

Foreign Culture Awareness Needs of Saudi English Language Majors at Buraydah Community College

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Abstract

Although many EFL learners have a command of internalized foreign language knowledge, they may have difficulty using this knowledge in different contexts. This is due to many interacting factors affecting their performance, mainly lack of target culture awareness. This study intended to identify the cultural aspects suitable to be integrated into the Saudi EFL classrooms, search for the sources upon which students get their knowledge of the target culture and examine their attitudes towards it. The study was administered to three main categories of subjects: students, teachers, and experts in the field of teaching EFL. The required data were collected using a Culture-awareness Diagnostic Test and a Culture-Awareness Needs Assessment Questionnaire. The results revealed the students' need to learn about different aspects of foreign culture to develop their culture-awareness and that they depend mostly on audio-/visual media to learn about the target culture. The findings also showed that students possess positive attitudes toward the target culture and its people. Introducing authentic materials such as DVDs, video tapes, newspapers in the foreign language classroom was highly recommended for enhancing culture awareness and improving language proficiency. Therefore, the current research suggested modifying the entire EFL education programs to introduce culture in the foreign language classroom.

Keywords: culture awareness, linguistic competence, communicative competence, stereotyping

1. Introduction

The British Council estimates that English is spoken as a second language by about 375 million speakers and as a foreign language by about 750 million speakers. The majority of these speakers would have been taught by indigenous NNESTs, Ling & Braine (2007). Despite the strong presence of these teachers world wide, they are considered as second in knowledge and performance to native speakers. Differences are attributed to many factors mainly lack of foreign culture awareness, Rafieyan et al. (2014). Language and culture are part and parcel of each other. Culture governs the behaviors which a person encounters and it also governs how a person acts in or reacts to certain situations, Chinh (2013). It is very usual that cultures have different ways of practices that indisputably reflect (verbal and nonverbal) language problems. Many others involve subtle differences in etiquette, rituals, values, norms, and systems, Al-Qahtani (2003). Therefore, it is important to embrace as much experiences of the target culture as possible, especially for those integrated into or learning about a foreign language (Gobel & Helmke, 2010).

The inclusion of cultural content in language teaching materials for English language majors is essential to help students interpret and understand the target culture, to raise students' awareness of their own native culture, and to achieve communicative competence (Cheng, 2013; Baker, 2012; Zaid, 2011; McKay, 2010).

2. Context of the Problem

Recent studies have shown that language is bound to culture in multiple and complex ways and that culture is important to language acquisition (Cheng, 2012; Byram, 2012; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Aguilar, 2007). They also confirmed that a foreign language cannot be learned successfully without having knowledge of its cultural aspects. If the learner is not integrated into the target culture, s/he should, at least, learn its aspects that are necessary to communicate with its speakers. Otherwise, the learner will be regarded as fluent in using the language, but "inaccurate" in manipulating the language in real-life situations. Therefore, Cheng (2013) suggested that learning a language in isolation of its cultural roots prevents one from becoming socialized into its

contextual use. Knowledge of linguistic matters alone does not guarantee insight into the political, social, religious, or economic system necessary to build up cultural competence which is required for appropriate use of language. Or even insight into when one should or should not talk.

EFL programs presented to English language majors focus on developing the linguistic rules of English away of its culture. This has created profession need for foreign language teachers who are disadvantaged in four areas: (a) a lack of role model and lack of voice in the profession; (b) a lack of confidence when using the foreign language (c) lack of insight into the verbal and nonverbal target culture features and (d) perceived prejudice based on ethnicity, accent, or nonnative status, Kamhi-Stein et al. (1999).

3. Statement of the Problem

Education programs offered to Saudi English Language majors do not contain real-life cultural data about English speaking people. Many instructors in colleges intend to neglect target culture aspects to avoid conflict between the students' native culture and the target culture. This is due to the fears for bad effect on students' behaviors and their Islamic identity (Al-Jarf, 2006; Al-Qahtani, 2003; Daif-Allah, 1998). This leads, then, to intercultural misunderstanding once coming across odd cultural situations as pointed by Yu (2006).

4. Research Questions

This study addresses three research questions:

- 1) What level of foreign culture awareness do English Language majors at Buraydah Community college possess?
- 2) What cultural aspects do English Language majors at Buraydah Community college need to develop their foreign culture awareness?
- 3) How do English Language majors at Buraydah Community college learn about the foreign culture?

5. Research Hypotheses

- 1) Fourth-level English language majors who have received more foreign language learning will exhibit greater awareness of the foreign culture than second-level English majors who have received lower foreign language learning.
- 2) English Language majors in Buraydah Community college need to develop their intercultural-awareness.
- 3) English Language majors in Buraydah Community college get most of their knowledge about the foreign culture from the media.

6. Objectives

This study aims to:

- 1) Detect any development in foreign culture awareness between second and fourth level English language majors.
- 2) Identify the cultural aspects suitable to be integrated into the Saudi EFL classrooms.
- 3) Find out the sources from which students get their knowledge of the foreign culture.

7. Review of Literature

7.1 Definition of Culture

Culture has been defined as a prevalent set of customs, habits and values shared by a particular population. Both visible aspects—food, clothing, buildings, etc; and invisible ones—thoughts, knowledge, attitudes etc., are included in the definition in question (Williams, 1985)

Tylor (1958) described culture as a complex whole which includes Knowledge, Beliefs, Arts, Morals, Laws, Customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a person as a member of society. Valdes (1990) identified two components of culture. First, culture as “knowledge” which can be transferred and exchanged with others like art, literature, inventions, etc. Then comes culture as behavior shared by members of the same group and manifested through products.

Young et al. (2011), providing a more specific definition of culture, outlined four meanings contributing more significantly and professionally to the concept. First, there is the aesthetic sense, called sometimes “culture with a capital C”, which involves cinema, music, media, and literature. The second is the sociological sense, or “small c culture”, concerned with the nature of family, interpersonal relations at home, at work, in institutions, material conditions, and so forth. Third, the semantic sense which covers the whole conceptualization system forming

human perceptions and thought processes. Lastly, there is the pragmatic or sociolinguistic sense that encompasses such necessities as background knowledge, social and paralinguistic skills, as well as language code without which communication in the target setting would not be successful. This last definition is applicable to the present study since it includes all aspects of culture components.

7.2 The Importance of Incorporating Culture Learning into Foreign/Second Language Classrooms

EFL learners are expected to gain knowledge of form, meaning, and pronunciation of the foreign language. They, in most cases, could learn “form” and “pronunciation”, but they may confuse “meaning” without having cultural understanding. Byram’s study (2008) revealed that EFL education should provide opportunities for developing intercultural understanding of otherness across the curriculum. The study also showed that EFL teachers appreciate the importance of such issues that develop students’ understanding of otherness and self. Some obstacles that prevent intercultural understanding were concentrating on factual knowledge and introducing tests that do not assess intercultural understanding, and students’ lack of ability to understand the perspective of the other. Finally, the investigator ended that in order for EFL learners to develop intercultural understanding, there is a need for empathy, maturity, and a high level of language proficiency. Yu (2006) argued for the importance of including a sociolinguistic component in EFL courses to avoid a “marked” misunderstanding and miscommunication when interacting with native speakers of English.

Four major conclusions emerged from the findings of Gobel’s study (2010). First, there is a strong need among Japanese EFL students to learn the relationships between language, communication and culture. Second, all aspects of English should be included in EFL instruction. Then, Japanese EFL classes should provide students with cultural information. Finally, it is recommended that Japanese EFL teachers should gain more cultural knowledge and communication skills and use this in their English classes.

It was postulated that if students were granted the opportunity to engage in cross-cultural learning activities, they would be more aware of and skilful in global communication. Daif-Allah’s study (1998) aimed at designing a culture-based secondary school English language program for developing cross-cultural awareness. The program bridges the gap between the classroom, on the one hand, and the outside environment and world, on the other. The program also gives the students a way to explore English-speaking people’s culture systematically as well as enriching knowledge about their own culture. To reach this end, a questionnaire was designed and given to 58 respondents including secondary school teachers, EFL teachers and experts in the field of language teaching and curricula design. The subjects’ responses reflected the students’ need for integrating culture with language teaching. The fundamental and significant aspects of culture to be included in EFL courses were also identified. The study highlighted an important aspect of language teaching which is completely neglected in EFL classes—namely nonverbal communication. The researcher indicated that the lack of emphasis on nonverbal communication patterns often leads to miscommunication and faulty assumptions about a person or a group of people from the foreign culture. Concerning results, the pre-post-test of the experimental group revealed that the proposed program is highly effective in developing language skills in general and cross-cultural communication in particular.

Al-Jarf’s research project (2006) aimed at developing students’ writing skills, awareness of global and cultural issues, and their ability to communicate with other people of different cultures. Three groups of undergraduate students at Lviv National Ivan Franko University, Ukraine; Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, Russia; and the College of Languages and Translation, King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia corresponded with each other in spring 2003.

Reports for the Ukrainian students indicated that the online documents helped them generate ideas for their messages, enrich new vocabulary items, and enhanced their reading and writing skills. Alike, the Saudi students reported noticeable improvement in their linguistic proficiency levels and acquirement of new information and ideas as they read the documents and posts of the other groups. Among all groups, the discussions of cultural topics with the highest number of responses were as follows: 23% Welcome; 19% Voices on Iraq; 14.5% Culture Shock; 12% Culture Awareness and Mass Media; 10% Man against Women; 10% Beliefs, Rumors and Prejudices; 7.5% Netiquette; and 2% Thanks to Everyone. The findings also demonstrated that rarely did students lose interest (only 20% Saudi) over the duration of the project. Often, they developed a positive attitude towards other cultures and learnt to accept and respect differences in points of view, beliefs and traditions.

7.3 The Interrelationship between Culture and Language Learning

Language and culture are inseparable. This close connection as seen by Risager (2008) is due to several reasons:

1) Language acquisition does not follow a universal sequence, but differs across cultures;

- 2) The process of becoming a competent member of society is realized through exchanges of language in particular social situations;
- 3) Caregivers' primary concern is not with grammatical input, but with the transmission of sociocultural knowledge;
- 4) The native learner, in addition to language, acquires also the paralinguistic patterns and the kinesics (i.e. body language) of his or her culture.

According to Chinh (2013) culture is the hidden part that cannot be separated from language learning skills. This "internal and hidden" part is not what people usually think of as the "high culture"—music, literature, cinema, politics, etc.; but it is the one concerned with the behaviour they come across. However, what rather usually happens is that people can only see the tip of the "iceberg" sticking above the water level of conscious awareness neglecting the most significant part that includes values and thought patterns.

Kramersch (1998) introduced three types of links between language and culture namely: universal, national, and local links. As for the local link, she commented that the cultural component of language teaching came to be seen as the pragmatic functions and notions expressed through language in everyday ways of speaking and acting. Stressing the pragmatic use of language, she focused on the "synchronic axis" (i.e. setting) which is a key element to everyday-life situations. Thus integrating the cultural dimension in language use helps in avoiding such misunderstandings, misjudgments and communication breakdowns which result from lack of pragmatic rules of use.

In an attempt to highlight the role of culture in the foreign/second language classroom, Al-Qahtani (2003) surveyed (70) Saudi intermediate school EFL teachers' views and attitudes toward teaching culture in their classrooms. He realized that most of the participants deemed learning culture as important as learning the language rules and those they generally revealed positive attitudes toward introducing the foreign culture in their EFL classrooms. Culture learning therefore, will have an effective role in developing foreign language learners' sociolinguistic competence, increasing their foreign culture awareness and improving their linguistic proficiency. The researcher recommended creating a "real world language" among foreign language learners; either through direct contact with native speakers (via emails, visits, telephones, pen pals, etc.) or through exposure to authentic texts filled with cultural cues.

8. Research Methodology

8.1 Participants

The study was administered to three main categories of subjects: students, teachers, and experts in the field of teaching EFL. A total of seventy students representing all level-two and level-four English major students participated in the study. The number of EFL teachers who took part in the study was nine. The third sample of the study included seven experts in the field of teaching EFL. It was composed of professors, lecturers as well as supervisors who had experience of dealing with school curricula for a long period of time.

8.2 Instruments

Two instruments were used for collecting the required data:

8.2.1 Culture-awareness Diagnostic Test (CADT)

This test provides insights into the level of culture-awareness students have about English speaking people. It incorporates 50 items in two parts:

Part One: In this part, students were required to rate their choices on a true-false response. 30 items comprise this part. These incorporate 10 dimensions: introduction and greeting, verbal communication skills, daily lifestyle, social behaviours, personal relationships, family values, history and politics, education, non-verbal communication skills, and finally cultural conflict and adjustment.

Part Two: This is a multiple choice test. It is composed of twenty hypothetical situations to which students are supposed to decide, if they know, how ENSs react to such situations.

Test items were gleaned and adapted from (Cheng, 2013; Baker, 2012 & Aguilar, 2007). The test was piloted to eight students and then given to members of the jury committee for validation. The Alpha Cronbach utilized to test reliability shows significance at the 0.05 level.

8.3 Culture-Awareness Needs Assessment Questionnaire (CANAQ)

The questionnaire was designed to assess student's foreign culture needs and the main sources of information students use to learn about the English speaking people's culture. It incorporates three parts, each of which aims

at detecting a certain kind of information.

Part One: Respondents' profile.

This part consists of 9 items detecting students' personal information and the foreign language background knowledge they have.

Part Two: Culture-Awareness Needs Assessment.

This part comprises of 49 items assessing the cultural aspects that students might need to learn about in foreign language classes. All items evaluated the extent to which subjects could determine the level of importance. Each item was presented using a 3-point scale ranging from "very important" to "unimportant". The items were employed in the following ten domains: introduction and greeting styles, verbal communication skills, non-verbal communicative skills, daily lifestyles, social behaviours, personal relationships, family values, education, history and politics, and finally knowledge of some aspects of cultural conflict and adjustment when integrating into the culture of ENSs.

The questionnaire was partly designed by the researcher and partly based on previous studies carried out in the field of foreign language learning/teaching (Cheng, 2013; Gobel et al., 2010; Al-Jarf, 2006). Many adaptations, then, were carried out.

Part Three: Sources of Information about the Foreign Culture.

This part consists of five items covering the possible sources of information students may use to learn about the English speaking people and their culture. These include: school curricula, college courses, audio and audio-visual media, printed media and also the internet in two yes/no columns, students were asked to indicate their responses next to each item. The questionnaire was piloted to 8 students and then given to a three-member jury committee for validation. The Alpha Cronbach test was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability co-efficient was significant at 0.05 which is a high level of significance.

9. Results and Discussion

Question one: This Question seeks information about the subjects' level of culture awareness.

It also detects any cultural development English majors might have been endowed with after a two-level period of study. The difference between the two student-groups was evaluated by a t-test.

Table 1. Result on means, std. deviation, and (T) value of students' responses to the CADT

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Calculated T	Tabulated (t)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Culture-awareness	2 nd level Students	35	14.061	3.8502	.000	2.62	1.000
	4 th level Students	35	14.061	5.1321			

Table (1) shows that the mean scores for both groups are exactly the same and it also shows a very low level of foreign culture awareness ($M = 14.061$). As displayed in the table, no significance in comparison is there, where the calculated T -value is lower than the tabulated T (2.7). This research finding showed that, after a considerable period of foreign language learning, students did not undergo any significant change in cultural knowledge ($T < 2.62$) and, therefore, disproves the validity of the **first research hypothesis** "Fourth-level English majors who have received more foreign language learning will exhibit greater awareness of the foreign culture than second-level English majors who have received lower foreign language learning". A definite indicator is that EFL classrooms do not provide students with a sufficient, if any, cultural knowledge of the target context. To make the situation clearer, it is commendable to mention that English courses (either those in literature or linguistics) handled in Saudi colleges/universities do contain modest amount of cultural data about native speakers of English and that no concern is given to it. Many EFL practitioners (teachers in schools and professionals in colleges) mean to neglect it to avoid conflict between the students' native culture and the foreign culture. In this vein, Al-Qahtani (2003, p. 200) indicated that EFL practitioners resort to this due to the fears for bad effect on students' behaviours. It could also be attributed to misunderstanding of the regulations underlying the Policy of EFL Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; often thinking that knowledge of the foreign culture would be a threat to the students' Islamic identity. Another reason is the extant ignorance of the foreign culture input on the part of EFL practitioners (ibid; Yu, 2006). This leads, then, to producing learners unable to conduct well-behaved responses once coming across odd cultural situations.

The comparison is also blemished due to the fact that EFL classrooms are native culture-based that rarely students' awareness of the foreign culture is raised. Mainly, students' poor responses to the culture awareness placement test have shown to be mere Arabic respondents, pointing to moderately segregation from the real life of the English native speakers. Besides, this research finding notably signifies that prominence in these classrooms is placed on "certain" linguistic matters while the cultural content is disregarded, due to time limits or to the feeling of insignificance among EFL practitioners. Byram (2008) is in full agreement with the case and described it as an obstacle that prevents intercultural understanding. Hence, no cultural transfer occurred in the momentous period between second and fourth years of study.

Yu (2006) advocated a similar finding as students, of his study, gained poor scores in the sociolinguistic diagnostic test. He elucidated the case as lack of the pragmatic component of the foreign culture in the foreign language classroom. There is some other research that adopted experiments of integrating the cultural dimension in the foreign language/SL classrooms (Rafieyan et al., 2014). However, conclusions were incompatible with the present one. Byram (2012) reported that 69% of students had developed foreign culture awareness after incorporating her cultural program. The same point was met by Daif-Allah who found that students "systematically" developed more awareness of the foreign culture and its speakers after they were given the opportunity to study foreign culture content.

Question two: This Question is designed to investigate the cultural aspects English language majors in Buraydah Community College need to know in order for their culture-awareness to be developed. It was administered to fourth-level students who have studied four levels of English language teaching courses and who, accordingly, can express their needs of foreign culture awareness. The results of the CANAQ, ordered in ranks from most important, are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Respondents' responses to the culture awareness needs assessment questionnaire

ENSs' cultural aspects students should learn about are:	Students weighted average	Teachers Weighted average	Experts weighted average	Total weighted average	Rank order
* getting to know <i>ways of praising and complimenting</i> (i.e. saying "Thank you", "Please", etc.) among ENSs	2.69	2.82	2.62	2.71	1
* learning <i>ways of requesting</i> (information, ideas, objects, etc.) which ENSs make use of	2.6	2.88	2.62	2.70	2
* learning <i>how to choose polite questions/answers</i> when interacting with ENSs	2.61	2.88	2.46	2.65	3
* learning <i>how to initiate/start, maintain and end a conversation</i> in the ENSs' culture	2.57	2.71	2.46	2.58	4
* getting to know <i>formal, semiformal and informal ways of introducing oneself/somebody else</i> in the ENSs' culture	2.37	2.59	2.62	2.53	5
* developing awareness of <i>ways of accepting, extending and refusing invitations</i> in the ENSs' culture	2.55	2.71	2.23	2.50	6
* getting to know <i>verbal ways of expressing feelings</i> (i.e. happiness, sadness, etc.) in the ENSs' culture	2.49	2.59	2.38	2.49	7
* learning <i>greeting styles</i> (verbal and nonverbal) of the ENSs' culture	2.44	2.35	2.62	2.47	8
* learning how <i>facial expression and tone of voice</i> affect ENSs' understanding of each other	2.38	2.65	2.38	2.47	8
* learning about <i>telephone etiquette</i> in the ENSs' countries	2.56	2.41	2.31	2.43	9
* learning about <i>the use of titles</i> (1 st name, Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., etc.) in the ENSs' culture	2.39	2.76	2.15	2.43	9

* learning about <i>food and eating rituals</i> (e.g. what to say and not say around food and drinks, table arrangement, eating etiquette, etc.) in the ENSs' culture	2.4	2.35	2.54	2.43	9
* getting to know <i>ways of interrupting silence and conversation</i> (i.e. stopping their continuous progress) in an ENSs' setting	2.42	2.47	2.31	2.40	10
* learning how the ENSs <i>make friends</i>	2.44	2.24	2.38	2.35	11
* developing awareness of <i>the different cultural beliefs and values</i> to avoid misinterpretation when communicating with ENSs	2.27	2.41	2.31	2.33	12
* getting to know <i>when and how to use terms of endearment</i> (i.e. names one might be called e.g. dear, love, flower, ma'am, madam, chuck, etc.) in the ENSs' countries	2.36	2.29	2.31	2.32	13
* getting to know <i>teacher-student relationships</i> in the ENSs' milieu	2.02	2.29	2.62	2.31	14
* learning about the suitable <i>ways of eye contact and handshaking in introducing</i> ENSs	2.36	2.29	2.23	2.29	15
* learning about <i>sources of culture shock</i> when integrating into the ENSs' culture	2.38	2.06	2.38	2.27	16
* learning how <i>gestures</i> (movements of the hand or head that suggest certain meanings) affect communication with the ENSs	2.49	2.24	2	2.24	17
* learning how <i>social occasions</i> (e.g. celebrations, weddings and marriages) differ in the ENSs culture	2.2	2.24	2.23	2.22	18
*getting to know <i>uses of names and nicknames</i> among ENSs	2.36	2.06	2.23	2.22	18
* learning about <i>the stereotypes</i> * that shape ENS's perceptions of others	2.31	2	2.31	2.21	19
* learning how <i>personal space</i> (i.e. the gap between people) affects the ENS's understanding of each other	1.93	2.29	2.38	2.20	20
* learning about <i>attitudes and interpretations</i> of ENSs	2.26	2.12	2.23	2.20	20
* developing awareness of the different <i>educational systems</i> in the ENSs' countries	1.73	2.35	2.46	2.18	21
* learning <i>ways of gift-giving and recovery</i> among ENSs	2.29	2	2.15	2.15	22
* developing awareness of <i>the various implications of smiling</i> in the ENS's culture	2.12	2.29	2	2.14	23
* learning about <i>money and means of payment</i> in the ENSs' culture	1.98	2.35	2.08	2.14	23
* learning about <i>individualized instruction</i> in the ENSs' countries	1.96	2.12	2.31	2.13	24
* learning about <i>visiting rituals</i> (social, business, personal, etc. habits) in the ENSs' culture	2.01	2.24	2.08	2.11	25
* getting to know <i>how elderly people are treated</i> in the ENSs	1.89	2.29	2.08	2.09	26

countries					
* getting to know how <i>clothing and dress</i> differ, according to the social event, in the ENSs' culture	2.17	2.18	2.08	2.08	27
* learning <i>non-verbal ways of expressing friendship and intimacy</i> , such as appropriate touching among people of the same gender, in the ENSs' culture	2.08	2	2.15	2.08	27
* developing awareness of <i>ways of child-raising</i> in the ENSs' culture	1.77	2.41	2	2.06	28
* learning about <i>time and temperature, weights and measurements, and calendar dates</i> of the ENSs	1.7	2.18	2.31	2.06	28
* learning about the ENSs' <i>literature</i>	2.06	1.71	2.31	2.03	29
* getting to know divergent <i>means of transportation</i> (buses, taxis, cabs, culture hiking, etc.) used by the ENSs	1.67	2.18	2.23	2.03	29
* Learning about <i>activities shared by the ENSs' families</i> (e.g. religious practices, outings, picnics, etc.)	1.89	2.18	2	2.02	30
* getting to know <i>who pays to whom</i> (in a restaurant, a coffee shop, etc.) in an ENSs milieu	2.01	2.06	1.85	1.97	31
*getting to know <i>vacations and holidays</i> of the ENSs culture	1.98	1.88	2	1.95	32
* getting to know <i>common problems among youth</i> in the ENSs' countries	1.86	2.18	1.77	1.94	33
* developing awareness of <i>ways of tipping</i> (i.e. money given as a reward for good service) in the ENSs culture	1.87	1.88	2	1.92	34
* getting to know <i>the historical background</i> of the ENSs	1.81	1.53	2	1.78	35
* learning about <i>the structure and the hierarchy of the ENSs' society</i>	1.82	1.53	2	1.78	35
* learning about <i>family reunions</i> (i.e. meetings after a long period of separation) in the ENSs' culture	1.5	1.82	2	1.77	36
* learning about <i>sports and leisure activities</i> (i.e. activities done in free time) ENSs prefer	1.57	1.76	1.77	1.70	37
* learning about <i>ways of voting and elections</i> in the ENSs' countries	1.35	1.35	2.15	1.62	38
* learning about <i>pets</i> (i.e. animals) ENSs keep in their houses	1.17	1.53	1.77	1.49	39

The table above shows cultural aspects students should learn about as seen by students, teachers and experts. The discussion of results gleaned from this questionnaire will focus on the total weighted average of the three categories of subjects. The cut-score point found for the subjects of the study as a group was 2.1 which shows a great extent of similarities in the respondents views regarding foreign culture awareness needs. Priority was given to thirty one needs out of the forty nine items included in the questionnaire. Top of these come the need to learn about:

Ways of praising and complimenting; ways of requesting; how to choose polite questions/answers in interaction; how to start, maintain and end a conversation; ways of accepting, extending and refusing invitations; verbal ways of expressing feelings; greeting styles; facial expression and tone of voice; the use of titles; food and eating rituals; ways of interrupting silence and conversation; different cultural beliefs and values; uses of names and

nicknames; ways of eye contact and handshaking in introductions; sources of culture shock; formal, semiformal and informal ways of introduction; stereotypes that shape ENSs' perceptions; gift-giving and recovery; social occasions; non-verbal ways of expressing friendship and intimacy; as well as teacher-student relationships.

These findings validate **the second research hypothesis** which states that “English Language majors in Buraydah Community College need to develop their intercultural-awareness”. Some previous studies traced similar demands (Yuen, 2011; Risager, 2008; Al-Qahtani, 2003). They reported that both explicit and implicit cultural aspects were agreed upon as important to be introduced in the EFL classroom, with a slight preference of integrating explicit aspects over implicit ones. An exception in Al-Qahtani’s findings was trifling learning about ENSs’ family values, beliefs, traditions and customs, the present study came to value them. Meanwhile, both Al-Qahtani’s and the present study opposed the need for including topics related to ENSs’ festivals, vacations and holidays. Such themes are chosen for their relevance, importance, and interest to students. They are the type of student and the milieu which determine the suitability of choices.

Question three: This Question is designed to investigate sources available to students to learn about the foreign culture. Results showed that the majority of students learn about the foreign culture from the media specially the audio visual media that don’t, in most cases reflect real life of societies. The media are not honest enough in conveying valid information about native people and their culture since their main aim is making money through showing the extremes of a society to attract people and in this way market their ads and make profit. This result came to confirm other research results in this field and it emphasizes the importance of integrating culture into school curricula being honest in reflecting true culture for the purpose of educating people not gaining money profit.

The internet comes second as seen by 31% of the respondents. This is due to the rapid spread of the internet connections everywhere and its availability to students in schools and at their homes. Printed media is another important source of learning about the foreign culture as seen by 17% of the respondents. School curricula and college courses are shown to be poor sources for providing and developing students’ awareness of the foreign culture. This result is closely related to the first research result since it provides a rationale for the students’ poor performance in the culture awareness test. To explore the extent to which each source contributes to students’ knowledge in comparison to other sources, the following graph is provided.

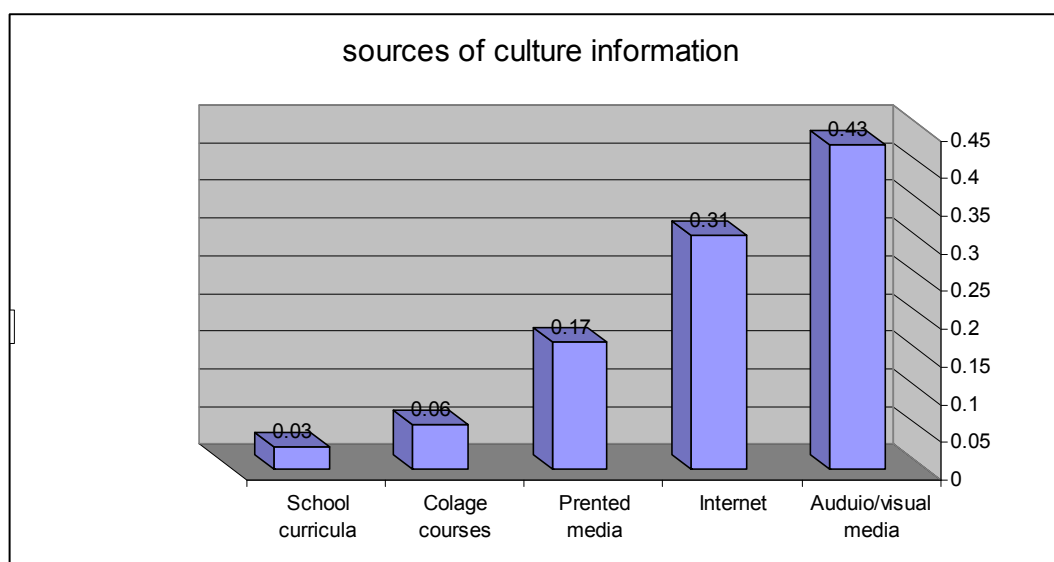


Figure 1. Percentages of sources of foreign culture information

These findings, therefore, validate **the third research hypothesis** which states: “English Language majors in Buraydah Community college get most of their knowledge about the foreign culture from the media”. The mass media are “business organizations” that do not honestly reflect real life in the ENSs’ society as well as other societies for the simple reason that they are not educational organizations or institutions. Their aim is to gain money and gain reputation by whatever means. For this purpose, they show the extremes of a society for

attracting people.

10. Implications

In the light of the results of the present study, a number of implications can be put forward to make the education programs for English Language majors in Buraydah Community College more efficient. EFL instruction should include EFL programs that introduce different cultural dimension in classrooms. Being aware of the differences between the foreign culture and the native culture is not enough for EFL learners to avoid complexity and misunderstandings. English Language majors at Buraydah Community College need to learn *how*, *when* and *why* to behave well in response to different cultural situations. They should be given a real-like chance for developing their foreign culture-awareness through manipulating modern audio-visual technology (like DVDs, videotape cassettes, etc.) in EFL classrooms. EFL programs should foster intercultural understanding to meet students' cultural needs and to ensure protection of their own cultural identity. Integrating culture into the foreign language classroom requires using innovative instructional techniques that are most effective for various aspects of culture e.g. culture capsules, culturgrams, culture assimilators, mini-dramas, games, etc. (Shemshadsara, 2012; Byram, 2012; Cheng, 2011; Young, 2011). Hence, EFL practitioners should seek guidance to such effective culture teaching methods.

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