The Impact of Culture on EFL College Students ' Comprehension of Reading Text

تأثير الثقافة على استيعاب طلبة الكليات الدارسين للغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية للنصوص الانجليزية

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Abstract

The tendency for learning English leads to make any foreign learner eager to learn all the components that have an effect on his/her comprehension of that widely used language. Cultural background is one of those components which has to great extent an active role in achieving a better communication. The study aims at Finding out the effect of teaching culture on EFL college students' achievement in reading comprehension as well as Developing EFL college students' skills in Reading Comprehension. A sample of 104 students (each group consists of 52) has been chosen from dept. of English/ College of education/ Karbalaa University. In order to achieve the aim of the study, the researchers have utilized "The Pre- test Post-test Control Group Design". An instruction for the experimental group using five reading comprehension test lasted for six weeks and it took place between the pre and post test. Whereas the control groups taught the same texts but in the traditional way. Results reveal a significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups on the benefit of the experimental one. Results also reveal a significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and post test. In the light of results, a number of conclusions are drawn.

الملخص

الرغبة في تعلم لغة أجنبية يجعل المتعلمين تواقين لتعلم كل مكونات تلك اللغة التي تؤثر بشكل كبير على استيعابهم لها. الخلفية الثقافية هي إحدى تلك المكونات والتي تلعب إلى حد كبير دورا مهما في القيام بتواصل أفضل. تهدف الدراسة الحالية لاكتشاف مدى تأثير تدريس الثقافة على تحصيل طلبة الكلية الدارسين للغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية لمادة الاستيعاب القرائي وكذلك مدى تطوير هؤلاء الطلبة على استعمال مهارات الاستيعاب. بلغت عينة البحث 104 طالبا وطالبة من قسم اللغة الانجليزية في كلية التربية جامعة كربلاء. ولتحقيق أهداف البحث قام الباحثان باستعمال (الاختبار القبلي والبعدي للعينة الضابطة) كتصميم تجريبي. تم تدريس العينة التجريبية خمسة مواضيع باستخدام المحتوى الثقافي في تلك المواضيع فيما تم تدريس نفس تلك المواضيع للعينة الضابطة ولكن بالطريقة التقليدية. واستمرت التجربة لمدة ستة أسابيع. أظهرت النتائج فروقا ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات العينتين لصالح العينة التجريبية. كما وأظهرت النتائج أيضا فروقا ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات الاختبارين القبلي والبعدي للعينة التجريبية مما يدل على تطور واضح في استيعاب الطلبة عند تدريسهم المحتوى الثقافي للغة.

(Section One) Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The spread of English language and the related expansion of its use and learning have generated intense interest in how and whether it is possible to improve the results of English teaching. Such improvement will naturally lead to progress in the study of language pedagogy and of second language acquisition (SIA).Acquisition of English Language specifically is viewed as a desirable end since it is now taught as the main foreign language in virtually every country, and used for business, education, and access to information by a substantial proportion of the world's population.

According to Crystal (2003: 255); language has no independent existence. It exists only in the brains, months, ears, hands, and eyes of its user. So, language without cultural background knowledge is insufficient to achieve communication between the foreign learner and the foreign language.

Learning the sub systems of the English language, namely sounds, grammar, and vocabulary is inadequate for the acquisition of communicative competence unless one knows their appropriate use within each situation. This means that one has to know when to use them and under what circumstances they are appropriate. This social use of the language involves, among other things, cultural allusions or conventions such as ways of thinking, custom, moves, art forms, idioms, … etc. It also involves paralinguistic features such as tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions. These cultural features are essential in speech acts. In addition to understanding the nonverbal communication such as nods, smiles and the like, the foreign learner must interpret the figurative use of language, proverbs, and norms of English culture, knowing which expression are polite, acceptable, formal, … etc. both in speaking and writing. (Betti and Al-Jubouri, 2015: 247).

It then, seems sensible, when learning a language, also to study the culture of the people who speak it. While learning Icelandic, for example, one would expect to study the life style of the Icelanders. Thus, teaching materials could reasonably include an element of Icelandic studies with description of the treeless landscape, the historic links with Denmark, the importance of the fishing, industry, and so on. For students such materials would be both necessary and motivating as they are unlikely to be studying the Icelandic language if they are not also interested in Icelandic culture (Cook, 2003: 57).

1.2 The Problem of the Study

The ignorance of cultural features will create misunderstanding between the speaker and listener or writer and reader. Being unaware of cultural content indicates incapacity to use the language appropriately. The impact of culture in learning a foreign language includes internal as well as external factors. The first one is related to the learner's society whereas the second belongs deeply to the foreign language culture which may cause a problem to the foreign learners in general. In this study, the important issue which is tackled by the researchers is: how learner's background knowledge in culture of the foreign language included in reading texts affects deeply his/ her comprehension and interpretation of those texts. In other words, it shows the extent to which culture has a connection with language interpretation and comprehension.

1.3 The Aims of the Study

The study aims at:

1. Finding out the effect of teaching culture on EFL college students' achievement in reading comprehension .
2. Developing EFL college students' skills in Reading Comprehension.

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

To achieve the first aim, it is hypothesized that:

- There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control one in the Reading Comprehension achievement test.

And to achieve the second aim it is hypothesized that:

- There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and the post-test.
- There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group in the pre and the post-test.

1.5 Value of the Study

Hopefully, this study is useful to teachers of English as it shows the necessity as well as the importance of teaching cultural elements when teaching reading comprehension (RC) texts. Such consideration to cultural background knowledge of English will remove any barriers and achieves communication between the foreign learners and the foreign language.

1.6 Limit of the Study

The study is limited to investigate the role of culture in just the comprehension of three reading texts that reflect a clear image about the culture of the foreign society. The population is Iraqi EFL second year college students, whereas the sample is two groups (each group consists of 52 students) of the second year students at the Dept. of English/ College of Education for Humanities/ Kerbalaa University.

1.7 Procedures

1. An explanation of the influence the culture has on the components of language: listening, reading, vocabulary, and translation.
2. Showing how teaching students the cultural elements affects their achievement in RC.
3. Applying pre-test and post-test for students who all belong to the second stage of English department, College of Education, Karbala University. The test concerns with measuring the students' comprehension of reading texts with or without teaching cultural components included in those texts.
4. Concluding, after examining the students' presentation, the active role or impact the cultural background knowledge has on students' comprehension of texts in general.

(Section Two) Literature Review

2.1 Culture Influence on Language Components

Language is both a product and a reflection of culture. What the people of a particular culture talk and think is shaped and communicated in the vocabulary of the language they use. Thus, learning a foreign language involves the language of the culture of the people who speak it because these two aspects are intimately bound together (Betti and Al-Jubouri, 2015: 248).

The influence of culture includes all components of language: vocabulary, reading, speaking, listening, and translation as it is illustrated below:

2.2 Culture Influence on Vocabulary

The basic component of language is vocabulary and the cultural difference between that of foreign learner and that belongs to the language itself has an impact on vocabulary. Such difference is reflected through the explanation of vocabulary. For example, the words below which are all collected from the internet are meaningful in English Whereas they mean something different in Arabic.

Blue baby   (A sick baby).
Blue blood   (From a noble fathers).
Blue book   (Marketing Research Services Dictionary).
Blue moon   (Long period).
Blue-eyed boy   (Special boy).
Blue ribbon   (Excellent)

(http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com, accessed on 10-1-2016)

This example shows how each factor in culture may be exhibited in words (vocabularies) and the foreign learners should pay attention to these words while learning vocabulary.

2.3 Culture Influence on Listening

Students often complain that although they spend lots of time in learning and practicing listening comprehension activity, their progress is not good. The reason behind this is their lack of knowledge about the culture of the foreign language they learn.

Hymes (1972: 75) asserts that in order to be able to communicate effectively in a language, foreign learners need more than grammatical competence. They also need to know how language is used by members of a speech community to accomplish their purpose. For example, a student hears a sentence like "Edward Kennedy went downhill since Chappaquiddick" finds no difficulty in understanding the structure of the sentence but he does not know that "Chappaquiddick" is the name of a place in America which is used in the sentence to refer to the traffic accident. (http://www.fun-with-words.com, accessed on 10-1-2016)

2.4 Culture Influence on Speaking

Just like listening, the ability of speaking is not a matter of pronunciation or intonation. The story of a young college interpreter shows how ignorance about culture of the foreign language leads to misunderstanding:

There is a young college interpreter whose pronunciation is standardized and natural. The first time he was appointed to accompany a foreign guest he tried to do everything he could to show he was enthusiastic, kind, considerate, and competent. He did his best to be attentive by saying "You come this way", "You sit here", "Don't go too fast", "Follow me", "Don't be late". In the next day, the college interpreter was surprised to know that the foreigner did not want to go with him as he thought that young interpreter was impolite.

(http://www.collegestories.com, accessed on 10-1-2016)

The example above shows that there is no problem in the interpreter's English language but this lack of cultural knowledge makes him utter such impolite remarks.

2.5 Culture Influence on Reading

As we know that the basic requirement of learning is to read English well. However, it is not the only skill to judge one's reading ability. The cultural background knowledge plays an active role in it. That is, when one reads a novel, play or even a newspaper, he/ she usually comes across the words derived from myths or religion .Consider the sentence below which stands from the Holy Bible religious allusion:

"Bow down in the house of Rimmon"

This sentence means "Doing things against one's willingness"

(http://www.worsleyschool.net/socialarts/allusion/page, accessed on 10-1-2016).

This means that the knowledge of language itself is not sufficient to remove all the problems in reading. People's works are always related to their culture, especially those related to allusions or usage which foreign learners are not familiar with.

2.6 Culture Influence on Translation

It is widely believed that translation is greatly influenced by culture. In translating, one should have enough knowledge about both his /her culture as well as the English one. The difficulty in translation mainly lies in the understanding the cultural background which includes many aspects like: art, history, geography, philosophy, science … etc.

Consider the following example:

"I was not Pygmalion, I was Frankenstein"

In the translation of such sentence, one must be aware about what these words "Pygmalion and Frankenstein" mean. These words are names of two persons. The first is the king of Cyprus in Greek fairy tales. Once he carved a statue of a very beautiful young lady, and he fell in love with "her". Because of his pious love, Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love, gave the statue life, and at last, Pygmalion got married with her. The second person, Frankenstein, was a character in M. W. Shelly's who was a young medical college student. Once he invented a monster, but that monster ate him. Taking into consideration that cultural background about those two characters, one can see that 'Pygmalion' means to enjoy one's own creation whereas 'Frankenstein' refers to one who suffers from his own actions.

(http://www.translationdictionary.com, accessed on 10-1-2016)

From what has been mentioned above about the influence of culture on language components, one can conclude that language is a part of of culture; the two are intricately interwoven such that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. Separation of culture and language is unproductive.

2.7 Culture and Teaching

Culture refers to ideas, customs, skills, arts, and tools that characterize a given group of people. It is the "glue" that binds a group of people together (Brown, 2007: 188).

Birjandi et al (2005: 237) point out that as students begin the course, they expect to gain some degree of functional ability in the culture as well as in the language. Students expect to learn about the people as well as the language. Thus, language and culture are inseparably bound. Language is used to convey meaning and meaning is determined by the culture. So, to be meaningful, language must be culture-bound and culture specific, because the particular patterns of social interactions are specific to teach culture. However, culture is so complex that students cannot be expected to absorb the totality of native cultural hits. At least students should be given the insights in order to participate in the foreign language setting. Students should learn about the foreign culture in order to be able to function in that culture and not threaten in any way their belief in their own culture system.

Teachers of foreign language teach and students learn about the culture of the foreign language whether teachers include it overtly in the curriculum or not. McLeod (1976: 212) confirms this point and states that "by teaching a language … one is inevitably already teaching culture implicitly". Betti and Al-Jubouri (2015: 248) point out that Arabic learners, for example, must be aware of the differences between their culture and the English culture including those differences in family environment, taboos, physical proximity and contact, manners of eating, selling and buying, greetings… etc. The understanding of cultural allusions will help students grasp the full meaning or function of the linguistic forms of the foreign language because they are often associated with the situation (i.e. social context) in which they occur. Students can clearly understand grammatical forms but when they are used in conversational discourse they may interpret them differently unless they are aware of the cultural concepts underlying them. Culture and form, therefore, complete and reinforce each other to make language meaningful . Thus, students need to be taught the conventions of English hand in hand with language forms and functions. To help students attain this goal, the teacher should give due consideration to cultural items related to the community speaking the target language.

Betti and Al-Jubouri (ibid: 252) mention the following strategies which are appropriate for fostering awareness and interest in the foreign culture in the classroom.

A) The environment of the classroom should reveal aspects of the target culture. This can be done through the use of bulletin boards, wall pictures, maps, magazines, newspapers… etc. For example, on bulletin board, the teacher can highlight current events in that country, mount comic strips, newspaper clippings and topics of general interest, and copy out popular pieces of poetry, proverbs and the like.

B) The teacher should provide the class with objects or pictures representative of the foreign country (e.g. money, costumes, stamps, and pictures of historical or interesting places). These can be supplemental by appropriate book, stories, and magazines so that students can familiarize themselves with the foreign culture.

Birjandi et al (2005: 237) add that culture can be presented in different modes in class or out of class. "Culture aside" is probably the most widely used approach which is an unplanned brief comment on culture. A "Culture assimilator" is another means and consists of three parts:

1. A short passage demonstrating intercultural exchange.
2. Possible interpretations.
3. Feedback for students.

The advantage of this approach is that students acquire a high degree of familiarity with the culture and a great deal of time to prepare. A culture capsule is a brief description of the aspects of the second culture followed by a discussion of the contrast between the cultures.

However, they (ibid: 247) mention that there are some problems in teaching culture. First, not all teachers know how to provide the culture information needed (the content). Teachers should know what language teach. The likes and dislikes, socio cultural systems, commercial publishers… etc. Colleges and universities are helpful variables to provide the necessary information. Second, teachers may not know how to devise ways of presenting culture. A manner to which the students can attach some relationship between the information and their background. Third, teachers may not find time in class period to teach culture.

2.8 Reading

Reading is the most important skill of all for most students of English throughout the world, especially in the countries that foreign language learners have not the opportunity to interact with native speakers but have access to the written form of all language. Birjandi et al (2005: 210) consider reading a process in which the readers focus attention on reading materials and activate previously acquired knowledge and skills in order to comprehend what someone else has written.

Sometimes, reading is erroneously referred to as a passive skill as the reader does not produce message like a speaker or a writer, but if we examine the abilities that have a basic role in comprehension of meaning, we find that it requires active mental processing. This explains the reason behind regarding it as a receptive and decoding skill in which the reader tries to understand the meaning of the word or phrase or sentence (code) and perceive the content of the written text (Harmer, 2001: 211).

Hedge (2000: 194) illustrates the importance of reading and mentions that reading can increase the students' knowledge and understanding of the culture of the speakers of the language, their people and their ways of thinking, their literature and their past and present civilizations.

Harmer (1998: 68) points out that it is necessary to distinguish two different dimensions before considering reading improvement techniques. In one case, the students read aloud from the printed page in which reading is comprehensible to a listener, without the reader getting much to meaning. Such an activity is one aspect of reading with a minor goal. The other is called reading for comprehension which is an activity in which the students read a passage for meaning or for recreating the writer's meaning without vocalizing what is being read. It is essential for teachers to be aware of the characteristics and objectives of each before practicing them in the classroom.

2-9 Teaching Reading comprehension

In the past, reading was considered as language learning process in which the teachers used the reading material to teach vocabulary and grammar. Now, reading is considered as a communicative process in which the goal of learning to read is meaning. So, the teachers' responsibility is to teach reading strategies that enable the students to read at higher levels of proficiency.

Richards and Renandya (2002: 289) define reading strategies as plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning. They mention that Krashen and Terrii (1983) introduce the communicative strategies as follows:

a. Reading for meaning and comprehension without looking up every word.

b. Predicting meaning by using context.

The ultimate aim of reading is comprehension of the written passage or the understanding of the context of the written texts. The course goal is to get a level at which students use their ability to overcome partial lack of understanding and to continue reading until they understand the author's message without concentrating on structure or translating into their own language. To achieve this objective, the teacher should help the students and lead them to their general and specific goals (Birjandi et al, 2005: 212).

Davies and Pearse (2000: 92) state that there are generally three stages which are recommended to make reading more realistic and interesting. These stages are:

2.9.1 Pre-reading

This stage is to prepare learners for what they are going to read. It may include the following activities which have to be applied by the teacher:

- Guess the topic of the text from the headings, illustrations… etc.
- Writing a word on board and asking students about the words that have a connection with the topic.
- Predict what the text will say.
- Write questions that may be answered by the text.

2.9.2 While Reading

This stage is to help the learners understand the text. They may first do any easy scanning or skimming task, and then a task requiring more through language comprehension. Teachers here should help learners understand the text rather than just testing their comprehension the whole time. In this stage the following activities can be applied:

- Scan for two or four items of information.
- Skim for the general idea.
- Answer questions.
- Complete sentences.
- Complete a table, map, or a picture.
- Ask each other questions.

2.9.3 Post-reading

This stage is to help the learners to connect what they have read with their own ideas and experience, just as we often do in real life, and perhaps to move fluently from reading to another classroom activity. It may include the following:

- Discuss what was interesting or new in the text.
- Discuss or debate the topic.
- Do tasks on the language or structure or the text.
- Summarize the text, orally or in writing. (ibid)

(Section Three) Methodology and Procedures
3.1 An Introductory Note
  This section presents the methodology and all the procedures followed to achieve the aim and to verify the hypotheses of the study. It covers the experimental design, population and sample selection procedures, the equivalence of the subjects, the construction of the pre and post test, , the experimental procedures and the statistical methods utilized in this study. A pre and post tests have been used in this study as instruments. The statistical tools followed in this study were: t-test for two independent samples to find out the significant differences between the two groups in the dependent variable and in some equivalent variables , Chi Square to equalize them in the variable of parents' level of education, t-test for two dependent samples to test the significant differences between the pre test and post test, Kuder Richardson formula 21 and Alpha Cronbach method to estimate the internal consistency and the reliability of the test.

3.2 The Experimental Design
     Designing any experiment is definitely important for this reason it should be appropriate to determine the possibility of obtaining valid, objective and accurate answers to research questions or statements (Christensen,1980:150). Experimental designs are employed to produce data that allow warranted conclusions to be drawn at the conclusion of the study (Schoenfeld, 2006:198).
     In order to achieve the aim of the study, the researchers have utilized "The Pre- test Post-test Control Group Design".   According to Nunan and Bailey (2009:98-99) the pre-test post-test control group is one of the quasi-experimental designs. The quasi-experimental designs are characterized by:
  1-Selecting two groups and assigning them to an experimental and a control group;
 2-The independent variable is administered only to the experimental group;
 3-The presence of actual control group; and
4- a pre-test is given to both groups;
4-Both groups of subjects submit to a post test to measure the dependent variable (Brown and Rodgers,2002: 211)
   In the light of the abovementioned design, the experimental group is taught by using the cultural knowledge, whereas the control group is learnt by using the traditional way.

3.3 Population and Sample of the Study
    The population of the study consists of the 2nd year STs in the Department of English, College of Education, University of Kerbalaa for the academic year 2015-2016. The total number of the 2nd year STs population is 104
    To achieve the aim of the study, the researchers have randomly chosen Section A and B to represent the sample of the study.
     Second year STs at the Dept. of English / College of Education for Human Sciences/ Kerbalaa University are distributed into three sections. Section (A), which consists of 52 students, has been randomly chosen to be the experimental group. Section (B), which consists of 52 students, has been chosen as a control group.

3.4 Equivalence of the Study Subjects
    In order to ensure better equivalence of the treatment groups, the researchers have tried their best to control some of the variables that may affect the results of the experiment. These variables are: age, parents' educational level, the final scores in reading comprehension in the second year, and the pre-test.
    Some of this information is taken from students themselves (age and parents' level of education); some is taken from the Department of English and the college registration.
    All the differences are tested at 0.05 level of significance using t- test for two independent samples or chi- square formula.

3.4.1 Age of the Subjects
The researcher has utilized the t- test formula for two independent samples to determine whether there is any significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the age factor.

The computed t- value is 0.294 whereas the table t- value is 1.671. The comparison has indicated that there are no significant differences between the ages of the two groups .

3.4.2 Parents' Education
In order to ensure whether there is any significant difference between the two groups in the level of their fathers' education chi-square formula has been used.

The result shows that the value of the computed chi-square for the fathers' education is 0.893 which is less than the table value of chi-square 11.7 under 5 degrees of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in this variable.

Both groups are found to be equal in this variable. The computed chi-square value is 0.267 which is less than the table value of chi-square 11.7 under 5 degrees of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in this variable.

3.4.3 The Final Scores in Reading comprehension in the Second Stage.
The scores of the 'reading comprehension' subject matter of the subjects in the previous year are taken from the Department of English records. The researchers used t- test in order to measure the significance of difference between the two groups. The mean score of reading comprehension of the experimental group (67.78) is compared with that of the control group (66.58), and it is found out that the computed t- value is 0.471 which is less than the table value 1.98 .

Hence the differences between the two groups are statistically insignificant at the degree of freedom (102) and 0.05 level of significance.

3.5 The Pilot Administration of the Test
On the 16th of November 2015 a pilot administration of the test was carried out. The test was experimentally tried out on a sample of 20 students from second year students group (c). The reasons behind the pilot study were to estimate the time needed to complete the test, check the clarity of instruction, analyze the items in the light of students' responses to determine their effectiveness in terms of difficulty level and discriminatory power, and to calculate the reliability coefficient of the test.

It was found that the time needed to was complete the whole test 50 minutes and the instructions were clear and stated in an adequate way. It was also found that the difficulty levels and the discriminatory powers were within the acceptable ranges.

3.6 The Validity and Reliability of the Study Instruments
According to Heaton (1975:153), the validity of the test is the extent to which it measures what is suppose to measure and nothing else. Some authors state that there are several types of validity such as: content validity, face validity, construct validity, and criterion-related validity (Best,1981:67; Bloom et al,1981:70, Gronlund, 1981:67; and Mehrens and Lehmann,1991:124)

In order to ensure the face validity of the pre and post tests, they were exposed to a jury of specialists in ELT, linguistics, and applied linguistics who agreed on the suitability and validity of the tests items .

The tests have gain the content validity for the following reasons: first, the researchers employed a wide range of varieties of skills and techniques involved in the instructional programme. Second, passages were selected from authentic materials. Finally, the jury members were kindly asked to comment on the content of the passages and made possible modification on the tests.

Reliability refers to the stability of the test scores. Two methods were used to estimate the test reliability in this study were Kuder Richardson 21 and Alpha Cronbach method. The Kuder Richardson 21 method is " based on proportion of persons passing each item and the standard deviation of the total scores" (Gronlund, 1981:99). The Alpha Cronbach method indicates how well

a group of items together measure the traits of interest by estimating the proportion of test variance due to common factors among the items, whether the items are dichotomously scored or not (Davies et al., 1997:39).

The results showed that the reliability coefficient of 0.91 (using Kuder Richardson 21) and 0.93 (using The Alpha Cronbach) respectively are obtained. This means that the test has an acceptable and adequate reliability since its coefficients are statistically significant.

3.7 Students, Achievement in the Pre-test.

According to Lado (1972: 383) researchers can test before conducting an experiment or teaching in order to equate the groups as well as knowing their background knowledge. After the application of the Pre-test it is found out that the calculated t-value is (0.132) and it is not significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, it is concluded that both groups are equal in the pre-test.

3.8 The Instruction

The instruction started on the 6th of December 2015 (the pre-test is conducted on the 16th of November 2015) and lasted for six weeks during the academic year 2015-2016, to end up on the 20th of February 2012. The lectures have been arranged on Monday for both groups. One of the researchers taught both groups in order to control the teacher variable in the experiment.

The lessons were arranged to be on every Monday for both groups in the reading comprehension lectures. The researchers faced no difficulties in teaching students because they are members of the department staff.

Both groups taught the same material which were reading comprehension passages (chosen from the textbook, Sixty Steps to Précis) but they were manipulated differently. Different techniques used for the experimental group including showing videos and picture to show cultural elements as well as concentrated on differences between the two cultures. Five passages from the textbook that contain cultural elements have been chosen to be taught (one passage for each week).

It is noteworthy to say that students of the experimental group were very interested in the instruction. The researchers noticed that through the attendance of the students and their active participation especially during the post reading discussions by giving their opinions and sharing ideas.

3.9 Final Administration of the Test

The post test was administered on the 25th of January, 2016. The test consists of three types of questions short answer questions (5 items), a synonyms matching (10 items), and putting chosen words in meaningful sentences(5 items). The researchers applied the post test on both groups at the same time to ensure giving them the same conditions. The number of the testees was 52 for each group. The time needed for finishing the test was 50 minutes for both groups .

3.10 The Scoring Scheme

Al Hamash et. al (1982:23) assert that an accurate scoring scheme should be applied for the test for the purpose of objectivity and reliability. In this study the first and the last five items (which need the students' production) are given two scores for each correct answer for an item, whereas the second ten matching items (which requires students' recognition) are given one score for each correct answer. A zero is given to each incorrect answer. The highest score the testee may achieve is 30 and the lowest is zero.

(Section Four) Results, Discussion, and Conclusion
4.1 The Discussion of Results

The first aim of this study is Finding out the effect of teaching culture on EFL college students' achievement in reading comprehension . to fulfill this aim it is hypothesized that There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control one in the Reading Comprehension achievement test.

The researchers have utilized t-test for two independent samples at 0.05 level of significance and 102 degrees of freedom. As shown in table (1), the mean score of the experimental group is (26.2)

and that of the control one is (17). It is found out that the computed t value is (6.49)which is greater than the table value (1.984). This means that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the benefit of the experimental group. So it can be said that this hypothesize is rejected. This result is considered normal due to the effect of teaching cultural element (including using pictures and videos to show students these elements) to the experimental group whereas the control group is taught RC traditionally.

Table (1)t- test statistics for the study subjects' score in the total post achievement test

Group	No.	$\bar{\times}$	SD	DF	t−value		Level of
					computed	table	significance
Experimental	52	26.2	5.40	102	6.49	1.984	0.05
Control	52	17	8.68				

As for the second aim in this study (Developing EFL college students' skills in Reading Comprehension), it has two hypotheses. The first one that There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and the post-test. The second one states that There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group in the pre and the post-test.

Using t-test for two dependent sample to measure the differences between the experimental subjects' scores in the pre test and post test, it is found out that the computed t-value is (28.06) which is greater than the table value (2.021). It can be said that there is a great development of the experimental group's RC achievement. So the null hypothesis is rejected. See table (2). This result is considered normal due to the fact that teaching cultural elements motivate students to learn and retain information easily
.

Table (2)t-test statistics for the experimental subjects' score in the pre-post achievement test

Group	No.	$\bar{\times}$	SD	DF	t−value		Level of
					Computed	table	significance
Pre test	52	15.9	7.98	51	28.06	2.021	0.05
Post test	52	26.2	5.40				

Using the same test to measure the differences between the control subjects' scores in the pre test and post test, it is found out that the computed t-value is (1.13) which is less than the table value (2.021). It can be said that there is not clear development of the control group's RC achievement. So the null hypothesis is accepted. See table (3). The development was not promising because the subjects of the control group were not motivated enough to search for cultural clues in texts and passages as the subjects of the experimental group do.

Table (3)t- test statistics for the control subjects' score in the pre and post achievement test

Group	No.	$\bar{\times}$	SD	DF	t−value		Level of significance
					computed	Table	
Pre test	52	15.7	7.56	51	1.13	2.021	0.05
Post test	52	17	8.68				

4.2 Conclusions

In the light of the empirical evidence in this study and in relation to the researchers' own observations during the experiment, the following conclusions are drawn:

1- Teaching culture is beneficial to a large extent for Iraqi EFL college students.
2- Iraqi EFL college students are highly motivated to comprehend texts by referring to cultural elements of that text.
3- Using culture in teaching helps to evoke students thinking skills.
4- Focusing on cultural similarities and differences between the native culture and that of the foreign facilitates university Instructors teaching and EFL students' learning.
5- Teaching culture provides instructors with students' background knowledge so that they can be acquainted with their abilities.
6- Knowing other cultures will undoubtedly help EFL learners contact foreigners especially by using the internet and the social media.

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