based on respecting differences in values, beliefs and attitudes.

For that reason, EFL researchers in recent decades put their focus on developing new didactics and new strategies to raise students' and teachers' awareness of the intercultural dimension in language teaching. They insist that English language teaching nowadays should be viewed from an intercultural perspective. Sercu (2006) affirms that teachers of the English language are now required to reshape their teaching strategies and consider teaching their students from an intercultural perspective. Likewise, Castro (1999) believes that the role of teachers is no longer determined in terms of teaching the linguistic competence or grammar of language, instead they are required to promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence.

Unfortunately, the intercultural dimension in language teaching is not familiar or implemented enough in EFL classes in KRG schools or universities. The lack of teachers' experience in intercultural issues as well as the absence of cultural content in class activities are probably the main reasons for students not to acquire intercultural competence to master successful negotiation with speakers of different cultural backgrounds. This quantitative study attempts to find out EFL teachers' and students' perceptions towards intercultural dimension by collecting the data from 148 EFL students and 30 EFL teachers of SUE and to discover the role of intercultural dimension in developing students as intercultural speakers or negotiators.

2-Theoretical framework

Over the past four decades, the topic of culture teaching and learning has attracted the attention of many researchers, especially in the field of foreign language teaching. There are numerous studies in which the role of culture in EFL classes is the focus of attention, for example, see (Byram and Morgan,1994; Byram et al.,2002; Paige,et al.2003; Atay,2009). Yet, to the present date, culture learning is not completely the domain of language instructors(Paige,et al.2003).

In order to understand the meaning of intercultural dimension in language teaching precisely, one must have knowledge of these related terms used in the literature: cross-cultural adaptation, international competence, intercultural sensitivity, cultural competence, global competence, intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. However, depending on the research analysis on the intercultural approach to language teaching and learning, many scholars prefer to use 'intercultural competence' or 'intercultural communicative competence (ICC) instead of other labels (Bradford et al., 2000 and Deardorff, 2006).

2.1. Intercultural Competence (IC)

There are many definitions raised by scholars and researchers for the term 'intercultural competence'; For example, Sercu (2010) defines intercultural competence as a "general humanistic educational goal". Byram (1997) defines it in terms of one's ability to "communicate and interact across cultural boundaries" According to Byram IC consists of four components 'knowledge, skills, attitude and awareness'. Paige et al. (2003) explain IC as an ongoing process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for effective communication with members of other cultures and societies. He also describes this process as dynamic and developmental and he adds that when this term is used in educational contexts, it engages students "cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively".

It can be seen from these definitions when people from different social and cultural backgrounds interact, their identities are an unavoidable part of the interaction; therefore, intercultural competence plays a key role in sustaining mutual understandings between these people; that is, having knowledge, skills and awareness of other cultures is the key factor for an appropriate interaction and communication

2.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Throughout the literature and research studies, the term ICC has always been used as a synonym with IC. The notion of 'ICC' originated in the work of Byram (1997) which stands for intercultural communicative competence as Oranje and Smith (2018) confirmed in their study. They also highlight that one with a well-developed ICC can effectively and cognitively mediate intercultural interactions. ÇAKIR (2006) states that in order for people to communicate "internationally inevitably" they are required to "communicate interculturally" because being an intercultural speaker raises the awareness of factors of cultural differences. In contrast, when someone is interculturally incompetent, he/she is not aware of the social and cultural backgrounds of other speakers, therefore it is assumed that this person might encounter misinterpretations and misunderstandings while communicating with speakers of other cultures. Societies may share common properties, but it cannot be denied that each group of

people has certain prosperities that are distinctive to its members. For instance, societies can be different in language, religion, points of view, cultures, music, topics of conversation, complaints, refusals and many other features, so what might be preferred Okay and accepted by members of a society may be refused by members of other societies as Smith (1985) explains this issue in terms of argument styles, he confirms that an argument might sound pleasing and elegant in a specific culture while other cultures might regard it as clumsy. Therefore, having a high level of ICC is required for learners of any language to communicate appropriately in the target language, because learning a language nowadays involves knowledge beyond grammar, phonology and syntax and it involves knowing about the culture, values, beliefs and attitudes of speakers of the target language.

3. Models and theories of Intercultural Communicative Competence

There are many models and theories that contribute to the development of ICC, below are the four major models that are constantly cared by researchers in conducting their studies.

3.1-Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

This model is based on Bennet's (1993) study as he created a framework to describe the observed and reported experiences of individuals in intercultural situations. He started observing students for months and years in intercultural settings such as ' intercultural workshops, classes, and students' exchanges' due to the fact that these students experienced a sophisticated interaction with other students with different cultural backgrounds. DMIS hypothesizes that when people experience cultural differences and this experience becomes sophisticated, they become successful in intercultural interactions and relations. The observation included six stages starting from "ethnocentrism" to "ethnorelativism". Ethnocentrism includes the first three stages (denial, defence and minimization) demonstrating that peoples' own culture is related to reality in a certain way. The last three stages called ethnorelativism, consist of 'acceptance, adaptation and integration' which highlights that one experiences his/her own culture in the context of intercultural interactions.

Bennet and Bennet (2004) clarify the DMIS' observation stages stating that in the ethnocentric stages, cultural difference is not appreciated or is avoided in these ways; its existence is denied, defences are raised against it or its significance is minimized. On the other hand, they claim that in the ethnorelative stages, cultural difference is appreciated in many forms; either its significance is accepted, it is taken into account through adaptation, or it is integrated into a definition of identity.

3.2-Anxiety/ Uncertainty Management Model (AUM)

The AUM model belongs to William B. Gudykunst's theory in 1993 which claims that in order for individuals to interact successfully in intercultural situations, they must learn to manage their anxiety of the foreign culture and its people. This management is done through the process of anxiety/uncertainty reduction. Consequently, when anxiety and uncertainty are balanced, people can effectively communicate in social situations. Moeller and Nugent (2014) state that the AUM model works best when it is used in training sessions for those who plan to travel abroad, hoping that the visitors could learn to balance their anxiety level as they are going to welcome a new culture and meet strangers. It is believed that training sessions are helpful for these people to help them successfully communicate with people of other cultures without facing culture shock. Moreover, according to Gudykunst (2005), when individuals are emotionally stable and psychologically satisfied, they have greater chances to adjust to intercultural situations.

3.3-Byram's Multidimensional Model of Intercultural Competence

Byram's 1997 model of intercultural competence is said to be the most influential model in explaining the concept of intercultural competence, most of the scholars in the field of foreign language teaching used this model to conduct their intercultural studies, see (Yang and Fleming, 2013; Hoof,2014; Hoof,2016). Oranje and Smith (2017) claim that the notion of 'Intercultural Communicative Competence' is derived from the work of Byram (1997). So, it is not surprising to see a long range of literature and studies that referred to Byram in conducting their studies. Similarly, this current study also based its methodology on both Byram's (1997) and Sercu(2005) model to obtain the aim of the study.

According to Byram (1997), ICC consists of both communicative competence and intercultural competence. This stresses that, in order for speakers of a language to communicate effectively and competently with other speakers who have different social and cultural backgrounds, they need not only 'linguistic competence' but also 'sociolinguistic and discourse competence'. That is to say, speakers need to know how to construct and understand meaningful sentences along with the awareness of how to use these sentences appropriately in a variety of intercultural situations. Besides, Byram et al (2002) state that integrating intercultural dimension into the process of language teaching, facilitates the acquisition of linguistic competence as well as develops intercultural competence of the students.

Byram (1997) and Byram, et al (2002) explain ICC in terms of its components which are; knowledge, attitude, skills and critical cultural awareness.They stress that being equipped with these elements is required for learners of a language in order to interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations.

3.4-Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence

Deardorff in 2006 provided a model of IC which includes five components, some of these components are similar to Byram's ones including knowledge, skills and attitude, the other two components (internal outcomes and external outcomes) are what make Deardroff's model distinctive.

According to Deardorff's (2006) model, attitude covers three key concepts that are absolutely essential and critical for competent intercultural speakers, they are 'respect, openness and curiosity'. Respect shows that one needs to respect and value others who have different social and cultural backgrounds; openness refers to being open-minded and ready to welcome new cultural experiences, and curiosity demonstrates learners' interest towards the new cultural experience. While, knowledge, demonstrates learners' knowledge and awareness of their own culture and the culture of others.

For Deardorff(2006), there are some intercultural skills needed for processing knowledge and developing language learners' ability in intercultural situations, these skills include skills of observing, listening, evaluating, relating, interpreting and analyzing. She suggests that these skills are required to understand and process knowledge because knowledge alone cannot be relied on by learners for appropriate and effective interaction with others who are socially and culturally different from them. What makes Deardorff's model differ from Byram's model is the components of 'internal and external outcomes', according to Deardorff(2006), knowledge, skills, and attitudes lead individuals to internal and external outcomes.

Internal outcomes refer to one's inner world in terms of flexibility, adaptability and empathy; these qualities allow people to develop their ICs. Adaptability means to what extent one adapts or adjusts to a new cultural environment while flexibility demonstrates one's ability to select and use appropriate communication styles and behaviors in a new cultural context. On the other hand, empathy can be understood as the desire to behave with people the way they prefer to be treated with, that is to say, seeing the situation from other people's perspectives. On the other hand, external outcomes are one's behaviour and communication skills in intercultural settings. This means that external outcomes can be defined as behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately based on one's aforementioned competencies in intercultural knowledge, skills, attitudes and internal outcomes. External outcomes are visible and they appear in what individuals do in their real daily lives or in workplaces, it is the way people act and communicate in culturally diverse environments (Deardorff,2006).

Among several definitions and descriptions of ICC, Byram's (1997) is more popular (Wilberschied,2015; Orange and Smith 2018) Since it comprises a set of components and skills

that are necessary for an effective and meaningful negotiation. Oranje and Smith(2018) indicate that individuals with well-developed ICC have greater chances to maintain intercultural relationships and negotiate meanings in a globalized world where borders become closer to each other and societies become more diverse every day. All human interactions and contacts according to Rogoveanu(2010) are inherently intercultural. It is reasonable to assume that even the meeting of two people is an intercultural exercise because each one of them has a different perspective on how to perceive and interpret the world since they belong to different social groups and cultures. Intercultural factors strongly influence negotiations and meaning interpretations among individuals. Interestingly, individuals with high ICC can see these cultural complexities as a medium for establishing relationships and appreciation of cultural differences rather than reinforcing them. Moreover, in the educational context, the goal of ICC is to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who can engage with complexity and multiple identities while avoiding stereotyping that comes with perceiving someone through a single identity. Consequently, an intercultural approach to language teaching helps learners to acquire the linguistic competence needed to communicate in speaking or writing, to formulate what they want to say/write in correct and appropriate ways as well as the " intercultural competence i.e. their ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities" (Byram et al.,2002,p.5).

4-METHODOLOGY

4.1. The sample of the study

Since the current study is a quantitative one, a probability sampling method has been used to collect data from EFL teachers and students of SUE. One of the types of probability sampling is called stratified sampling; this study uses stratified sampling because this type of sampling gives a sufficient and convenient representation of the whole population. In stratified sampling, the population is divided into subgroups called 'strata' with regard to relevant characteristics such as age, ethnicity, gender, and career (Etikan and Bala, 2017).

For the purpose of obtaining the aim of the study, 30 EFL teachers from three different colleges of SUE including the College of Education, College of Languages and College of Basic Education were selected to fill in a questionnaire designed by Sercu (2005). The sample concerning students of English departments of the three colleges of SUE are 148 students (shown in figure 1) including,76 females and 72 males, moreover, 38% of the students are from the College of Education,27% include students of College of Basic Education and 35% of the students participated in the study are from College of Languages.

Concerning the students, in each one of the aforementioned colleges, from the first stage to the fourth stage, two groups of students were selected one studied the lecture 'Language and Culture' and the other group did not. For example, in the College of Education, this lecture is studied in the second stage. Thus, a group of students in the second stage and another group in the first stage were selected in this college, while in the College of Languages, this lecture is studied in the third stage, which is why two groups of both the third and second stages were selected, the last but not the least, two groups of students in the third and fourth stages in the College of Basic Education were chosen to fill in the questionnaire items in which the culture of ' language and culture' is studied in the fourth stage. Finally, all the participants were divided into two groups, group 1 included those students who did not study 'culture' and group 2 included those who studied culture.
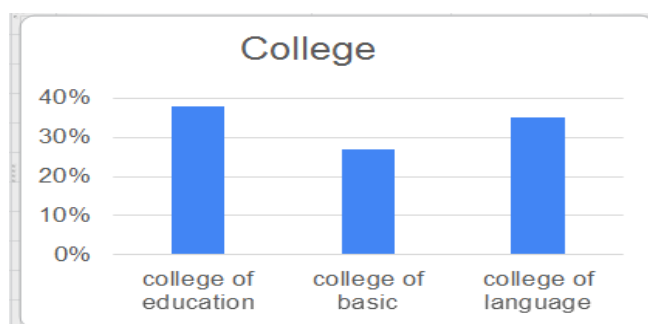
Figure 1, The Percentage of Students who Participated in The Study in Three Different Colleges Of Salahadding University-Erbil

4.2. Instruments used in the study

The main instruments used in the study are teachers' and students' questionnaires and checklists. A standardized questionnaire designed by Sercu(2005) was used to answer the research questions concerning teachers' perceptions and ideas towards the intercultural dimension of language teaching, this is a detailed questionnaire that contains both close-ended and open-ended questions that allows the researcher to get as much information as he/she wants to know about teachers' ideas of 'culture' in foreign language classes. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, weighted mean and weighted percentile, t-test were used for analyzing the data.

For the students, a questionnaire based on Byram's 1997 model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) was designed. It was sent to a group of EFL teachers with scientific titles such as professors or assistant professors inside and outside SUE to comment on it and evaluate it as jury members. Also, both teachers' and students' questionnaires were pilot-tested before they were distributed to them to increase the reliability and validity of the results. This is performed two weeks before the application of the questionnaire. That is to say, eight EFL teachers from the

SUE were randomly selected to answer the questionnaire items for the sake of the pilot study. Moreover, ten students from the participants of the study of English departments were asked to take part in the pilot study.

The questionnaire items are scored according to a numerical scale from 1-5; 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. The scores then were statistically treated using weighted mean and weighted percentile, variance, standard deviation t-test(p-value) and ANOVA.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1.Teachers' perceptions of intercultural dimension in language teaching

To understand teachers' perceptions, teachers were asked to answer the question 'What do you understand by culture teaching in a foreign language teaching context?' They had to choose a number from 1 to 9 in which 1 indicates that it is most important 2 means it comes second in importance, and so on. The result reveals that only 10% of the teachers find culture teaching as (most important), 40% confirmed that culture teaching comes second in importance, 37% said that it comes third in importance and 9% believed that culture teaching has to come up fifth in importance, the last one 4% believed that it comes sixth in importance showing that they do not consider culture teaching very significant.
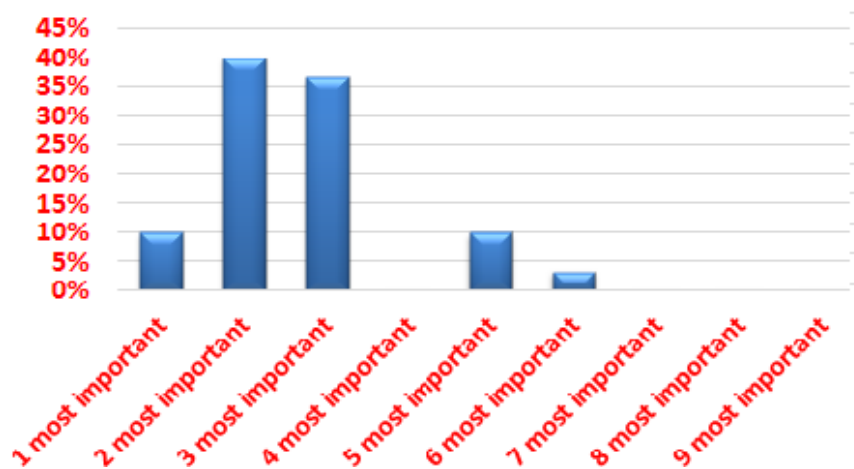
Figure 2, Teachers' Understanding of 'Culture Teaching' in Terms of Importance

Moreover, concerning the time teachers devote to teaching culture, 50% of the teachers said that they devote only 20% of their teaching period to culture teaching, which means that they dedicate 80% of their teaching period to language teaching (the subject). 30% of the teachers said that they devote 40% of their teaching time to culture teaching and 60% to language teaching, the result shows that only 10% of the teachers devote 60% of their class periods to culture teaching.

5.2. Teachers' Interest in devoting more time to teaching culture

The result of the study reveals that teachers care about language teaching or subject teaching more than teaching culture. In other words, they pay attention to give more time to the subject rather than giving cultural information. However, the reader might think that teachers do not have a positive attitude towards an intercultural approach to language teaching, but this is totally wrong because the findings of the study reveal that 70% of the teachers said that up to a certain extent, they would like to devote more time for teaching culture and 27% of the teachers said that they very much like to devote more time for teaching culture.

5.3. Reasons not to devote more time to 'culture teaching'

So as to find the results behind teachers' less attention to culture teaching compared to language teaching, the teachers were required to write their possible reasons that do not allow them to devote more time to culture teaching in the questionnaire, since this item of the questionnaire is an open-ended question, a constant comparative analysis was used to get the frequency from the answers, this is done by interpreting the data in smaller topics sorted into categories with regard to recurring themes. Accordingly,83% of teachers claimed that due to the shortage of time, they could not devote their teaching period to culture teaching, while 7% of the teachers said that due to both the crowded classroom and the shortage of time, they could not give more time for teaching culture, also 10% of the teachers claimed that because of the curriculum, and feeling obliged to finish the subject they pay more attention to the subject than teaching culture. See figure(3)
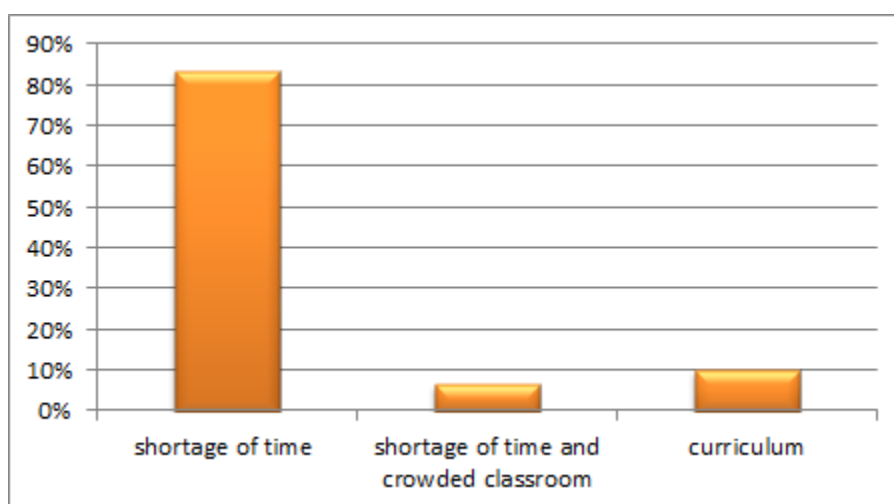

Figure 3, Reasons for Not Devoting More Time for Teaching Culture

5.4. Teachers' familiarity with the foreign country, people and culture/s that is associated with the English language they teach

The result of the study revealed that 53% of the teachers are to some extent familiar with the foreign country, people and culture/s that is associated with English language they teach through English textbooks, internet, media and films, while 27% said they are familiar with these stuff because they have lived in UK or USA for some years; eight teachers wrote that they studied their MA in UK and lived there some years so that they are very familiar with the foreign people, country and culture associated to English language. Moreover, 13% mentioned that they were not very familiar.

In another part of the questionnaire, teachers were asked about their students' perception of the foreign people, country and culture that is associated with the English language they study, according to teachers' answers, 97% of the students have a positive attitude towards foreign people, country and culture that is associated with the language they study.

5.5. Materials and classroom activities that teachers use in the class to promote cultural awareness

In foreign language classes, teachers usually use materials such as textbooks, and teaching aids like maps, diagrams and videos. Concerning the teachers who participated in the study, it was revealed that 87% of the teachers use textbooks as the main object for teaching English, and among the criteria for choosing textbooks the majority of teachers said that they select textbooks that are in accordance with the curriculum. Moreover, teachers' answers revealed that most of the teachers do not have a special classroom activity to promote students' intercultural awareness; the most used activities they use are presentations, seminars and discussion sessions regarding the subject they study.

5.6. School Trips, Intercultural Activities

A vast number of studies emphasize the effectiveness of cultural exchange projects on developing students' intercultural understanding and awareness, see (Williams,2005 and Hopkins, 1999). Cultural exchanges refer to any activities or projects that allow students to experience a new cultural environment such as student exchange programs or scholarships, school trips and international activities. School trips to intercultural communities, student exchange programs and intercultural activities are believed to have a vital role in developing students' negotiation of meaning and increasing intercultural awareness(Williams (2005).

However, teachers' answers showed that there are no such activities or projects in Salahadding University-Erbil. 87% of the teachers mentioned that there are no intercultural activities in their colleges, and 93% declared that their faculty do not arrange school trips. Interestingly, 97% of teachers strongly believe that intercultural activities, and school trips affect students' intercultural awareness positively.

5.7.The role of intercultural dimension in developing students' negotiation of meaning

Regarding the group of students who did not study the lecture on 'language and culture', the mean for all the questionnaire items was 3.07 and the item is achieved at level 3 and above, whereas, the result of the most frequent item that students strongly agreed on is the number 7 of knowledge, which is "I like travelling to other countries so as to learn about foreign cultures" (weighted mean=4.6, weighted percentile=93%). See the Table 1 below.

Table,1:**Rank Of the Questionnaire Items From The Strongly Agree To Strongly Disagree For Students Who Did Not Study 'Language And Culture**

Questionnaire Items	Rank	Mean	Percentage
7- Knowledge	1	4.666667	93%
5-Awareness	2	4.055556	81%
5- attitude	3	3.916667	78%
4- Knowledge	4	3.915493	78%
2- Knowledge	5	3.833333	77%
6- Knowledge	5	3.833333	77%
2- attitude	7	3.75	75%
6- attitude	8	3.611111	72%
2-Awareness	9	3.5	70%
3-Awareness	9	3.5	70%
3- attitude	11	3.444444	69%
4-Awareness	12	3.277778	66%
1- attitude	13	3.194444	64%
1- Knowledge	14	3.138889	63%
2- Skill	14	3.138889	63%
4- attitude	16	3.083333	62%
3- Knowledge	17	2.777778	56%
3- Skill	17	2.777778	56%
5- Knowledge	19	2.694444	54%
1- Skill	20	2.416667	48%
4- Skill	20	2.416667	48%
1-Awareness	22	2.277778	46%

Table (1) shows the weighted mean and the percentage of the questionnaire items ranked according to the students' agreement on it. For example, item 5 of awareness in the questionnaire comes in the second rank (M= 4.0.), while the first item of awareness comes at the 22nd rank (M=2.27) showing that students who did not have studied the lecture "language and culture' disagree to this statement, they gave 46% to this item.

 On the other hand, the weighted mean for the questionnaire items regarding the second group of students who studied ' language and culture' was 3.9, Whereas, the result of the most frequent item that students strongly agreed on is item number 7 (M=4.78), which shows students' positive attitude towards travelling to other countries to learn about foreign cultures. As can be seen from the findings, the most frequently ranked item of the questionnaire in both groups of students is item number 7 of knowledge. This can be interpreted that all of the participants in the study including those who studied culture and those who did not study it are very curious to travel to a foreign country.

Table(2) Ranking students according to the mean and percentage of the questionnaire items

Questionnaire Items	Rank	Mean	Percentage
7- Knowledge	1	4.789474	96%
6- Knowledge	2	4.657895	93%
2-Knowledge	3	4.578947	92%
3-Awareness	4	4.289474	86%
4-Awareness	4	4.289474	86%
5- Awareness	4	4.289474	86%
1- Knowledge	7	4.184211	84%
2-attitude	8	4.131579	83%
1-attitude	9	4.105263	82%
4-Knowledge	10	4.026316	81%
3- attitude	11	4.013158	80%
1-Awareness	12	3.921053	78%
2-Awareness	13	3.842105	77%
5-Knowledge	14	3.815789	76%
3-Skill	15	3.789474	76%
3- Knowledge	16	3.763158	75%
2-Skill	17	3.710526	74%
5- attitude	18	3.684211	74%
4-attitude	19	3.421053	68%
1-Skill	20	3.368421	67%
4-Skill	21	3.289474	66%
6- attitude	22	2.947368	59%
	Total	3.950359	

From Table 1 and Table 2, a conclusion can be drawn from the comparison of the items of the questionnaire to show to what extent teaching culture and intercultural dimension develops students' negotiation of meaning. It is clear that students' knowledge, skills, awareness and

attitudes have increased in the second group of students to some extent. This indicates that the intercultural dimension in language teaching develops students' negotiation of meaning and increases their knowledge, skills, attitude and awareness of their own culture and the culture of others. See table (3)

Table 3: Comparing the Mean of questionnaire items that are closely related to the aim of the study

Questionnaire items	The Mean Score of Students in Group1	The Mean Score of Students in Group2
1- I know about my own culture, besides I have some information about other cultures	3.1	4.1
5-I know about social and cultural differences between my own culture and the culture of others	2.6	3.8
6- I appreciate cultural differences that exist between my culture and others	3.8	4.6
1-I believe that I have the capacity and skills to interact appropriately in different social and cultural environments.	2.4	3.3
4-I have a strategy to resolve cross-cultural conflicts and misunderstandings when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds.	2.4	3.2
1-I am aware of ICC (intercultural communicative competence) that's to say I am aware of how to negotiate appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds	2.2	3-9

As can be seen from Table (3) students in group 2 who studied culture are more knowledgeable about their own culture and other cultures compared to the first group who did not study culture. Also, the second group of students has greater cultural awareness and strategies and skills to adapt to an intercultural environment. These findings indicate that the intercultural dimension in language teaching develops EFL learners' knowledge, skills, attitudes and

awareness of their own culture and the culture of others which paves the way for students to become intercultural speakers or mediators.

The researcher believes that the mean score of the results from Table 3 for these items could have been much greater for the second group if teachers had devoted more time and consideration to teaching culture. However, the mean of the overall items of the questionnaire of students in the first group is 3.07 and for the second group is 3.6. The P-value is 1.85 which marks an insignificant difference.

To sum up, if one considers the items that are closely related to the study's main aim (shown in Table 3), it can be seen that teaching culture developed students' knowledge, skills, awareness and attitude. But, if the mean of the overall items of the questionnaire are to be considered that students of both groups answered, insignificant differences are seen. This is absolutely due to the teachers' plans and strategies for teaching language and devoting their teaching periods to teaching the subject more than teaching culture. See table (4)

Table (4), the average mean and p-value for the first and second groups of students

	Mean	Sd	t Stat	P-Value	interpretation
Group 1. did not study 'culture'	3.071047	0.134427			
Group2.studuied culture	3.628036	0.131054	-25.5036	1.85	Not significant

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study showed Salahaddin University-Erbil teachers' and students' positive attitudes towards the intercultural dimension of language teaching. Depending on the data collected in this study it can be stated that EFL teachers in SUE are knowledgeable and familiar with the foreign people and culture that is associated with the English language, but they do not devote much of the class time to teach culture because of the shortage of time, crowded classrooms and the curriculum. Moreover, most of the teachers do not have a special classroom activity to promote students' intercultural awareness. Depending on the data gathered in this study, EFL teachers in SUE prioritize teaching languages or subjects designed by the curriculum over teaching cultures because of the aforementioned reasons. Although the teachers highly acknowledge the importance of integrating culture into EFL classrooms and appreciate

intercultural activities to promote students' intercultural awareness to effectively and meaningfully negotiate with speakers of other cultures. On the other hand, concerning the EFL students who participated in this study, the findings reveal that students to some extent have knowledge and awareness of the intercultural dimension, particularly those students who study culture. Because, the results demonstrated that the intercultural dimension in language teachings develops students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness to successfully negotiate meaning.

7. Recommendations

This study highlights the significance of integrating an intercultural approach to English language teaching and learning due to its role in developing students as intercultural speakers who can mediate among various cultures on the basis of understanding, respect and meaningful negotiation. For this reason, University stakeholders must rethink their strategies for teaching and learning the English language and focus on the intercultural dimension.

ڕۆڵی ڕەھەندی کلتوری لە بەرەوپێشبردنی توانای ئاخاوتنی خوێندکاران

ڕوناک ابراهیم حمه

بەشی ئینگلیزی کۆلێژی پەروەردە، زانکۆی سەلاحەدین،هەولێر،هەرێمی کوردستان، عێراق.

پوختە

بایەخدان بە کلتورو ڕەھەندی کلتوری لە ناو پرۆسەی فێربوونی زمانی ئینگلیزی بووەتە یەکێک لە پێویستییه هەنووکەییەکانی ژیانی ئەمرۆمان، ئەمەش لە دیدی تویژەران و شارەزایانی بواری زمانی ئینگلیزی بەو مانایە دێت کە پێویستە مامۆستایانی زمانە بیانییەکان بەتایبەت ئینگلیزی لەو قالبە چەقبەستوەی کە فێربوونی زمانی ئەبەستەوە بە توانای کارامەیی خوێندکار لە ئەزبەرکردنی ھەموو یاساکانی ڕێزمانی ئینگلیزی و دروستکردنی ڕستەو دەستەواژەی دروست بەگوێرەی یاساکان، بێنە دەرەوەو لەبری ئەوە زیاتر گرنگی بدەن بە شارەزاکردنی خوێندکارەکانیان بە کلتورو خەلک و بیروبۆچون و ھەموو ئەو لایەنانەی تر کە ئاستی هۆشیاریی خوێندکار بەرزدەکەنەوە. ئەم تویژینەوەیە دەرخەری ئەو ڕاستییەیە کە گفتوگۆیەک بە پێز و کاریگەر لەنێوان دوو قسەکەر دا بەتایبەت ئەگەر باکگراوندی کلتوری و کۆمەلایەتییان جیاوازبێت تەنها پشت نابەستێت بە توانای زمانەوانی و ڕێزمانەوە، بەلکو شارەزابوون لە کلتور و دیدو فیکری یەکتری و فێربوونی یەکتر قبولکردن و بە ئاسایی وەرگرتنی جیاوازییەکان ھەموو ئەمانە دەبنە ڕێگە خۆشکەر بۆ دروستکردنی پەیوەندییەکی دروست لەنێوان تاکەکان.

بۆ ئەم مەبەستە، ئەم تویژینەوەیە بەبەکارهێنانی چەند ئامرازێک وەکو ڕاپرسی و چاودێری کردنی ناو پۆل (Checklist Observation and Questionnaire)ڕاپرسییەکی ئەنجامدا کەتێیدا ٣٠ لە مامۆستایانی بەشی ئینگلیزی لە ھەرسی کۆلێژی پەروەردە، کۆلێژی بنیات، کۆلێژی زمان و ١٤٨ لە خوێندکارانی ئەو کۆلێژانە تێیدا بەژداربوون. خوێندکارەکان دووگرپ بوون، بەشێکیان ئەو خوێندکارانە بوون کە وانەی culture کلتور یان خوێندبوو، وە بەشەکەی تریان ئەوانە بوون کە ئەو وانەیان ھێشتا نەخوێندبوو ئەمەش بە مەبەستی زانینی کاریگەری ڕەھەندی کلتور لە بەرەوپێشبردنی توانای ئاخاوتنی خوێندکاران. ئەنجامی تویژینەوەکە ئەوەی نیشاندا کە ئەو خوێندکارانەی وانەی کلتوریان خوێندبوو، تێگەیشتنیان بۆ پەیوەندی و ئاخاوتنیان لەگەڵ کەسانێک کە جیاوازن لەمان لەڕوی بیروبۆچون، کلتور، کۆمەلایەتییەوە زیاترە وەک لەو گرووپەی کە ھێشتا وانەکەیان نەخوێندوە. ھەرچەندە چەند هۆکارێک ڕیگربوون لەوەی کە جیاوازییەکە بە ڕێژەیەکی بەرچاو نەبێ، وەک تەرخان نەکردنی کاتی پێویست بۆ ڕەھەندی کلتوری لەلایەن مامۆستایان لە وانەکانیان بەشێوەیەک کە مامۆستایان ئاشکرایان کرد کە بەھۆی نەبونی کاتی پێویست و قەرەبالخی ناو پۆلەکان و مەنهەجەوە ناتوانن کاتی پێویست تەرخان کەن بۆ گرنگیدان بە کلتور لە کاتێکدا کە خوازیارن کە لەو پێناوەدا کار بکەن.

کلیلە وشەکان: ڕەھەندی کلتوری، توانای ئاخاوتن

APPENDICES

APPENEX 1

Students' Questionnaire based on Byram'1997 model of ICC

Part one: Background information of the participants

Age: 18—20 ☐   20—22 ☐   23—25☐   26+ ☐

Gender: Male☐   female☐

Nationality: Kurd ☐   Arab☐   other nations ☐

Native language: ------------

Other languages: ------------

College or faculty------------

Part Two: The questionnaire

Part 1: **Knowledge**					
1- I know about my own culture, besides I have some information about other cultures.	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Partially agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
2-Knowing about another culture helps me to resolve cross-cultural conflicts and misunderstandings especially while communicating with people of other cultures.					
3- The English language helps me to know about the language as well as the target culture, therefore when I interact with a native English speaker, I realize what to say or not to say.					
4-I know that being linguistically competent in English is not enough unless I have intercultural communicative competence "ICC"(ability to communicate appropriately with speakers of other cultures). That means knowing English grammar does not help me to become an intercultural speaker.					
5-I know about social and cultural differences between my own culture and the culture of others.					
6- I appreciate cultural differences that exist between my culture and that of others					

7- I like travelling to other countries so as to learn about foreign cultures.					

Part 2: Skills

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1-I believe that I have the capacity and skills to interact appropriately in different social and cultural environments.					
2-English classes help me to develop strategies for learning the language as well as the culture of English speakers.					
3-When travelling to another country, I can adjust my behaviour, dress, ways of speaking,etc. as appropriate to the new cultural environments so that I can avoid offending people with my behaviour or speaking.					
4-I have strategies to resolve cross-cultural conflicts and misunderstandings when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds.					

Part 3: Awareness

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1-I am aware of ICC (intercultural communicative competence), that's to say I am aware of how to negotiate appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds.					
2- I see that there is no integration of cultural-related practices whether in curricula design or even in teacher's activities in class.					
3-When speaking with others from different cultures, I find it normal to have cultural differences or different viewpoints on a particular subject.					
4-I am aware of avoiding generalization, that's to say I do not take individual behaviour as representative of the whole culture.					
5- When a person from another culture behaves impolitely, that does not mean it can be applied to all people of that culture.					

Part 4: Attitude

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1-I care about knowing the culture of the people that I am speaking with in order to be able to treat them properly.					
2-I enjoy talking and interacting with people from other cultures.					

3- When I travel to another country, I try to communicate or behave in a way that is suitable for that country.					
4-English classes provide me with insights concerning the culture of English speakers.					
5- English classes at my university do not contain so much cultural content; therefore, I might face difficulty when speaking with English speakers appropriately.					
6- I am more flexible and I feel more comfortable negotiating with people of my culture than with people of other cultures.					

Appendix 2

Teachers' questionnaire based on Sercu (2005)'s Model of IC

Part one: Background information.   Please write the answer on these dots.

1. Nationality: ………………..
2. Gender: ………………
3. Where you teach: …………………………………
4. Years you have been teaching English as a foreign language: …………………………

Part two: This part includes 13 sections which are in the form of questions, please answer all of them.

1 What do you understand by 'culture teaching' in a foreign language teaching context?

Below, nine possible objectives of culture teaching have been listed. Please **Circle around the number you choose** in order of importance.

number **'1' = most important**

number **'2'= second in importance**   .

(1) Provide information about the history, geography and political conditions of the foreign culture(s).

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

 (2) Provide information about daily life and routines. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

(3) Provide information about shared values and beliefs. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

(4) Provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.).

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

 (5) Develop attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

(6) Promote reflection on cultural differences. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

 (7) Promote increased understanding of students' own culture. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

 (8) Promote the ability to empathise with people living in other cultures. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

(9) Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2-How is your teaching time distributed over 'language teaching' and 'culture teaching'?

Please tick the **only one option** that best corresponds with the average distribution of teaching time over 'language teaching' and 'culture teaching'.

a- 100% language teaching–0% culture teaching☐   **b**- 80% language teaching–20% culture teaching☐

c- 60% language teaching–40% culture teaching ☐   **d**-40% language teaching–60% culture teaching ☐

e-20% language teaching–80% culture teaching☐   **f**- 100% integration of language-and-culture teaching☐

3-Do you have the feeling that you would like to devote more time to 'culture teaching' during your foreign language teaching classes, but that somehow you never get around to it?

Please tick the answer that best matches your opinion:

a-Yes, very much so☐   **b**-Yes, up to a certain extent☐   **c**- No, not particularly☐   **d**-No, not at all **e**-No opinion☐

If you have the feeling you would like to devote more time to 'culture teaching' but do not get around to it, what may be the reasons for that? Please type in any reasons you see in the area below.

_ _
_ _

4-To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Put(√) under the option that you agree with.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement.	Agree	Strongly Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1- My pupils are very motivated to learn the foreign language I teach.					
2-My pupils think learning the foreign language I teach is very difficult.					
3-My pupils are very knowledgeable about the culture of the foreign language I teach.					
4-My pupils have a very positive attitude towards the people associated with the foreign language I teach.					

5- How would you describe your pupils' perceptions of and ideas regarding the country/ies and people(s) usually associated with the foreign language you teach?

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6- How familiar are you with the country, culture, and people primarily associated with the foreign language you teach?

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7- What kind(s) of culture teaching activities do you practise during classroom teaching time?

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8-Do you use textbooks and/or additional teaching materials? What criteria do you observe when selecting a textbook?

   a.   Yes, I do ☐   **b. No, I do not** ☐

Note: Please choose the most important criteria for you in the following statements, and use(√).

1- The fact that additional materials come with the book (workbook, listening materials, tests, video, etc.)

2- The layout   (……)

3- The price   (……)

4-The quality of the teacher's manual   (……)

5-The degree to which the textbook meets the curricular requirements   (……)

6- The degree to which the book is attuned to the level and the age of my pupils.   (……)

7- The pace of the book, the speed with which the book progresses   (……)

8- The amount of cultural information the book offers   (……)

9-The degree to which the book can motivate my pupils   (……)

10-The textbook authors' nationality   (……)

11-The degree of matching between the amount of materials offered and the number of teaching periods assigned to my subject. (……)

9-Does your school, faculty or university organize school trips to foreign countries?   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

10-Does your school, faculty or university participate in international exchange projects?   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

11-Does your school, faculty or university organize (cross-curricular) intercultural/multicultural/ international activities?

Yes ☐   **No** ☐

12-Do you believe school trips, international exchange projects and/or intercultural activities have a positive or a negative effect on the attitudes and perceptions of pupils regarding foreign country/ies, foreign cultures (s), and foreign people? Do these projects and activities help students to develop their negotiations of meanings?

Yes ☐   **No** ☐

Please explain your answer in the area below.

_____
_____
_____

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