

The Attitudes of Iranian EFL Learners toward Cross-Cultural Factors in Language Learning

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The cultural background in language teaching has, for a number of reasons, recently moved to the foreground. Broadly speaking, there has been a shift in emphasis in course design from a pre-occupation with form to an interest in content. This article describes the results of a survey designed to elicit the views of students on what language teaching should be about. 400 students learning English in Kish-Language Institute, Kashan branch were chosen as participants of the study based on their proficiency level (Starter, Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced) in order to answer the questionnaire. Each question was designed in the form of a five point Likert Scale. The results were analysed using Binomial and MANOVA Tests. The obtained Results in this study indicate that except for Elementary level, other levels favoured bilingual/bicultural teacher. In relation to varieties of English, American English was liked most by Intermediate and Advanced students. All students had an overall positive attitude towards the native speaker pronunciation and finally the most favoured course contents were revealed to be science and social facts, students' past experiences, English/American Literature along with culture of other countries.

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The growing number of bibliography on cross-cultural matters in language teaching is an indicator of wider social, political, and technological developments and in particular the increased mobility of people, and therefore of contact between people, brought about by modern communication, electronic media and internet, etc. Thus an underlying potential for harmony as well as conflict is created while awareness of a common destiny is increased. However, English as a medium of International communication has to mediate cultural and cross-cultural conflicts that may arise in the way of this global harmony. International dimension of English language not only cannot be denied, but offers English Language Teaching (ELT) a potentially significant role.

Rogers (1982) in his article, 'The World for Sick Proper', re-examined the role of English as a foreign language in contexts where English is often considered a passport to success by most people. Rogers (1982) suggested that ELT experts should start digging other holes such as cutting the teaching of English where it is not only an expensive luxury but where it also distorts a country's needs and raises false hopes in large sections of the population and to teach English only to those students who are going to use it. English as educational subject in its own right is a reality that researcher like Rogers fails to consider. English is not like mathematics or algebra in that these subjects are, universal languages: they do not belong to one particular culture and thus are not instruments of domination of one country by another.

According to Prodromou (1988), the existence of imperialism raises the problem of cultural domination and alienation with which language teaching is inextricably tied up. With its political implications language teaching, especially in developing countries, has to reject the limited function of technical usefulness and force itself as an educational issue in its broadest sense. This is the first step towards making the teaching of English more a process of developing self-awareness, and awareness of the world outside the classroom. Prodromou (1988) defines English language not only a medium for developing self-awareness but

also describes it as a foremost medium of international communication at the present time.

English as an International Language

According to Tseng (2002), those who view the spread of English as Linguistic imperialism always question the English language teaching and learning enterprise because, they believe it compromises the cultural integrity of non-native speaker. Modiano (2001) argues that, linguistic imperialism is a reality that cannot be avoided; however, cultural imposition can be degraded by utilizing ELT practices which position and define English as an international language (EIL). Pennycook (1994) questions the very foundation of 'English as an International language' ideologies and suggests that while a privileged few enjoy the benefits of globalization, many more suffer as a consequence. Conversely, Honey (1997), the radical defender of 'standard English', in calling for the promotion of a 'prescriptive educational standard', insists that it is through a mastery of standard English that the 'disenfranchised' are given an opportunity to partake in the discourse which will lead them forward.

Graddol (1997) suggested that the forecast of the globalization process continuing and gathering momentum in the coming decade is a reliable one. This movement, which requires, as a precondition for success, a common tongue, has locked on English and is now being deployed in the creation of cultural artifacts which are representative of global culture. Jenkins (2000) also believes that English, as a common tongue, is not only representative of global culture, but also a newly emerged movement of cultural integration. It is this cultural integration, together with the social and economic necessities of knowing English, which will secure the English language as the platform upon which globalization will come into being.

Cultural Values: The Interpretation of Discourse

It is sometimes suggested that the main problem in understanding discourse in foreign language comes from not

knowing enough about the cultural background in which the language is used. The solution then seems to be to teach as many facts as possible about the cultural background (Brown, 1990). He argues that it is more useful to teach explicit strategies for making inferences from the language used so that the knowledge about the cultural background can be gradually constructed in the same way that native speakers of the language gradually construct their knowledge of their own culture.

Culture as Content

Over the past thirty years in the field of English language teaching there has been extensive discussion of the syllabus. What has been seldom discussed is the actual subject matter, the content of the language lesson (Cook, 1983). For Cook, one reason why content is not discussed more frequently is that the choice is taken for granted. He specifies two general types of content: imaginary content and real content. A typical general course is about the lives and adventures of imaginary characters. Real content on the other hand, consists of information about the real world outside the classroom, its events, problems and places. Cook (1983) states that the opposition between imaginary and real content must be distinguished from that of between authentic and non-authentic language. If by authentic language we mean language produced naturally by native speakers, rather than language specially designed for teaching (Cook, 1981 as cited in Cook, 1983) it is possible to have 'real' content treated in non-authentic language. Authentic language as Cook suggests, seems to imply 'real' content, but the converse is not true.

According to Abbott (1987) the concepts that we associate with education are becoming buried, like seedlings in a snowstorm. Stern (1983) was right to draw attention to a weakness in present-day thinking about curriculum in language teaching namely, an absence of links to useful educational theory concepts which is attributable to the fact that language syllabus theory has remained within the framework of applied linguistics. The teaching of the language then must be restored to the realm of education. According to Abbott (1984) restoration process starts from scratch

by asking such questions as what do we mean by ‘education’? and what sorts of experience comprise ‘an education’? Different cultures are likely to produce differing sets of answers to these questions. It will then be necessary to decide how the national school syllabus for EFL should be established. In attempting to restore EFL to the realm of education as suggested by Abbott (1987) is to consider the nature of the content rather than the structures and functions of the medium; that is, if we are going to use a foreign language in our classrooms, what are we going to use it *for?*, to talk and write about *what?*, and to read and listen to what kinds of information? In the process of answering such questions one might take into consideration the six possibilities put forward by Cook (1983), which is summarized in the following table.

Table 1
Six Possibilities for Content of the Foreign Language Used in the Classroom Put forward by Cook (1983)

1. <i>A school subject as content:</i> use English instead of MT(Mother Tongue) to teach a school subject.	.. or a new subject, such as anthropology.
2. <i>Student-contributed content:</i> get student to express own experience, views, etc.	.. but this might be too stressful, as cook says
3. <i>Language as content:</i> show students how language as a phenomenon operates.	.. that is, a sort of pre-linguistic course.
4. <i>Literature as content:</i> use short, modern pieces of Literature as stimulating content	.. with serious discussion in MT if need be
5. <i>Culture as content:</i> give students some insights into different ways of life	.. including nay cultures having English as official language?
6. <i>Interesting facts as content:</i> provide students with true information in accordance with their interests	.. and <i>beyond</i> their current interests, in order to arouse curiosity about other things?

For Cook (1983) Culture includes information about the life of the people whose language is being studied- what they eat, how

they dress, how their political systems work, and, so on. Through this type of content the goal of giving the students insight into different ways of life can be achieved.

Four Meanings of Culture

Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi, (1990) distinguished four separate sorts of ‘culture’ that language teaching may involve:

Table 2
Four Meanings of Culture

The aesthetic sense	Culture: the media, the cinema, music, and literature
The sociological sense	culture: the organization and nature of family, of home life, of interpersonal relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs and institutions.
The semantic sense	The conceptual system embodied in the language and, according to the Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis, conditioning all our perceptions and our thought processes.
The pragmatic (or sociolinguistic sense)	The background knowledge, social skills, and paralinguistic skills that, in addition to mastery of the language code, make possible successful communication.

The pragmatic and semantic senses of culture are necessary to the learners’ achievement of a measure of communicative competence. The other cultural elements included in the aesthetic and sociological senses are also important to be used as content for the following reasons:

- To foster international understanding and counter negative stereotypes and other prejudices (Seelye, 1974);
- To encourage the learners to compare their own and the foreign culture and arrive thus at a better understanding and appreciation of their own (Byram, 1986);

- To facilitate the learners' possible future visits to the foreign countries concerned or contacts with people from them;
- To integrate the language course in an interdisciplinary, thematic curriculum;
- To motivate the learners (Courtyllion, 1984, as cited in Adaskou, Britten.& Fahsi,.1990)

The Question of Culture

According to Alptekin & Alptekin(1984) two conflicting pedagogical views exist in teaching EFL (English as a foreign language) abroad:

- English teaching should be done with reference to the socio-cultural norms and values of an English speaking country with the purpose of developing bilingual and bicultural individuals.
- Teaching of English should be independent of its nationality-bound cultural context.

Thus language and culture are two inextricably related entities, and as such should be taught together. No real acquisition of the target language can take place without the learners' internalization of target language speakers' patterns and values. Alptekin & Alptekin(1984) noted that the new cultural and linguistic competence will enable the learners to develop new perceptions of reality and to behave differently in the light of such perceptions. According to Brown (1981, as cited in Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984) "learners experience a series of cognitive and affective changes thanks to which they take on new identity. An identity with both bilingual and bicultural features" (p.14). Thus, for Trivedi, foreign language teaching is regarded as a pedagogical process aimed at changing the learner's behavior by injecting new norms and values into it (1978, as cited in Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984).

Attitudes to EFL in Non-English Speaking Countries

In general, EFL instruction for the host culture is important because it affords a window on the world of advanced technology

and industrial development. However, the cultural norms and values of the English-speaking world which come with the technical data and equipment are often considered to be 'alien and unacceptable feature' of the target culture (Wilkins, 1975). According to Alptekin & Alptekin (1984) the host country runs the risk of having its own culture totally submerged, and thus imposes restrictions in educational and cultural domains to protect its way of life. In many cases EFL learners want to acquire an international variety of English, independent of the cultural norms and values of native English speakers with an inclination to reject those values but still acquire English satisfactorily, due to their wish to identify with international attitudes which have developed in such field as pop culture, travel culture, and scientific culture where English happens to be the principal medium of communication (Ladousse, 1982). This willingness of the hosts to learn English in the context of national or international norms and values according to Paulston (1978) is indicative of their belief in the possibility of becoming bilingual without becoming bicultural. According to Alptekin & Alptekin (1984) EFL instruction in non-speaking countries is to become effective and realistic, care must be taken in order to pay less attention to teaching models based on native-speaker norms and values, and more to develop culturally neutral and learner oriented ones.

Attitudes and cultural distance in second language acquisition

Many empirical studies in second language acquisition have found a positive relationship between attitudes towards the target country, people, and learning a foreign language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1980; Spolsky, 1969). In another study Oller, Baca, & Vigil (1977) in their study on Mexican Americans in the southwest found a negative relationship; the more proficient their students were in ESL, the more negative they were toward Americans. They also found that students who were proficient in English rated Americans lower on traits such as cleverness and happiness than students who scored lower on ESL proficiency. It could be argued that these inconsistent results may be due to differences in the subjects being studied. Gardner's subjects were

high school students living in their own country and studying a foreign language as a school subject. Teenagers tend to hate some school subjects and love some others, and these strong feelings may influence their attitudes toward the people speaking the language they study. Consequently, a positive correlation between grades and attitudes seem to be reasonable (Svanes, 1988).

In Oller, Baca, & Vigil's (1977) study the subjects were all adults living in a foreign country by choice to work or study there. For adult immigrants constantly meeting problems caused by differences in language or in culture, it is important to have a strong national identity and a critical and balanced view of the host people. Earlier research has shown how language shock and culture shock have a negative influence on language learning (Stengel, 1939 & Smalley, 1963, as cited in Svanes, 1987). The ability to evaluate and criticize the host people and country adds to one's feeling of being able to handle the situation. Those who have less of this ability and/or are full of admiration for the host country may feel inferior, and this may not be conducive to effective language learning (Schumann, 1976, as cited in Svanes, 1988).

Thus, in groups of students studying in a foreign country, one would not expect a positive relationship between second language proficiency and attitudes to the target people. The main aim of this study is to find and identify the type of that relationship (positive or negative) among different levels of EFL students (Starter, Elementary, Intermediate, & Advanced) studying English at Kish Language Institute of Science and Technology, Kashan Branch.

Method

Research findings have demonstrated that success in language learning depends on the extent to which teachers are able to meet the students' cross-cultural wants and desires. The following survey sought to elicit students' reactions to the following four questions which embrace what language teaching, who the teachers, and what content should be about:

1. What is the importance of the cultural background?

2. What is the importance of the cultural foreground?
3. What is the importance of cross-cultural understanding and multi-cultural diversity?
4. What is the importance of English language teaching as education?

1. What is the importance of the cultural background?

For the classroom teacher, cultural goals may be divided into four categories: developing a greater awareness of and a broader knowledge about the target culture; acquiring a command of the etiquette of the target culture; understanding differences between the target culture and the students' culture; and understanding the values of the target culture (Valette, 1986). According to Brown (1990) importance of cultural knowledge is also in interpreting texts appropriately.

2. What is the importance of the cultural foreground?

According to Alptekin & Alptekin (1984) local culture may be submerged into the dominant culture of the foreign language. He questions the desirability of identifying the learning of English with the culture of native speaker and rejects the use of local varieties of English. He argues that the desirability of bilingual/bicultural teachers of English as a foreign language is implicit. Rampton (1990) also questions the supremacy of the native speaker at a time when world English is a mosaic of many non-native and 'nativized' varieties.

3. What is the importance of cross-cultural understanding and multi-cultural diversity?

No-one involved in teaching English is likely to argue for cross-cultural misunderstanding. But some may question the relative emphasis to be given to cross-cultural as opposed to target or local culture components in course design. Robinson (1985) believes in the importance of developing cultural versatility to help learners to meet the demands of an increasingly multicultural world; the cultural background approach is criticized for its

implicitly alienating effect in the learner. Robinson (1985) also believes that cultural instruction does not usually build bridges between the home and target culture and students are usually asked to role-play and imitate the target behaviour rather than synthesise it with their own experience. Robinson therefore proposes a multilingual/multicultural model of education rather than a bilingual/bicultural one.

4. What is the importance of English language teaching as education?

The view that ELT has for long been practiced in an educational vacuum is expressed by Brumfit (1980), Cook (1983), and Abbott (1987). Abbott's focus, building on Cook's work, is on interesting content. Abbott (1984) believes that, current views on language teaching are highly instrumental and have led to the creation of speech oriented syllabuses and much more thought is needed on what the aims and content of school EFL syllabuses should be.

What do students think?

May be it is the right time to ask what about the students? How do they feel about the claims made for him/her, and the concern shown for their cultural improvement? As Whitney (1988) aptly phrased:

A properly conducted survey of students' view on this matter of the cultural standpoint and credulity of the range of teachers and materials available to them would be very interesting (Whitney, 1988: 71).

Participants

The survey was in the form of a questionnaire which was distributed to 400 students learning English in Kish language Institute, Kashan Branch. Most students were mostly young adults. One third of the students were beginners, while the others were Elementary, Pre-Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate or Advanced. I included different levels of language ability to

identify possible differentiation in attitudes towards the use of the mother -tongue by the students with only a little knowledge of English and those, on the other hand, who know quite a lot. All subjects had done a placement interview based on Cambridge placement interview standards.

Design of the Study

The quantitative data were gathered by the means of the questionnaire. The Likert scale was used in the questionnaire, which included 15 ordered questions. The direction of values within each item was fixed.

Instrumentation

A self-reporting questionnaire in Kish languageInstitute, Kashan Branchwas administered and student level (based on Cambridge Placement Test) was recorded. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions including 4 general sections about: The Bilingual/Bicultural teacher, varieties of English, native speaker pronunciation, and what should language teaching be about? (See appendix A). The Bilingual Bicultural Teacher section consisted of 2 questions about mother tongue and Iranian culture. The Varieties of English section consisted of three questions about British/American/other accents. The question addressed attitudes toward native English accent was included in section called native speaker pronunciation. The section on ‘what should language teaching be about?’ focuses on the content or subject matter of English lesson and presented in questions 7-15. All the items comprising the questionnaire constructed on 5 point Likert scale. The direction of points in all the items is same and one directional.

Procedure

A cover page was attached to questionnaire to explain the goals and importance of the study. The questionnaire was administered to all four levels: Starter, Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced students. Each level included one hundred students, comprising the population of the study.

Results and Discussion

The results of the present study will be presented by discussing students' reactions to the following concepts:

- The Bilingual Bicultural Teacher (Question 1-2)
- Varieties of English (Question 3-5)
- Native Speaker Pronunciation (Question 6)
- The content of the language teaching materials (Questions 7-15)

In order to investigate students' attitudes a one way MANOVA was used to extract the overall mean for each question within each separate level comprising the population of the study and a Binomial Test was used to classify results from Likert scale for each question and within each level.

Questions 1 and 2: The Bilingual / Bicultural Teacher

In order to find out students' attitude toward the problem of bilingual or bicultural teacher a Binomial Test was used for each level (i.e., Starter, Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced). Table 3 gives the results of Binomial Test.

Table 3
Binomial Test for Starter Level (Questions 1-2)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q1 St	Group 1	<= 3	10	.1	.6	.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	90	.9		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q2 St	Group 1	<= 3	10	.1	.6	.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	90	.9		
	Total		100	1.0		

Table 4
Binomial Test for Elementary Level (Questions 1-2)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q1 Elm	Group 1	<= 3	12	.1	.6	.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	88	.9		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q2 Elm	Group 1	<= 3	15	.2	.6	.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	85	.8		
	Total		100	1.0		

Table 5
Binomial Test for Intermediate Level (Questions 1-2)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q1 Int	Group 1	<= 3	10	.1	.6	.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	90	.9		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q2 Int	Group 1	<= 3	12	.1	.6	.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	88	.9		
	Total		100	1.0		

Table 6
Binomial Test for Advanced Level (Questions 1-2)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q1 Adv	Group 1	<= 3	10	.1	.6	.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	90	.9		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q2 Adv	Group 1	<= 3	10	.1	.6	.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	90	.9		
	Total		100	1.0		

Except for the Elementary level the number of the students who rated >3 are over 88 %. This means that just over 88 percent of the students thought the teacher should know the learner's mother tongue and know about local culture. There were more Starters, and Intermediate/Advanced students who felt the teacher should be bilingual / bicultural, compared to students in Elementary classes. Only 85 percent of Elementary level students

thought their teacher should be bicultural, while 88 percent agreed that their teacher should also be bilingual and have familiarity with their mother tongue. A possible explanation for this might be lack of experience of being taught by native speakers. Regarding starter and Elementary students, this was predictable, because they feel more strongly than higher-level students that their teacher should know Persian. Hence a limitation of direct method approaches with our students at different levels.

In the case of cultural awareness, the students at all levels felt their teacher should be familiar with their country's (Iran) culture. Students at Starter (90%) and Intermediate (88%) and Advanced (90%) levels felt more strongly than Elementary students (85%). Of course, this could be due to age along with cultural and linguistic sensitivity.

The results of MANOVA also verify the lower attraction of the Elementary level students toward the bilingual/bicultural teacher with the average mean of 4.25 for question 1 and 4.22 for question 2. (See table 7)

Table 7
MANOVA Test for Four Levels of Proficiency (Questions 1-2)

Q1:Bilingual Teacher	Starter	4.43	100
	Elementary	4.25	100
	Intermediate	4.35	100
	Advanced	4.28	100
	Total	4.33	400
Q2:Bicultural Teacher	Starter	4.57	100
	Elementary	4.22	100
	Intermediate	4.32	100
	Advanced	4.31	100
	Total	4.35	400

Question 3,4,5: Varieties of English

The overall picture here is the universal popularity of American English compared to British English. Despite the negative reflection of Americans in the press, this variety of English is more popular among the students. 55% of Intermediate

and 84% of Advanced students prefer American English. Regarding Starter and Elementary students, with only 38% and 42% this was predictable simply because they have no idea about the difference between the two varieties, i.e. this was due to age and linguistic competence: students at higher levels can appreciate the difference.

Table 8
Binomial Test for Starter Level (Questions 3-5)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q3 St	Group 1	<= 3	54	.5	.6	.131 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	46	.5		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q4 St	Group 1	<= 3	62	.6	.6	.382 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	38	.4		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q5 St	Group 1	<= 3	84	.8	.6	.000 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	16	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		

Table 9
Binomial Test for Elementary Level (Questions 3-5)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q3 Elm	Group 1	<= 3	52	.5	.6	.064 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	48	.5		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q4 Elm	Group 1	<= 3	58	.6	.6	.377 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	42	.4		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q5 Elm	Group 1	<= 3	90	.9	.6	.000 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	10	.1		
	Total		100	1.0		

Table 10
Binomial Test for Intermediate Level (Questions 3-5)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q3 Int	Group 1	<= 3	60	.6	.6	.543a,b
	Group 2	> 3	40	.4		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q4 Int	Group 1	<= 3	45	.4	.6	.002a,b
	Group 2	> 3	55	.6		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q5 Int	Group 1	<= 3	95	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	5	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		

Table 11
Binomial Test for Advanced Level (Questions 3-5)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q3 Adv	Group 1	<= 3	84	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	16	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q4 Adv	Group 1	<= 3	16	.2	.6	.000a,b
	Group 2	> 3	84	.8		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q5 Adv	Group 1	<= 3	97	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	3	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		

The results of MANOVA for the mean of the groups for each question are presented in table 12.

As it is shown in table 5, Starters with the average mean of 3.09 and Elementary students with the average mean of 3.15 have somehow a negative attitude toward American accent. Instead they favour the British accent with the average mean of 3.21-3.32 for question 3. With regards to other accents, questioned (question5) Advanced students have the lowest mean of 1.88 which is much lower than other 3 levels. The highest score in spite of all the negative attitude of the Starters and Elementary students belongs to the question 4 with the total score of 219 and total mean of 3.52.

Table 12
MANOVA Test for Four Levels of Proficiency (Questions 3-5)

MANOVA			
Q3:British Accent	Starter	3.32	100
	Elementary	3.21	100
	Intermediate	2.85	100
	Advanced	2.48	100
	Total	2.97	400
Q4:American Accent	Starter	3.09	100
	Elementary	3.15	100
	Intermediate	3.67	100
	Advanced	4.15	100
	Total	3.52	400
Q5:Other Accents	Starter	2.48	100
	Elementary	2.22	100
	Intermediate	2.20	100
	Advanced	1.88	100
	Total	2.20	400

Question 6: Native Speaker Pronunciation

The overall picture here is a ~94% (mean=94.5) desire for everyone at all levels from Starter to Intermediate/Advanced to speak English like a native speaker (see table 13) with the total mean of 4.59 at four levels for question 1. The results of MANOVA for the mean of the groups are also presented in table 14.

Table 13
Descriptive Statistics for Four Levels of Proficiency (Question 6)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean
Total for Question 6	4	90.00	98.00	378.00	94.5000

Table 14
MANOVA Test for Four Levels of Proficiency (Question 6)

MANOVA			
Q6:Native Accent	Starter	4.62	100
	Elementary	4.41	100
	Intermediate	4.68	100
	Advanced	4.64	100
	Total	4.59	400

- This may be due to any one or more of the following factors:
- Students regard the native speaker pronunciation as the only correct pronunciation.
 - This could have something to do with their own ideals.
 - They might have found the limitations of their own/teachers' pronunciation while interacting, watching a film, listening to a native speaker etc.

The highest total score as shown in table 9 among all other questions belongs to the question 6 which is 378 point (see table 15).

Table 15
Binomial Test for Four Levels of Proficiency (Question 6)

		Binomial Test				
		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q6 St	Group 1	<= 3	10	.1	.6	.000a,b
	Group 2	> 3	90	.9		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q6 Elm	Group 1	<= 3	6	.1	.6	.000a,b
	Group 2	> 3	94	.9		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q6 Int	Group 1	<= 3	4	.0	.6	.000a,b
	Group 2	> 3	96	1.0		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q6 Adv	Group 1	<= 3	2	.0	.6	.000a,b
	Group 2	> 3	98	1.0		
	Total		100	1.0		

Question 7, 8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15: What Should Language Teaching be about?

The fact that most students 43.25% (mean=43.25) said they wanted the lesson to be about ‘the English Language’ may be so clear to be unimportant because we know all lessons are in English.

Table 16
Descriptive Statistics for Four Levels of Proficiency (Questions 7-15)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean
Total for Question 7	4	31.00	50.00	173.00	43.2500
Total for Question 8	4	15.00	22.00	76.00	19.0000
Total for Question 9	4	3.00	15.00	33.00	8.2500
Total for Question 10	4	3.00	13.00	26.00	6.5000
Total for Question 11	4	3.00	20.00	38.00	9.5000
Total for Question 12	4	8.00	20.00	58.00	14.5000
Total for Question 13	4	2.00	9.00	15.00	3.7500
Total for Question 14	4	20.00	33.00	97.00	24.2500
Total for Question 15	4	1.00	4.00	9.00	2.2500

The results of Binomial and MANOVA tests (see appendices) for four proficiency levels regarding questions 7-15 are discussed below:

- Science and society (Question 8): Except for language itself, one of the favoured content was 'facts about science and society' with the average point of 173 and mean of 3.14 point.(table 16) (see also appendix F)
- The experience of other students in the class was the most favoured content and attracted Elementary (mean=2.92) and Advanced levels(2.97) more than the other two levels (starter with mean of 2.45 and Intermediate with the mean of 2.49)(see appendix F)
- The least favoured contents were Politics(Question 13), Iranian life and culture (Question 15) and social problems (Question 9). Iranian life and culture with the total mean of 1.65 was the lowest. Political and social problems gave us a total of 1.87 and 1.96 (see appendix F)
- English/American literature (Question 11) was the most favoured after the experience of other students with the total mean of 2.18.
- Culture of other countries (Question 12) was motivating to almost all students equally (14.5%), with the total mean of 2.12.
- Overall, the results of this survey show that the following common hypotheses are rejected:

- 1) The use of 'political problems', 'local culture and life', 'British life', as content;
- 2) Speaking Persian (the students' mother tongue) should be forbidden in English classes;
- 3) Native English Teachers are better English teachers than non—native- speaker teachers of English;
- 4) Students' local culture and language should be ignored by our English teachers.
- 5) Students prefer British rather than American English.
- 6) Students don't need to be exposed to near native-like English in the classes;
- 7) Our teachers should just be able to speak English, no matter British or American, with accent or without accent.
- 8) A monolingual, mono-cultural approach to ELT is the best approach.

Conclusion and Implication

In suggesting that the above hypotheses (popular fallacies) have been trivial, I would like to say that any prescriptions written for our language learners should be pondered first. Prescriptions should not be based on personal hypotheses, wants or desires. Then at this point it is time to ask: what about the learners? How do they feel about all the decisions made for them, and the concern shown for their English improvement? What are our learners interested in?

There are two other reasons why the research in this article is useful. First of all, there is the end-product of the survey: insight into the subject under discussion, cultural factors in language learning. Secondly, there is the process itself of going to the students and finding out to what extent the teacher's assumptions and theirs coincide.

It is both disconcerting and stimulating to discover that our assumptions and those of our students do not always coincide. Such findings are a refreshing form of self-development. Going back to the learners generates a renewed interest in the process of teaching English.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

1. Do you think your teacher of English should know the student's mother tongue?

Yes, absolutely	A little	No, not at all
1	2	3
1	2	3
2. Do you think your teacher of English should know about Iran and Iranian culture?

Yes, absolutely	A little	No, not at all
1	2	3
1	2	3
3. How much is it important for you to learn English with British accent?

Very much	A little	None
1	2	3
1	2	3
4. How much is it important for you to learn English with American accent?

Very much	A little	None
1	2	3
1	2	3
5. How much is it important for you to learn English with other accents?

Very much	A little	None
1	2	3
1	2	3
6. How much is it important for you to speak English like a native speaker?

Very important	Quite important	Not important
1	2	3
1	2	3
7. How much is it important for you that the content or subject matter of your English lessons be about English Language?

Very important	Quite important	Not important
1	2	3
1	2	3
8. How much is it important for you that the content or subject matter of your English lessons be about scientific and social facts?

Very important	Quite important	Not important
1	2	3
1	2	3

9. How much is it important for you that the content or subject matter of your English lessons be about social problems?
- | | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------------|---|---------------|
| Very important | | Quite important | | Not important |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
10. How much is it important for you that the content or subject matter of your English lessons be about British/American life and institutions?
- | | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------------|---|---------------|
| Very important | | Quite important | | Not important |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
11. How much is it important for you that the content or subject matter of your English lessons be about English/American literature?
- | | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------------|---|---------------|
| Very important | | Quite important | | Not important |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
12. How much is it important for you that the content or subject matter of your English lessons be about the culture of other countries?
- | | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------------|---|---------------|
| Very important | | Quite important | | Not important |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
13. Do you think it is important that the content or subject matter of your English lessons be about political problems?
- | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| Yes, very important | | Quite important | | No, not important |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
14. Do you think it is important that the content or subject matter of your English lessons be about the experience of other students in the class?
- | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| Yes, very important | | Quite important | | No, not important |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
15. Do you think it is important that the content or subject matter of your English lessons be about Iranian life and culture?
- | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| Yes, very important | | Quite important | | No, not important |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Appendices A-D, show the results of Binomial test for four proficiency levels. They indicate the number of students, their attitudes based on Likert scale, and the observed proportion for each level regarding questions 7-15.

Appendix B: Binomial Test for Starter Level (Questions 7-15)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q7 St	Group 1	<= 3	53	.5	.6	.093 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 3	47	.5		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q8 St	Group 1	<= 3	78	.8	.6	.000 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	22	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q9 St	Group 1	<= 3	90	.9	.6	.000 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	10	.1		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q10 St	Group 1	<= 3	97	1.0	.6	.000 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	3	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q11 St	Group 1	<= 3	93	.9	.6	.000 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	7	.1		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q12 St	Group 1	<= 3	92	.9	.6	.000 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	8	.1		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q13 St	Group 1	<= 3	91	.9	.6	.000 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	9	.1		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q14 St	Group 1	<= 3	76	.8	.6	.001 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	24	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q15 St	Group 1	<= 3	97	1.0	.6	.000 ^b
	Group 2	> 3	3	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		

Appendix C: Binomial Test for Elementary Level (Questions 7-15)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q7 Elm	Group 1	≤ 3	50	.5	.6	.027a,b
	Group 2	> 3	50	.5		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q8 Elm	Group 1	≤ 3	85	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	15	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q9 Elm	Group 1	≤ 3	95	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	5	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q10 Elm	Group 1	≤ 3	97	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	3	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q11 Elm	Group 1	≤ 3	92	.9	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	8	.1		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q12 Elm	Group 1	≤ 3	85	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	15	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q13 Elm	Group 1	≤ 3	98	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	2	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q14 Elm	Group 1	≤ 3	67	.7	.6	.091b
	Group 2	> 3	33	.3		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q15 Elm	Group 1	≤ 3	96	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	4	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		

Appendix D: Binomial Test for Intermediate Level (Questions 7-15)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q7 Int	Group 1	≤ 3	69	.7	.6	.040b
	Group 2	> 3	31	.3		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q8 Int	Group 1	≤ 3	80	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	19	.2		
	Total		99	1.0		
Q9 Int	Group 1	< 3	85	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	15	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q10 Int	Group 1	≤ 3	93	.9	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	7	.1		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q11 Int	Group 1	≤ 3	80	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	20	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q12 Int	Group 1	≤ 3	85	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	15	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q13 Int	Group 1	≤ 3	98	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	2	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q14 Int	Group 1	≤ 3	80	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	20	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q15 Int	Group 1	≤ 3	99	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	1	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		

Appendix E: Binomial Test for Advanced Level (Questions 7-15)

Binomial Test						
	Category		N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Q7 Adv	Group 1	≤ 3	55	.6	.6	.179a,b
	Group 2	> 3	45	.4		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q8 Adv	Group 1	≤ 3	80	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	20	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q9 Adv	Group 1	≤ 3	97	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	3	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q10 Adv	Group 1	≤ 3	87	.9	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	13	.1		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q11 Adv	Group 1	≤ 3	97	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	3	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q12 Adv	Group 1	≤ 3	80	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	20	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q13 Adv	Group 1	≤ 3	98	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	2	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q14 Adv	Group 1	≤ 3	80	.8	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	20	.2		
	Total		100	1.0		
Q15 Adv	Group 1	≤ 3	99	1.0	.6	.000b
	Group 2	> 3	1	.0		
	Total		100	1.0		
a. Alternative hypothesis states that the proportion of cases in the first group $< .6$.						
b. Based on Z Approximation.						

Appendix F: The Results of MANOVA Test for Four Levels of Proficiency (Questions 7-15)

MANOVA			
Q7:Content=English Language	Starter	3.41	100
	Elementary	3.21	100
	Intermediate	2.86	100
	Advanced	3.07	100
	Total	3.14	400
Q8:Content=Scientific/Social Facts	Starter	2.66	100
	Elementary	2.49	100
	Intermediate	2.46	100
	Advanced	2.40	100
	Total	2.50	400
Q9:Content=Social Problems	Starter	2.23	100
	Elementary	1.78	100
	Intermediate	2.21	100
	Advanced	1.61	100
	Total	1.96	400
Q10:Content=British/American Life	Starter	1.67	100
	Elementary	2.09	100
	Intermediate	2.16	100
	Advanced	2.15	100
	Total	2.02	400
Q11:Content=English/American Literature	Starter	1.79	100
	Elementary	2.33	100
	Intermediate	2.76	100
	Advanced	1.82	100
	Total	2.18	400
Q12:Content=Culture of other Countries	Starter	1.79	100
	Elementary	1.90	100
	Intermediate	2.41	100
	Advanced	2.38	100
	Total	2.12	400
Q13:Content=Political Problems	Starter	1.78	100
	Elementary	1.64	100
	Intermediate	1.99	100
	Advanced	2.08	100
	Total	1.87	400
Q14:Content=Experience of other Students	Starter	2.45	100
	Elementary	2.92	100
	Intermediate	2.49	100
	Advanced	2.97	100
	Total	2.71	400
Q15:Content=Iranian Life and Culture	Starter	1.70	100
	Elementary	1.63	100
	Intermediate	1.83	100
	Advanced	1.45	100
	Total	1.65	400

نگرش زبان آموزان ایرانی نسبت به عوامل میان فرهنگی در یادگیری زبان

فرناز جاودانی
دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی واحد تبریز
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دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی واحد تبریز

داشتن یک پیش زمینه فرهنگی در آموزش زبان بنا به دلایل زیادی به تازگی جایگاه خاص و چشمگیری یافته است. به طور کلی، در تهیه و تدوین مطالب درسی دیگر بر ساختار تکیه نمی شود بلکه بر محتوی تاکید می گردد. این مقاله دربرگیرنده نتایج یک نظرسنجی بعمل آمده درباره نگرش زبان آموزان نسبت به محتوای مطالب آموزشی آنها می باشد. به همین منظور چهارصد زبان آموز دختر و پسر که در مؤسسه علوم و فنون کیش کاشان به فراگیری زبان انگلیسی مشغول بودند بر اساس چهار سطح زبانی پایه، مقدماتی، متوسط و پیشرفته برای شرکت در نظرسنجی انتخاب شدند. سؤالات بر اساس میزان لیکرت طرح و بر همان اساس ارزیابی شد. علاوه بر آمار توصیفی (Binomial)، تست آنالیز واریانس چندگانه یک طرفه (MANOVA) برای بررسی نتایج مورد استفاده قرار گرفت. نتیجه بررسی نشان داد که بااستثناء زبان آموزان سطح پایه، دیگر سطوح (مقدماتی، متوسط و پیشرفته) تمایل زیادی به داشتن اساتید دوزبانه یا دوفرنهنگه داشتند. در ارتباط با تنوع لهجه های زبان انگلیسی، لهجه انگلیسی آمریکایی بیشترین طرفدار را بین سطوح متوسط و پیشرفته به خود اختصاص داد. بطور کلی زبان آموزان در همه سطوح نگرش مثبتی نسبت به تلفظ زبان انگلیسی مادری داشتند. و در نهایت پرتطرفدارترین محتوای درسی به ترتیب اهمیت عبارت بودند از حقایق علمی و اجتماعی، تجارب گذشته زبان آموزان، ادبیات آمریکایی و انگلیسی همراه با فرهنگ دیگر کشورها.

کلیدواژه‌ها: نگرش، عوامل میان فرهنگی، فرهنگ
بعنوان محتوای درسی، زمینه فرهنگی، فاصله
فرهنگی.