

Iranian Male and Female EFL Teachers' attitudes toward Intercultural Education: Teaching L2 and transfer of culture

Parisa Badrkhani *

Islamic Azad University, Shiraz branch, Shiraz, Iran

Abstract

In a Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting, it is not enough to teach a language without considering that language's culture. EFL teachers should recognize that students are the future's international communicators therefore, it is essential to teach culture and language simultaneously. In this study, Marx and Moss (2011) My Cultural Awareness Profile (My Cap) questionnaire was conducted to collect the current research's data, which is regarded as the teacher's cultural awareness. 120 Iranian English teacher's (41 males and 79 females) were selected to respond this survey questionnaire. The questionnaire reflects Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes, understanding and tendency toward the cultural awareness in the teaching context. Teachers responded to both multiple choice and open-ended questions. Multiple-choice questions are based on the Likert Scale. Each dimension's frequency calculated by IBM SPSS software version 24. Therefore, teacher's attitudes and tendency toward each dimension is separately reflected. The results showed that the Iranian male EFL teachers have more opportunities to communicate with people from the other cultures than the female teachers do. EFL male teachers claimed that they have difficulty in finding global subjects that they plan to each. Female EFL teaches said that they have more knowledge about Iranian customs while males claimed that they have more information about the Iranian history.

Keywords: intercultural awareness, intercultural communicative competence, culture and language, EFL classroom

INTRODUCTION

In the process of learning a new language, intercultural awareness (ICA) is one of the necessities for English language learners, because they need to have enough information about the other cultures, since English language is widely used for communication between people from most of the countries. Furthermore, English language learners are those to communicate across various cultures and communities. English language teachers have to provide the learners cultural knowledge as more as possible and this task requires having cultural knowledge. English language teachers

should be interested in various cultures and tend to teach the learners how to communicate with people of other nations who have different cultural backgrounds.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In this study, the Iranian English teacher's interest toward various cultures and the importance of this issue in the process of their teaching was examined. When the EFL teachers have great interest toward the other cultures, they tend to transfer their knowledge to the learners. To have language competence is not enough to gain performance. How to communicate in a perfect way is the most important part of this performance. Language, communication and culture are inseparable, since culture does not only order how the communication progress is, but also signifies how the speaker encodes the message, its meaning and the circumstances under that message was sent. "If we teach language, without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols to which the students attach the wrong meaning" (Poltzer, 1959, 100-101).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of this study promote the readers' knowledge of Iranian English teachers' tendency toward intercultural awareness and the findings informs readers to what degree the English language teachers tend to transfer their cultural knowledge to the learners, because the learners are the individuals who will communicate with other people from different cultures. In addition, this study provides insights into teachers' thoughts, perception, and worldview. They recognize that the culture's position has important effects on teaching process in English language classrooms. The findings of this study bring new insights of Iranian English teachers' tendency toward the cultural issues. Theoretically, this research will help readers how two important factors like language and culture were applied together in English classrooms in Iran. Furthermore, the reader recognizes the relationship between culture and language. In English language classrooms, these two factors are complements of each other.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there any relationship between Iranian EFL educators' teaching and their cultural understanding?
2. How do Iranian EFL teachers feel about the global issues?
3. Do the Iranian EFL teachers have perspective consciousness toward cultural issues?
4. Do the Iranian EFL teachers have the opportunity to communicate across various cultures?

INTER CULTURAL AWARENESS (ICA)

According to Allwood (2015) our today's world is defined by a growing number of contacts resulting in communication among those with different linguistic, ethical and cultural backgrounds. Languages are related to each particular nation's culture and both

culture and language must always be taught together. People from different cultural communities need to recognize their own perspectives from the other's point of view in order to participate in cross-cultural communication (Rodriguez, 2013). Cloak (2008) asserts that lack of cultural knowledge causes misunderstanding and sometimes results in humorous occurrences. According to UNESCO (2013), intercultural competence is the ability to adaptively navigate complex environments marked by the growing diversity of people, cultures, living style and the abilities to perform "effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are different from the other one, linguistically and culturally" (Faniti & Tirmizi, 2006).

ICA IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) CONTEXT

According to Byram (1997), using L2 should be considered as intercultural communicative competence that is based on the learners' cultural backgrounds and learning context. In this way, learners may compare their own culture with another one to distinguish areas of differences and similarities. Moreover, it forms intercultural communicative patterns to put these conceptions into practice, in order to use them in specific situations where communication occurs. Baker (2012) asserts that individuals need some specific skills to realize the role of the cultural context in communication and the special meanings that is conceived in reference to one's own culture. Cloak (2008) said that if EFL learners want to become desired intercultural communicators, it is essential to provide them with systematic intercultural drills.

COMPONENTS OF THE CULTURAL AWARENESS

According to Chlopek (2008) culture is in the backdrop, right from the beginning, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it, they want to move all barriers in order to achieve their goals in communicative competence, using their skills to get in touch the world around them. The process of becoming culturally aware is a lifelong undertaking. Bachman (1990) asserts that teaching and learning a foreign language cannot be limited to teaching phonology, morphology, and syntax. The concurrent models of communicative competence show that, there is much more to learn a language, and they cover the essential components of cultural knowledge and awareness. She believes that learning a language for communication and cultural awareness for a language learner, are always side-by-side (Kramersch, 1993). Teachers who are living in the Far East and teaching in a English as a foreign language (EFL) setting, would recognize to explicitly clearly teach intercultural competence along with the critical thinking to their students (Komaya, 2011). Barletta (2009) believes that language teachers have found themselves beyond a situation of the limited ideas, which is about the different cultures and the teaching communicative approach. Teaching culture may place in target position in the language teaching process, but it is essential to put language and culture always side by side in many language departments. EFL procedures focus on grammatical level studies than cultural involvements. Furthermore, in this setting, intercultural competence poorly develops (Byram, 1997).

Teacher's Globalization perceptiveness

In the context of globalization, with the extraordinary movement of people and their ideas, it has been increasingly recognized that people need to be intercultural capable, that is, being able to negotiate meanings across languages and cultures. In such a globalized world, the bilingual or bicultural person is the norm (Scarino & Crichton 2007, p. 3). Marx and Moss (2011) assert that teachers must provide the local and global connections to obtain citizenship understanding to improve their personal commitments toward the global issues. According to Devecioglu and Kurt (2013) some implications that means to do things in moving towards thinking and acting both locally and globally at the policy level for school and classroom practice, results in conducting some cultural trainings for both teachers and school leaders. From this respect, to improve students' achievement, they are advised to change the classroom practice in the directions of 'thinking globally', 'acting locally' and 'thinking and acting both locally and globally'. For example, thinking globally means recognizing that in the international setting, students need to have high levels of knowledge in order to be successfully employed. Being internationally competitive involves understanding how well the students are learning more cultural issues in comparison to the others, both locally and globally. While defining these kind of indicators that means "where we are now and where we might want to be. Teachers' training programs should be focusing on expanding the range of teacher capabilities, beyond delivering the basic curriculum, to enable them to face an unknown and increasingly globalized future. Teachers should be encouraged to put the international issues and subjects as the part of their teaching practicum (Townsend, 2011).

Teacher's Cultural understanding

According to Chlopek (2008), stereotyped views and prejudices will prevent the students from developing intercultural competence. The teachers must help the students to understand that there can be different sets of behaviors, beliefs, and values. As Kramersch says, "not considering stereotypes is not to know that people are not in that position that one may think they are, or considering 'we are the same. Each of us is unique, but if we try, we can be same as each other'" (1995, p 3).

Byram et.al (2002) assert that the elements of intercultural competence are information and knowledge, attitudes and skills that is complemented by all of the values that a person holds, because of his or her belonging to the wide variety of the social groups. All of these values are part of each individual's social awareness. The establishment of social intercultural competence is in the posture of the intercultural moderator:

Intercultural behaviors and attitudes

When individuals have openness, curiosity and they are eager to recess disbeliefs about the other cultural group's beliefs, they have intercultural behaviors and attitudes. It means that this person has the appetite to relate the other people's values, behaviors

and beliefs to each other than supposing that they are always true and right, and also are able to accept that how the outsiders might think about or judge them. The other important and crucial factor is to have information and knowledge, but not the initial knowledge about a special culture, but preferably knowledge of the different groups and identities cultures that are in the society and how to communicate with them. If a person anticipates that with whom he or she may interact, then his or her knowledge of the world is useful and beneficent.

Knowledge

It refers to have enough knowledge and information about groups in the society and their affairs, habits in one's own and in other interlocutor's country and of the overall processes of social and individual relations. Therefore, knowledge may have two important factors: 1) knowledge of the processes in the society and 2) knowledge of the instances of these processes. No educator is able to anticipate or have all of information and knowledge that students need at some points. In fact, many teachers have this opportunity to undergo all or any culture that their students may encounter to, but this is not important. The educator's function is to develop skills and attitudes more than the knowledge and they can cultivate this knowledge, which is about the other countries, with their students. Because, intercultural mediators need to be able to recognize how these misunderstandings may occur and they can manage them. Intercultural mediators are also able to see how individuals with a different cultural background might misunderstand something, which is written or said by the other individuals with a different social and cultural background. In addition, it is crucial to have the skills of comparison, relating and interpreting of the various cultures.

Skills of relating and interpreting

Interpreting skills are concerned with the abilities of interpreting an event and document from another culture and relating it to the events of one's own culture; while teachers are not able to anticipate all of the knowledge that they need. It is important to obtain skills of understanding new knowledge and incorporating it with what they already know. Furthermore, this is very useful to know how to ask culturally diverse people about their beliefs and values, for sometimes they act unconsciously and are not able to explain. Thus, a person who communicates with people from various cultures needs to have skills of interaction and discovery. Sometimes, they need to have complete awareness about their own cultural beliefs and its effect, which may cause rejection and reaction.

Teacher's cultural Perspective Consciousness

Patton (1990):

"We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the

presence of observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meaning they attached to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to inter into the other person's perspective "(p.196).

According to Abdullahi (2010) perspective consciousness is to recognize that an individual's worldview is not universally shared and this perspective continues to be shaped by influences that often doesn't detected consciously and the others have some worldviews that are profoundly different from one's own (Hanvey, 1976). It is troublesome for some of the teachers to overcome these orientations and accept teaching as a highly contextualized process. In fact, teaching is a personal performance, moral endeavor, and cultural script, same as technical craft (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Danielewicz, 2001, Palmer, 1998).

Teachers' communication across cultural differences

According to Gay (2001) the teachers need to gain knowledge about cultural diversity which provides progressive awareness of respecting in order to obtain general understanding about ethnic groups who have different values and to express similar values in different ways. Thus, to develop knowledge for culturally responsive teaching needs acquiring the detailed information about the cultural specialties of specific ethnical groups (e.g., African, Asian, Latino, and Native American). Byram et.al (2002) assert that for understanding intercultural human relationships, it is crucial to have awareness that is more to be known and understood from the other person's perspective, such as skills, values, and attitudes. According to Lambert and Myers (1995), communicating with people from different cultures can sometimes pose challenges, misunderstandings and inadvertent offenses that are commonplace. Communicative competence, which is tangible to eradicate the borders of differences and challenges, requires enhancing through not only linguistic gain but also more importantly intercultural awareness (Robotjazi, 2008).

A symbolic curriculum is an instructional program such as using images, symbols, icons, prizes and other artifacts to teach students morals, behaviors, knowledge and rules, in order to teach them what is good, is present and what is bad, is absent. Teaching those ethical principles and beliefs social etiquettes, trade books and about heroes of each nation, would convey important information, values, and actions about the ethnic and cultural diversity (Gay, 1995). Teachers should reflect spoken and written language that representing in the classroom. Labeling classroom materials in different languages affords awareness of cultural differences and similarities (Tarman, 2011).

METHOD

Participants

This study was conducted in Shiraz and 120 Iranian EFL teachers (41 males and 79 females) who were teaching in language institutes were selected to respond to this questionnaire. Their age ranged from 25 to 40 years old.

Materials

According to Marx and Moss (2011) my cultural awareness profile (My Cap) questionnaire is designed to be used by teacher educators to help them promoting the cultural image and support the developmental view of cultural learning which serve as a formative assessment tool. Furthermore, a questionnaire consisting of 16 items was given to the subjects, which focuses on four essential dimensions that asking about teachers' cultural information and their behavior toward the ethical and cultural issues. Each dimension has its related question items, which clarifies teacher's tendency toward each dimension's domain.

Statistical procedure for data analysis

The questionnaire contains both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions are about teachers' personal activities and their understanding or knowledge of cultural differences. It is a self-reflection tool for the EFL teachers. Marx and Moss's questionnaire (2011) has four dimensions that has both, multiple choice questions that is based on the Likert scale, and several open ended questions. The four-point scale attributed values from 1 to 4 namely was, 1 assigned to "disagree", 2 to "agree", 3 to "somewhat agree", 4 to "agree". Besides, the most common responses to the open-ended questions were categorized based on their theme and the subject, in order to obtain accurate statistic results for each question.

Descriptive statistics were separately used to describe Iranian EFL teachers' attitude toward each dimension in the questionnaire. For each dimension the mean and standard deviation (SD) was calculated in order to estimate Iranian EFL teacher's tendency toward each dimension. In addition, an independent sample t-test was conducted in order to obtain inferential statistics conducting a comparison between Iranian male and female EFL teachers' responses to both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The IBM SPSS Statistic software, version 24 was used to obtain statistical results for each dimension.

RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for four dimensions in Marx and Moss cultural profile questionnaire (2011)

Dimension 1	Mean	SD
Male	18.387	4.527
Female	18.192	4.537
Dimension 2	Mean	SD
Male	18.058	5.214
Female	17.374	4.881
Dimension 3	Mean	SD
Male	23.643	3.007
Female	24.045	3.297
Dimension 4	Mean	SD
Male	15.588	3.982
Female	15.739	3.807

As table 1 shows, both male (mean=23.643, SD=3.007) and female teachers (mean=24.045, SD=3.297) like to perceive and know themselves as the cultural, which shows how much the Iranian EFL teachers feel unity with the people from various cultures.

Dimension 1: To explore our global world

When teachers have enough information about the local and global issues, they are able to relate all these factors together and it helps the teachers to apply them in the process of teaching (Marx & Moss, 2011). This may influence the educators' process of teaching, consciously or unconsciously when they are applying it to the teaching instructions or curriculum. The activities type reflects how much EFL teachers like to bring global and cultural issues to the classroom.

Table 2. The results of t-test for multiple-choice responses

Teachers opinion	Group	Mean	SD	Mean differences	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
I read and watch international newspapers, movies and TV programs	Male	3.510	.223	-0.097	1.200	118	.000
	Female	3.603	.491				
It's easy to find global subjects that I plan to teach	Male	2.926	.647	-0.314	2.304	118	.000
	Female	3.240	.737				
I think about decisions in my life that may have global effect	Male	2.536	.951	-0.337	1.932	118	.000
	Female	2.873	.882				

As table 2 shows, there is a statically significant difference between male and female EFL teachers to find global subject that they plan to teach ($t=2.304$, $p<.05$). Examining the means shows that female EFL teachers with the mean of 3.240 (SD= .737) feel it is easier to find global subjects which they plan to teach, than male teachers do (mean =2.441, SD= .786).

1. How do you define "global citizen"?

Table 3. Coding scheme to categorize teachers' most common responses to the open-ended questions

Category label	Opinion
Peoples' union ship	Spreading peace and no war in the world
	Friendship between people around the world
Language and culture	When people from different cultures communicate freely
	When people try to learn another language or culture
Behavior	Fighting poverty and to help other people

Table 4. The results of t-test for most common responses to the open-ended questions

Teachers opinion	Group	Mean	SD	Mean differences	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Peoples union ship	Male	2.369	.779	0.249	1.771	118	.000
	Female	2.120	.687				
Language and culture	Male	2.441	.786	0.042	0.299	118	.000
	Female	2.399	.697				
Behavior	Male	3.552	.987	0.052	0.282	118	.000
	Female	3.500	.943				
Other	Male	1.023	.016	0.023	1.460	118	.000
	Female	1.00	.10				

Dimension 2: To learn About Different cultures and ethics (Cultural understanding, knowledge, attitudes and skills)

In the second dimension, teachers claim that how much they tend to know about general cultural issues. They assign curriculum and instruction based activities, which affirm and respect diverse cultures that found in this whole world (Moss & Marx, 2011).

Table 5. The results of t-test for multiple-choice responses

Teachers opinion	Group	Mean	SD	Mean differences	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Talking about various cultural characteristics is different form stereotyping	Male	3.246	.695	0.008	0.062	118	.000
	Female	3.238	.647				
I had opportunities to know people from different cultures,	Male	2.987	.752	0.315	2.275	118	.000
	Female	2.672	.702				
When I met new individuals, I try to understand their cultural backgrounds	Male	2.367	.694	0.031	0.242	118	.000
	Female	2.336	.648				

The result of t-test for 'to have opportunities to know people from different cultures', shows that there is a very statically significant difference between male and female EFL teachers ($t=2.275$, $p<.05$). Examining the means show that male teachers with the mean of 2.987 (SD= .752) had more opportunities to know people from different cultures than female teachers (mean=2.674, SD= .702)

2. Describe three categories/ characteristics that commonly used for cultural groups?

Table 6. Coding scheme to categorize teachers' most common responses to the open-ended questions

Category label	Opinion
Cultural ceremonies	Traditional ceremonies New year's ceremonies Traditional clothes
Language	A special language Specific body language Specific language terms
Religious Beliefs	Religious ceremonies Religious places

Table 7. The results of t-test for most common responses to the open-ended questions

Teachers opinion	Group	Mean	SD	Mean differences	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig</i>																												
Cultural ceremonies	Male	2.944	.667	-0.056	0.414	118	.000																												
	Female	3.000	.720					Language	Male	2.441	.922	0.072	0.429	118	.000	Female	2.369	.860	Religious beliefs	Male	2.873	.534	0.174	1.897	118	.000	Female	2.699	.444	Other	Male	1.2	.95	0.14	0.815
Language	Male	2.441	.922	0.072	0.429	118	.000																												
	Female	2.369	.860					Religious beliefs	Male	2.873	.534	0.174	1.897	118	.000	Female	2.699	.444	Other	Male	1.2	.95	0.14	0.815	118	.000	Female	1.06	.86						
Religious beliefs	Male	2.873	.534	0.174	1.897	118	.000																												
	Female	2.699	.444					Other	Male	1.2	.95	0.14	0.815	118	.000	Female	1.06	.86																	
Other	Male	1.2	.95	0.14	0.815	118	.000																												
	Female	1.06	.86																																

Dimension 3: To perceive and know ourselves as the cultural beings

According to Marx and Moss (2011), the third dimension asks teachers some questions that is related to their attitude toward considering themselves as a cultural beings who feels unity with other people with different cultural backgrounds. This dimension refers

to the knowledge, attitudes, and skills often labeled as "perspective consciousness." Perspective consciousness is essentially considered as the intercultural tendency development and communication cleverness that is also relating to know themselves as the cultural beings and understanding that the others have different and equally viable cultural perspectives.

Table 8. The results of t-test for multiple-choice responses

Teachers opinion	Group	Mean	SD	Mean differences	t	df	Sig
I know myself as being part of a special culture	Male	2.630	.302	0.096	1.673	118	.000
	Female	2.534	.296				
I understand that my perspectives may not be shared by other people	Male	3.011	.228	0.022	0.544	118	.000
	Female	2.989	.200				
I've been in situations where I felt like a cultural outsider	Male	3.332	.356	0.017	0.324	118	.000
	Female	3.315	.276				

3. Using up 10 terms or phrases, describes your cultural identity?

Table 9. Coding scheme to categorize teachers' most common responses to the open-ended questions

Category label	Opinion
Language	I speak Farsi (Persian) Several great poets from my country are Hafez, Saadi and Ferdousi
Culture and customs	Our new year's eve is Nowruz
Geographical position	I am living in Iran which is an ancient country located in western Asia
History	Cyrus the great is our king in ancient Iran One of the most popular places in my country which attracts a lot of tourists each year in Persepolis

Table 10. The results of t-test for most common responses to the open-ended questions

Teachers opinion	Group	Mean	SD	Mean differences	t	df	Sig
Language	Male	2.878	.207	0.011	0.275	118	.000
	Female	2.867	.210				
Culture and customs	Male	2.339	.478	-0.991	10.422	118	.000
	Female	3.330	.502				
Geographical position	Male	3.467	.642	-0.222	1.673	118	.000
	Female	3.689	.709				
History	Male	3.986	.774	0.565	3.898	118	.000
	Female	3.421	.742				
Other	Male	2.00	.12	0.1	1.726	118	.000
	Female	1.9	.36				

Table 10 shows how male and female EFL teachers used different terms and phrases, which describes their cultural identity. The results of t-test for cultures and customs shows that there is an extremely statically significance between male and female teachers in using the terms describes their cultural identity ($t=10.442$, $p<.05$). Examining the means shows that female teachers with a mean of 3.330 ($SD=3.502$) used more terms that is related to cultures and customs to describe their cultural identity, than male teachers do (mean=2.339, $SD= .478$). The result of t-test for 'history' shows that there is an extremely statically significant difference between male and female EFL teachers in using the terms and phrases that is related to the history which describes their cultural identity ($t=3.898$, $p<.05$). Examining the means showed that male teachers with a mean of 3.987 ($SD= .774$) used more terms that is related to the Iran's history to describe their cultural identity than female teachers do (mean=3.421, $SD= .742$).

Dimension 4: To communicate across various cultures

The fourth dimension considered in My Cap survey, asking about the educators' ability to communicate within cross-cultural relationships and contexts. This dimension relates to the knowledge, attitudes, and skills often discussed which named as "intercultural communication." This dimension is based on the individual's cultural understanding development within the other three dimensions (Marx & Moss, 2011). It

is focusing on the educators' abilities and skills to communicate effectively with the people from the other cultures.

Table 11. The results of t-test for multiple-choice responses

Teachers opinion	Group	Mean	SD	Mean differences	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
It is polite to slow down your speech when talking to someone who is learning English	Male	2.620	.941	0.008	0.045	118	.000
	Female	2.612	.894				
I notice that people from other cultures use different gestures and body language when they talk	Male	2.519	.764	0.01	0.021	118	.000
	Female	2.509	.729				
15. I adjust my communication styles depending on whom I am talking to	Male	3.580	.749	0.013	0.094	118	.000
	Female	3.567	.702				

4. Consider a time when you talked with someone from another culture. How did this conversation differ from one with someone from your own culture?

Table 12. Coding scheme to categorize teachers' most common responses to the open-ended questions

Category label	Opinion
Language	Using English language and tried to learn the new terms
	Ask them how good my English speaking is
Sharing ideas	I was so interested in knowing their ideas about my country
	I tried to ask their cultural beliefs and life styles
	Tried to be conservative because I didn't want to hurt them by my behavior

Table 13. The results of t-test for most common responses to the open-ended questions

Teachers opinion	Group	Mean	SD	Mean differences	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Language	Male	3.229	.269	0.018	0.329	118	.000
	Female	3.211	.291				

Sharing ideas	Male	2.620	.559	-0.778	1.601	118	.000
	Female	2.840	.781				
Other	Male	1.02	.70	-0.75	0.197	118	.000
	Female	1.00	.41				

CONCLUSION

In this study, Iranian EFL teachers' tendency and attitudes toward intercultural knowledge in the teaching and learning context was investigated. This study helps the reader specially EFL language teachers to get informed about how to perform cultural knowledge in the EFL context and how they may use it in different contexts, in their personal life or activities in the social life. Teachers in L2 educational settings need to consider two factors:

First, they need to know that EFL learners are future communicators across different nations, so to teach language itself is not enough. Teachers need to consider the cultures while teaching English language. When EFL teachers tend to put cultural awareness and understanding in the curriculum, they feel it is essential to get more information about various cultures in order to teach them to the EFL learners. As the results show, Iranian EFL male and female teachers' areas of interest were different, while this domain and area could be broader. Besides, EFL teachers need to get more knowledge about how to communicate perfectly through various cultures that need to obtain more knowledge about different cultural issues as well. Therefore, more communication causes obtaining more cultural knowledge and teachers are able to transfer any kind of cultural knowledge to their students in the EFL context. Learning a foreign language without its cultural knowledge does not work appropriately. Second, if teachers tend to encourage EFL learners to attempt and learn about various cultures, which results in sharing and exchanging knowledge and information about cultures in EFL context. In the class where there is an atmosphere to share various cultural knowledge, both EFL teachers and educators have tendency to learn more and more about various cultures.

DISCUSSION

This study seeks to address Iranian EFL teachers understanding and attitude toward various cultures. The term "understanding" relates to how a person perceives and understands some matters and "attitude" refers to what one person thinks or feels about something special and the way he or she behaves toward them that reflects how that person comprehends. As the results show, both male and female Iranian EFL teachers' attitude was completely positive toward dimension 3, that shows they have great tendency to know themselves as a person who does not have difference with the people from various cultures and they understand individuals with different cultures

are also respected. The male EFL teachers seemed to have difficulty in finding a global subject that they plan to teach than female teachers do (Q2). The male EFL teachers' tendency toward the global subjects depends on the classroom's condition. Some of the EFL classrooms in Iran are mixed gender. By considering Iranian society's culture, the male teachers may find it difficult or may feel uncomfortable to explain some specific points regarding special global issues. However, it seems that female EFL teachers are more able to manage the classroom's condition while talking about the global issues.

The male EFL teachers claimed that they had more opportunities to know and communicate people from various cultures than the female teachers do (Q6). This is the matter of social activities, which help the individuals, especially EFL teachers to get in touch with the people from the various cultures. However, the interpersonal relationships have been facilitated through social networks, but to meet people from the various cultures, personally and to share ideas mutually in a particular setting has an important role when their purpose is just to meet up and sharing ideas regarding to the cultures and living styles.

The results for 'using different terms and phrases which describes your cultural identity' showed that the male EFL teachers have more information about Iran's history than the female teachers do (Q12). The female EFL teachers claimed that they have more knowledge regarding Iran's culture and customs. These findings show that both teachers group's area of interest and knowledge is extremely different.

Iran is not a multinational and multicultural country and EFL language teachers must become familiar with the different cultures and gaining their knowledge. While learning English language, students may fail to recognize the importance of the different cultures, but the EFL teachers would help them to consider the importance of this issue. Teachers should remind the students that the people with different cultural backgrounds are also respected and appreciated. The purpose of this activity is to help the learners easily socialize with different people from different nations with different cultural backgrounds. Besides, it is also helpful if Iranian EFL teachers read the books published by UNESCO, which is about the diversity, unity, peace and equity, in order to transferring their information and knowledge to their students. It helps the Iranian EFL learners to improve their knowledge about the diversity and multiculturalism.

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