

The Role of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching with Special Reference to "Iraq Opportunities" Textbooks for the Intermediate Stage

By

Isam Hoobi Nasir

and

Dr. Jameel Qasim Hameed

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Abstract

This research paper endeavors the incorporation of teaching culture into foreign language classes. Teaching culture can be used as a motivating factor for encouraging the learners to learn the foreign language (i.e. English). It tries to find answers why and how culture is taught by designing a questionnaire conducted to (215) teachers of English for the intermediate stage in Basrah governorate and its districts for the academic year 2011-2012. The study showed that nearly most of the teachers of the selected sample are untrained to teach culture either they lack of knowledge and experience or lack of aids, techniques and strategies and the time for teaching culture. This led the teachers to neglect teaching some of the cultural aspects. In addition, the findings showed that the Iraqi culture is very limited compared to the English one and other cultures in the prescribed

textbooks. Many teachers suggested the inclusion of the Iraqi, Islamic and Arabic cultures in the prescribed textbooks.

ملخص البحث :

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توظيف تدريس الثقافة مع تدريس اللغة الأجنبية تعتبر عاملاً مساعداً ومشجعاً للطلبة على تعلم اللغة الأجنبية (الانكليزية)، وقد صمم الباحث استبانته لأخذ آراء ٢١٥ مدرس لغة انكليزية للمرحلة المتوسطة في محافظة البصرة للعام الدراسي ٢٠١١-٢٠١٢. أظهرت الدراسة بأن أغلب مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية هم غير مدربين لتدريس الثقافة في المناهج المتبناة وذلك لقلة الوقت والمعلومات أو الوسائل التقنية أو الاستراتيجيات المتبعة في التدريس. وقد أدى هذا الأمر إلى إهمال للعديد من المفردات الثقافية للمدرسين. وقد أظهرت النتائج أيضاً بأن الثقافة العراقية والعربية والإسلامية هي محدودة للغاية مقارنة بالثقافة الانكليزية حيث أبدى العديد من المدرسين رغبتهم في إضافة بعض المواضيع الثقافية المتعلقة بحضارة العراق والوطن العربي وكذلك الثقافة الإسلامية التي تفتقر إليها هذه المناهج.

1. Introduction

Human beings do not exist in isolation. However, they usually live and interact with one another socially. This integration, indeed, requires people of the same community to share certain customs, traditions and feelings. In this case, it is not only the linguistic forms that are needed for meaningful communication among individuals or communities, but rather the cultural patterns should be used in social interaction in order to enhance the linguistic aspects.

Teachers and many educators do believe that there should be an integration between language and culture if they are to have any mutual knowledge between two persons that passes from one generation to another with slight difference in their traditions and beliefs (Croft, 1980:531). The term 'culture' has been applied in language teaching only recently. Since the last three decades, culture emerged to be very significant in foreign language teaching. When language and culture are interwoven, it is, then, necessary to have culture taught in foreign language classes. This integration will enable students to have cultural awareness and consequently they will communicate properly in meaningful situations.

With the emergence of the communicative approach in foreign language teaching during the 1970s, culture has been highlighted in the writings of many scholars such as Byram, Seelye and Kramsch.(Genc and Bada,2005:73).

Similarly, Rivers (1968:84) states that teachers and textbook writers understand that students need to express their ideas not just in well-formed sentences, but also they need to interact orally by means of cultural activities. In this sense, it is believed recently that language should be taught through its culture as well as the culture of the learners. There are two main reasons for this belief. First, culture is taken to be a motivating factor that interests learners. Second, cultural aspects give the exact meaning of an utterance spoken by the community of that language.

2. Definition and Historical Background of Teaching Culture

Before the Second World War, culture had the meaning of translating literary, social and historical events. This is very clear through translating ancient texts mainly from some classical languages like Latin and Greek. At that time, the grammar translation method had the greatest job of translation for many years, and the aim was to educate people to have knowledge in literature, history, science, etc. So, the concept of culture was understood as the communication of different sources of information. Before the Second World War, the term culture was referred to by 'Big C'(i.e. big culture),which means high or culture such as institutions , literature, history ,etc. But, after the war, culture came to be known as 'small c' (i.e. small culture) which means behavioural culture that is concerned with individual's and societal behaviour , values, customs , and feelings. In this respect, culture was considered as an essential component in students' linguistic and social life as well as in all educational institutions. (Saluveer, 2004:7-8)

After the Second World War, exactly with the rise of linguistics and other social sciences, the need for cross-cultural communication was a must. Lado's book, *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957), was the first attempt to link language and culture educationally. Then ,this trend was developed later by Edward T. Hall in his book *The Silent Language* (1959) when he revealed that "culture is communication , and communication is culture" (Kramsch, 2001:201). Kilickaya (2004:1) defines culture as "whatever a person must have in order to function and live in a particular society". Also, culture is described by some

scholars like Lado (1964:52) ,Chastain (1988:32 as cited in Saluveer ,2004:11) and Brown(2000:176) as “a way of life” which includes all the people feel and think about.

Since the mid and late 1980s, many educators and scholars started to be interested in the intercultural approach to second language teaching. At that time they tried to take into their consideration the textbooks materials and what type of content should be included. This led to what is called the *intercultural communicative competence* which includes the understanding of language behaviour of the target society and the ability to interact culturally(Corbett, 2003:2).In this respect, Brooks (1986:123 as cited in Saluveer:9) emphasizes the role of teaching culture as well as the effect of not teaching it in foreign language classes . He mentions:

As language teachers we must be interested in the study of culture ... not because we necessarily want to teach the culture of the other country, but because we have to teach it. If we teach the language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the students attach the wrong meaning.

3. Teaching the Native Culture, the Foreign Culture or both

Culture is an essential component in the process of teaching a foreign language because it guides the learner to use language in meaningful situations. But, cultures vary from one community to another and within the same community there are sub-cultures. So, it seems that it is the job of the teachers and syllabus writers to decide which culture to be taught in language learning classrooms; that is, home culture, target culture or both.

3.1 Home –Language Culture Teaching

It is of crucial importance for certain educators to use home-language culture in foreign language classes. One of the scholars who support this opinion is Alptekin (1993:136,143) who reveals that students usually learn their first language linguistic aspects together with their native culture used in their community. The writer adds that they use their "schematic knowledge" when they learn the second language .This will lead to the lack of cultural parallelism between first and second languages. Thus, students will not be able to use their

background knowledge when learning a new language with a completely new culture.

In addition, there are some benefits for using home-language culture in students' textbooks. First, the use of the topics of the students 'home culture will enable them to use their background knowledge in different activities. Second, the use of home culture helps non-English speaking students to express their feelings and ideas easily. For example, it is easier for students to write topics about their birth place. Thirdly, some cultures lack the genre which is found in the target culture that makes it difficult for the student to express himself. (Kachru, 1999:75)

This point is also sustained by Edge (1987:308-309) who points out the need for teaching home culture in that some activities such as problem solving or task-based are not value-free modes of behavior .These activities require Western modes of communication which may not go with the values and traditions of students' culture. Accordingly, learners will not be able to learn English properly by the learning of strange ways which are different from their own.

3.2 Target –Language Culture Teaching

Regarding the use of the target language culture, Stewarts (1982 as cited in Alptekin 1993:139) considers it as a fundamental feature of every stage of foreign language learning. He adds that teaching the formal aspects of the foreign language while referring to the native culture of the learner is virtually useless. Moreover, Valdes (1986:121) believes that "the use of native culture in foreign language teaching is a 'trap', leading to a 'gross misfit' or an ' impasse'. She adds that it is impossible to teach a foreign language without its cultural content.

Thanasoulas (2001:4) opines that the learner has to take the role of the foreigner in order to obtain the insights of the values and meanings that the latter has internalized and unconsciously negotiates with the members of the community he belongs to. Besides, Rivers (1968:270) assumes that "the teacher's major problem is his superficial, outsider's understanding of the culture of the people whose language he/she is teaching". She thinks that a teacher may not have the opportunity to live in the foreign country. So, this will not enable

him/her to understand the meanings of some texts appropriately. In this respect she encourages the teaching of the target-language culture instead of travelling abroad.

3.3 The Use of both Home Culture and Target Culture

There has been a great appeal by recent scholars who find the integration of both cultures as useful and fruitful. It is quite obvious that some people do not like other languages and their cultures for some reason or another , but still it is the teachers' job to limit the target -language culture to the most interesting and important materials which are applicable for all students. Thus, students can get the benefit of comparing the differences and similarities of the materials which have common grounds with students' native culture.(Tomalin and Stempleski ,1993;82). Moreover, there was a study conducted by Devrim and Bayyurt (2010:4) about the learners' understanding of the use of home or target cultures in EFL classrooms in Turkey. The study revealed that students preferred cultural materials from both cultures equally.

Kramsch (1993:205) also supports the use of home and target cultures in teaching a foreign language. She states that “understanding a foreign culture requires putting that culture in relation with one's own”. This means that such an understanding requires stepping into the shoes of the foreigner deep into his internalized thinking as well as that of one's own culture.

4. Techniques and Activities Used for Teaching Culture in Foreign Language Classes

Since scholars have put in mind certain goals for teaching culture, it is also beneficial to choose certain techniques and activities for the purpose of implementing these goals. Generally speaking, students all over the world feel some psychological blocks towards the foreign culture. This leads to the feeling of cultural alienation from people in their home culture, the target culture and from themselves. Alienation from the target culture seems to be the most noticeable barrier to learning a foreign language. Therefore, teachers or textbooks writers should select certain techniques and activities to make such an alienation less. The following are some of these techniques:

a. The Comparative Technique

This technique implies a comparison between aspects from the foreign culture with those found in the native culture. Examples for such an activity are ‘holidays’, which can be found in a reading passage or in a film. Here, students can either read or watch the activity and then try to discuss it with their teacher.

b. Culture Capsule

Culture capsule was first developed by Taylor and Sorensen (1961). It is a brief description of only one aspect of the target culture followed by a discussion of the contrasts between the students' culture and the other culture. This technique may be accompanied by photographs or magazine pictures such as a doll. (Seelye 1993:177-185)

c. Culture Clusters

This technique was first proposed by Meade & Morain (1973). Culture clusters are short units that contain three or four culture capsules followed by questions, discussions and finally a role –play. The teacher's role here is to guide the students as an actor through the performance. (Allen and Vallette, 1977:360)

d. The Culture Assimilators

A culture assimilator is described by Abisamra (2009:10) as “short descriptions of an incident or situation where interaction takes place between at least one person from the target culture. The description of the incident is followed by four possible explanations by the students who are asked to select the correct one”. Cultural assimilators are considered as a good method because they lead to emotional empathy for one or more of the options.

e. Question- and- Answer Technique

This is, of course, one of the best techniques used for teaching culture in foreign language classes. Most teachers prefer using this technique because it does not take much time in the class. It is also preferred by students because even the low-level students will also be able to participate since it does not require a lot of words to ask or answer.

5. Aids and Authentic Materials Used for Teaching Culture

In addition to the techniques and activities used for teaching culture, teachers are advised to know the different types of teaching aids used in the class. Some of these aids are, indeed, conventional while others are technological.

5.1 Conventional Aids

These aids were used by the teacher before the invention of the modern devices. The most traditional means of teaching linguistic as well cultural aspects are the following:

a. The chalkboard, the textbook and the teacher

Among these three conventional means is the teacher who is considered to be the most effective one who runs the teaching process as a whole.

b. Pictures, posters, charts, magazines, newspapers, etc.

Attractive pieces of magazines or newspapers may be cut out and mounted on heavy paper. These pieces can represent different cultural aspects. (Allen and Vallette, 1977:334)

c. Library

In foreign language teaching, a library containing cultural books and magazines on home culture as well the foreign culture plays an important role for

understanding cultural topics. This, of course, helps students in their preparation of the topics in the sense that the books are in the school and not far away from them. (Finocchiaro, 1958:43)

d. Realia

Realia is considered as actual objects and items brought into a class by students or teachers as aids to be talked or written about. These may include photographs, coins, articles of clothing, etc. (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1992:308). Realia is considered very important in teaching in general and in teaching culture in particular since these objects associate the objects with their real life situations.

5.2 Non-Conventional Aids

These devices include audiorecordings and videotapes such as TV programmes, radio, etc, which have to be provided in a language laboratory where students can have the opportunity to hear and watch cultural activities.

a. Language Laboratory

One of the most important means of authentic materials is the language laboratory which should include radio, TV, overhead projector, a tape recorder and films. Oda (1988:73) mentions that teachers should prepare the students for the main headings they are going to see before they go to the laboratory. This is because they may feel embarrassed or confused at the first time they hear or see authentic materials at normal speed. This means that students should perform as if they were abroad when they hear and see foreign cultures (Taylor as cited in Oda, 1988:73).

But, teaching culture through films should be approached with caution. Lee et al, (975), Finocchiaro, (1964), and Lado, (1964) as cited in Bataineh,2002:86) argue that not all culture films are suitable for teaching culture unless they have the following qualities which are summarized as follows:

1. They should introduce the students to clear topics which suit the students' own culture.

2. They should be well-planned to introduce classrooms activities appropriately.
3. They should be simulating and motivating.
4. The language of the films should be within the students' level.
5. They should present fresh topics to think and talk about.
6. Films should be as short as possible so that students would not feel bored.

b. Internet–Based Technology

There are several tools related to the internet technology which facilitate the process of teaching culture in foreign language classrooms. These include the World Wide Web which is an electronic web used internationally. Another internet tool is the electronic mail (e-mail) which enables learners to have a close contact with their mates in the foreign countries. (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002:23)

c. Non Internet-based Technology (Computer–Based Technology)

There are some authentic materials, related to CD ROM or DVD programmes which use multi-media technology. These can provide visual context and textual references for the purpose of listening and watching different educational cultural topics in the form of films, clips or cameras. To sum up, authentic materials enable students to be in contact with native speakers by sound and character which is a typical characterization of real-life communication. Joynt (2008:40-1) emphasizes the effect of culture on learning the foreign language and the benefit of using authentic materials in language teaching as well as in culture teaching which is described as a positive orientation. She proclaims that “It has also been suggested that authentic materials and media can contribute to students’ satisfaction towards a course which in turn contributes to a positive orientation towards the target culture”.

6. Methodology

A. Population of the Study

In this study, the population of the research covers all the teachers of English at the intermediate stage in Basrah governorate which is (1056). It covers Basrah governorate centre and its districts, distributed over the main Directorate of Education and three branches in the districts of Basrah governorate. Table (1) below shows this:

Table (1)

Teachers Population Distributed over the Four Directorates of Education in Basrah Governorate

No.	Directorates of Education in Basrah Governorate	No. of Teachers
1	Basrah Centre-main	710
2	AZ-Zubair-branch	130
3	Qurna-branch	121
4	Abu al Khaseeb (branch)	95
Total		1056

B. Sample of the Study

In most papers, it is not feasible to collect data from every individual in a setting or population. Therefore, the researcher has randomly chosen (215) intermediate school teachers as the sample of the research. This number represents 20% of the total number of teachers in Basrah governorate. Table (2) below shows the distribution of the samples among the four directorates of education in Basrah governorate and its districts:

Table (2) The Sample Distributed over the Four Directorates of Education in Basrah Governorate

N0.	Directorates of Education in Basrah	No. of Teachers
1	Basrah Centre (main)	163
2	AZ-Zubair (branch)	21
3	Qurna (branch)	17
4	Abu al-Khaseeb (branch)	14
Total		215

C. The Questionnaire

In order to construct the items of the main teachers' questionnaire and to gather information about how culture is being taught, a pre-questionnaire consisting of 68 teachers from Basrah governorate and its districts has been used. It contained a question about the importance of teaching culture as a motivating factor for learning a foreign language. Also, there have been some lines left for the teachers' opinions and suggestions concerning the different ideas about culture teaching. After reviewing the related literature, and the teachers' opinions and suggestions the teachers' thirty-four items questionnaire has been designed in order to elicit the data to be analyzed. It contained four areas, and each one contained several items. The first area contained 10 items, the second area contained 5 items, the third area contained 11 items, and the fourth area contained 8 items. A five-point Likert's scale has been used which consists of five degrees beginning with the highest degree to the lowest: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree (Abu al-Neel, 1984:190-91).

D. Field Investigation

1. Objectives of the Study

There are seven objectives to be achieved through the questionnaire and one objective through the content analysis framework of the intermediate textbooks. They are:

1. Whether the home-culture and target-culture are well integrated in the prescribed textbooks.
2. Whether the cultural topics motivate learners to learn the foreign language and whether the communicative approach is suitable for teaching them.
3. Whether the teachers of English are in need for a training course on how to teach culture.
4. Whether the cultural topics of the textbooks are comprehensive and have variation in their distribution among the textbooks units.
5. Whether the teaching aids are purposeful and effective for developing the students' cultural competence.
6. Whether students are more inclined to prefer the cultural aspects that are usually connected with their everyday life.
7. Whether the teachers prefer techniques that do not require high-level students or time-consuming.

2. Analysis of the Questionnaire

The researcher has used the descriptive statistics of the mean and percentage as the chief statistical means to analyze the informants' responses of the items of the questionnaire based on Likert's scale. The values which score below 50% and over 70% will be taken into consideration as most significant, whereas those in between will not be given much attention.

2.1 Analysis of the First Area

This area contains some of the most important issues that are related to culture teaching for students or teachers. Table no.(4) below shows the mean and percentage of the items of the first area.

Table (4) Mean and Percentage of the Items of the First Area

First Area : Culture –Related Issues			
No.	Item	Mean	%
1	Home culture and target culture are well and equally integrated in the Iraqi intermediate stage textbooks.	2.35	47%
2	The students will be more interested and motivated in learning the foreign language if they are supplied with background knowledge in culture.	4.9	81%
3	The communicative approach is effective and suitable for teaching culture.	4.15	83%
4	Teachers should have a training course on teaching culture for the adopted textbooks.	4.60	92%
5	The textbooks contain a variety of cultural topics distributed among their units.	2.40	48%
6	The cultural topics found in the textbook are comprehensive for teaching culture.	2.55	51%
7	There are topics in the target culture that are not culturally suitable for the students in our home culture.	2.59	52%
8	The students are aware of the cultural differences between their home culture and foreign cultures.	2.20	44%
9	The students can be helpful as cultural resources.	3.72	74%
10	There is enough time for the teacher to discuss the cultural topics in the class.	2.20	44%

Table (4) above shows that item (1) has a low mean and percentage 2.35, 47%. This indicates that the teachers believe that there is no integration between the home culture and the target one. Thus, objective no.1 is achieved. Items (2 and 3) received high scores of mean and percentage on Likert's scale which shows that the cultural topics can arouse learners' motivation in learning the foreign language and suggest the suitability of the communicative approach for teaching culture. In this respect, objective no.2 is achieved. Item (4) has received the highest mean 4.60 and percentage 92% of all the items in this area. This strongly indicates that almost all the teachers of the intermediate stage need a training course on how to teach culture. This, of course, may indicate that they either do not know how to teach culture or may have very limited experience about it. So, objective no.3 is achieved.

Items (5,6) have low scores and which are also considered significant in that many teachers believe that the cultural aspects found in the textbooks are neither comprehensive nor distributed equally among the units. What supports this point is that, some teachers revealed in the focused interview and the lines put for their opinions that the Islamic culture is not referred to and the Arab culture is very rare. This result confirms objective no.4 above. In the same way, Item (7) has a low score on the scale which shows that the number of teachers who think that there are cultural aspects in the foreign culture which do not suit the students' native culture, is not very significant with a mean of 3.34 and a percentage of 66%. Item (8) has very low score of a percentage 44% which assures the idea that students are not fully aware of cultural differences in the world. The score of item (9) is statistically significant, that some students can be regarded as cultural resources in the class especially those who travel abroad frequently. Item (10) refers to the fact that most teachers, especially those working in state schools; do not think that there is enough time to discuss the cultural aspects. This seems to be a major problem in culture teaching.

2.2 Analysis of the Second Area:

This area contains the conventional and the non-conventional aids which are used in teaching culture in foreign language classes. Table (5) below shows the mean and percentage of the items of the second area.

Table (5) Mean and Percentage of the Items of the Second Area

Second Area : Teaching Aids Used to Develop the Cultural Aspects			
No.	Item	Mean	%
1	Language laboratory.	4.79	95%
2	TV programmes, audiorecordings and videotapes.	4.63	93%
3	A well-stocked library containing cultural books.	4.35	87%
4	Newspapers ,magazines ,wall charts , and posters.	4.50	90%
5	Computer and internet access.	4.60	92%

Table (5) above shows that all the items of the second area received high scores with very slight difference in their means which are higher than 4.0 and percentage higher than 81%.This indicates that teachers regard the teaching aids as effective and important in teaching the cultural aspects in foreign language classrooms and this emphasizes objective no.5.

Concerning the superiority among the five items, it is clear that items (1,2,5) have received the highest scores which indicates that teachers prefer the most modern technological devices than others and consider them as the most necessary in the process of culture teaching. The library in item (3) has a significant score of 87%, yet, it is considered the lowest among the other scores. Possibly books are less interesting than the audiovisual aids in the items 1,2,4 and 5.Item (4) is also considered important since these aids contain drawings and colours which attract students' attention to the situations being discussed or read.

2.3 Analysis of the Third Area

The third area is concerned with the cultural aspects found in the intermediate textbooks. The mean and percentage are used to find out which of the following aspects are most favoured by the learners. Table (6) below shows the mean and percentage of the items of the third area:

Table (6) Mean and Percentage of the Items of the Third Area

Third Area : Superiority and Motive of the students in Learning the Cultural Aspects			
No.	Item	Mean	%
1	Shopping , food and drinks	4.53	91%
2	Family life	4.27	85%
3	British wildlife and rare animals	3.58	71%
4	Literature spots	2.68	54%
5	Famous people	3.99	80%
6	Countries , cities and nationalities	3.97	79%
7	Legends and history	3.73	75%
8	Clothing	4.44	89%
9	British superstitions (good & bad luck)	3.79	76%
10	Youth life, sports and holidays	4.24	85%
11	Quote...Unquote spots (famous quotations)	2.46	49%

The above table shows that item (1) has received the highest score of 91% and mean 4.53, closely followed by the items (8 , 2 and 10) which have received comparatively high scores of mean more than 4.0. This means that the social factor is the most important element that characterizes people's lives. It is also clear that students tend to prefer the cultural aspects that touch their everyday lives. Thus, objective no.6 is confirmed.

The items (3, 5, 6, 7, 9), have also received significant scores but they are considered of less interest to young learners than the ones before. Item (4) has received a very weak mean 2.68 and percentage of 54%. This is maybe because the literature spots contain many difficult vocabulary items and they require high-level students. Item (11) has received the lowest score of mean 2.46 and

percentage of 49% in this area. The reason behind this low percentage is that “Quote...Unquote” spots contain difficult words and expressions which make it unfavoured by the learners as well as the teachers. The teacher’s guide of book 6, p.4, assures this and reveals that these quotations contain difficult vocabulary in these quotations. Besides, the teacher’s guide never gives any information about these quotations or about their writers which enables the teacher to explain them to their students appropriately.

2.4 Analysis of the Fourth Area

This area consists of the most well-known techniques that are used in teaching culture in foreign language classes. Table (7) below shows the frequency and percentage of the items of the fourth area.

Table (7) Mean and Percentage of the Items of the Fourth Area

Fourth Area: Techniques Used for Teaching Culture			
No.	Items	Mean	%
1	The discussions on the differences and similarities between native and foreign cultures.	4.14	83%
2	Culture capsules	3.52	70%
3	Non-verbal communication (e.g. body movement)	4.13	83%
4	Cultural problem solving	3.77	75%
5	Cultural assimilators	3.80	76%
6	Literary texts	3.78	75%
7	Question-and-answer technique	4.13	83%
8	Movies and documentaries	4.15	83%

Table (7) above shows that items (1,3,7,8) have received the highest scores of mean which is 4.0 and percentage 81% more than the other four items (2 , 4, 5,6) which received the lowest scores. This may have the implication that teachers prefer using the techniques which are not time-consuming and which do not require high-level students. This has a relation with item (10) in the first area when teachers revealed in the focused interview that the time of the lesson is not enough for discussing the cultural aspects found in the textbook, especially that of state schools. Yet, all the items of this area are statistically significant. This shows that all these techniques are necessary and have an important role in teaching culture in foreign language classes and that teachers are in an urgent need for having some knowledge and practice for using them. Thus, objective no.7 has been achieved.

7. Conclusions

After analyzing the teachers' opinions and attitudes in the questionnaire concerning the teaching of culture at the intermediate stage in Basrah governorate, it has been proved that there is no integration between the home language culture and the target language culture in the prescribed textbooks. The textbooks focus on the target culture (i.e. English) more than the Iraqi one. The findings of the research assure that the cultural topics are not comprehensive ,in that they do not cover many important topics like the Islamic culture that characterizes the Iraqi people.

One of the most crucial factors that are traced in this study is the teachers' training. This paper proved that most of the teachers of English of the intermediate stage lack training and have non-service training about teaching culture in foreign language classes. The results also showed that teachers are unaware of the different techniques used for teaching culture except the common one which is the question-and-answer technique. In addition, lack of time seems to be a major problem that accompanies the process of teaching culture.

Syllabus designers themselves revealed that there are cultural activities which cannot be explained by the teacher due to the reasons mentioned above. Consequently activities such as the Quote...Unquote activity are neglected. This is because these quotations contain very difficult vocabulary and ideas suitable for advanced learners and not for intermediate learners who are considered as

beginners in Iraq. Moreover, the teacher's book does not give any information about these activities to enable teachers to know what they mean. In the same way, the teachers' questionnaire showed that most teachers and students do not like teaching the 'Literature spots' at the end of the textbooks. The reason behind this is that these spots contain many difficult vocabulary items. In this case, students will not be motivated in learning the foreign language especially when they are young who like simple and interesting things that attract their attention.

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this case student will not be motivated in learning the foreign language especially, with young learners who like simple and interesting things that attract their attention.

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