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شروط النشر:

١. ان يكون البحث مطبوعاً على الحاسوب، وتزود هيئة التحرير بثلاث نسخ منه مع نسخة على قرص ليزري (CD).
٢. ان لا تزيد عدد صفحات البحث عن (٢٥) صفحة ولا تقل عن (١٥) صفحة من الحجم العادي (A4) ويستثنى من ذلك النصوص المحققة على ان يدفع الباحث مبلغ (١٠) عشرة الاف عن كل صفحة إضافية إذا كان البحث يزيد عن ٢٥ صفحة للبحوث داخل العراق و٨ دولار امريكي للبحوث خارج العراق.
٣. يمكن ان يكون البحث جزءاً من رسالة الماجستير أو أطروحة الدكتوراه التي أعدها الباحث على ان يلتزم الباحث بوضعه على قالب المجلة واستكمال المعلومات المطلوبة باللغتين العربية

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والانكليزية، وألا يكون قد سبق نشره على أي نحو كان أو تم إرساله للنشر في مجلة أخرى ويتعهد الباحث بذلك خطياً.

٤. يلتزم الباحث بإجراء تعديلات المحكمين على بحثه وفق التقارير المرسلة إليه وموافاة المجلة بنسخة معدلة في مدة لا تتجاوز (١٥) يوماً.

٥. أن يكون البحث ضمن الاختصاصات الانسانية ومن ضمن ابواب المجلة الستة الثابتة.

٦. يخطر أصحاب البحوث بالقرار حول صلاحيتها للنشر أو عدمها خلال مدة لا تتجاوز ثلاثة أشهر من تأريخ وصوله لهيئة التحرير.

٧. لا ترد الأبحاث إلى أصحابها سواء نشرت أم لم تنشر.

٨. يلتزم الباحث بدفع أجور النشر المقررة والبالغة ١٠٠ ألف دينار عراقي داخل العراق إذا كان عدد صفحاته اقل من (٢٥) صفحة وما زاد عن ذلك يدفع الباحث مبلغ (١٠) الاف دينار عن كل صفحة اضافية و ١٠٠ دولار أمريكي خارج العراق إذا كان عدد صفحاته اقل من (٢٥) صفحة وما زاد عن ذلك يدفع الباحث مبلغ (٨) دولار عن كل صفحة اضافية وكذلك دفع مبلغ ٢٠ دولار لعمل استلال الكتروني للبحث.

٩. يطبع البحث ببرنامج (Word)، وتوضع الرسوم أو الاشكال - إن وجدت - في مكانها من البحث على أن تكون صالحة من الناحية الفنية للطباعة.

١٠. أن يكون البحث خالياً من الأخطاء اللغوية والنحوية والاملائية.

١١. يجب اتباع الأصول العلمية والقواعد المرعية في البحث العلمي.

١٢. يجب أن تكون الخطوط كالآتي:

• اللغة العربية: نوع الخط (Simplified Arabic) حجم الخط (١٤).

• اللغة الانكليزية: نوع الخط (Times New Roman) حجم الخط (١٤).

١٣. عمل الهوامش يكون بنظام تلقائي (تعليقات ختامية) في نهاية البحث، ويكون الترقيم مستمراً، مع التدقيق في تسلسل الترقيم.

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٢. المؤتمرات والندوات العلمية: تنشر المجلة بحوث المؤتمرات والندوات العلمية المحلية والعربية والعالمية والتي عقدت حديثاً في مجال العلوم الإنسانية وضمن ابواب المجلة الستة الثابتة.

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ملاحظات النشر:

١. البحوث المنشورة في المجلة تعبر عن آراء الباحثين ولا تعبر عن رأي المجلة.
٢. ترتيب البحوث في المجلة يخضع لاعتبارات فنية.
٣. تستبعد المجلة أي بحث مخالف لقواعد النشر أو الذي يرفض من قبل الخبراء.
٤. يعطى الباحث نسخة مسئلة من بحثه.

العنوان البريدي:

جمهورية العراق، محافظة صلاح الدين، مدينة تكريت | جامعة تكريت، كلية الآداب،
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معلومات الاتصال

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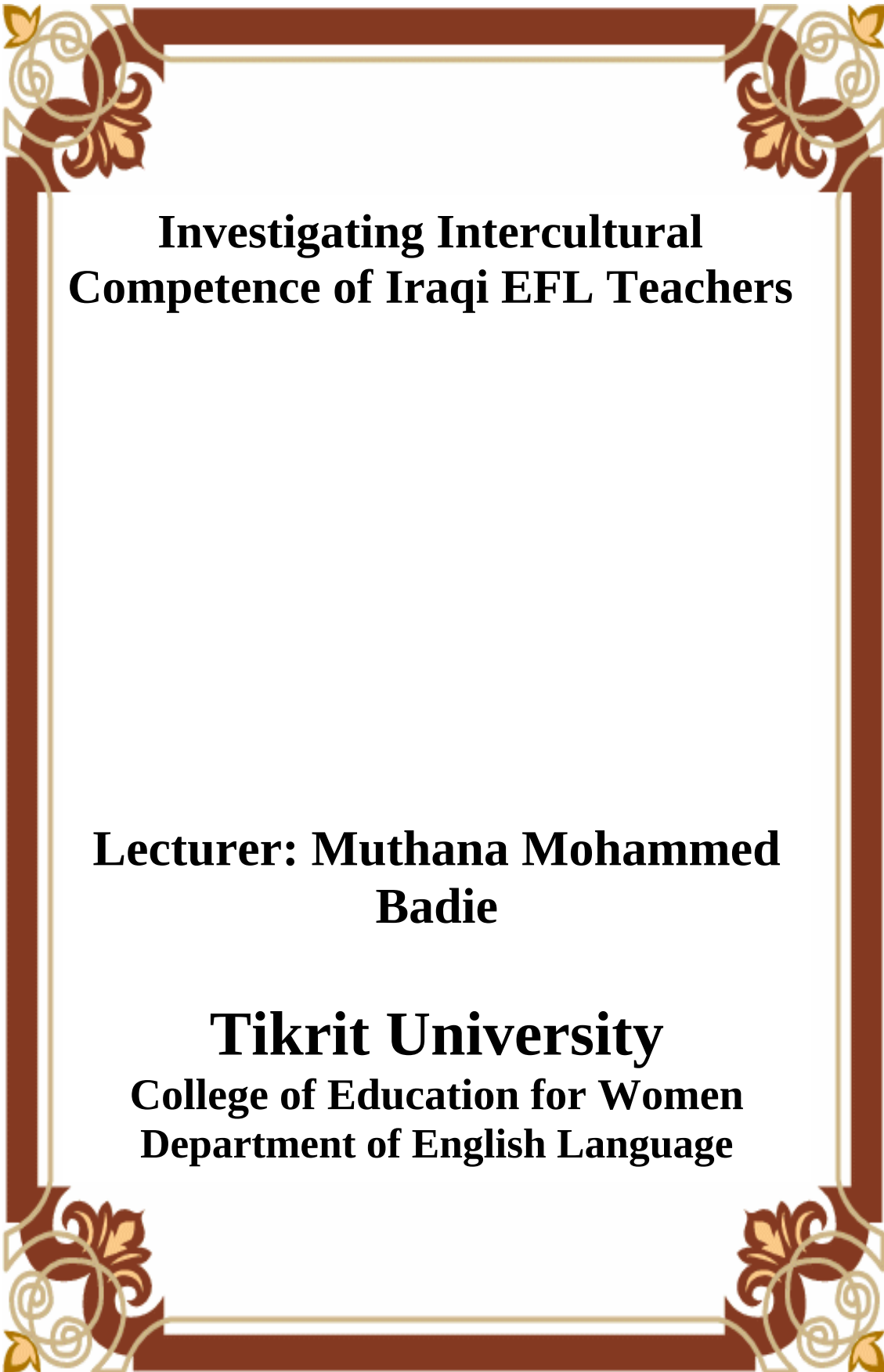
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Investigating Intercultural Competence of Iraqi EFL Teachers

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Investigating Intercultural Competence of Iraqi EFL Teachers

ABSTRACT

Intercultural communicative Competence (ICC) has recently been considered by many expertises as crucial competence language learners or language teachers need to be equipped with. The importance of ICC is rooted in globalization and the importance of the role played by culture in any language including English. ICC, in effect, equips the learners or teachers with the required skills in order to be more successful and achieve better results in terms of mutual understanding. One of the challenges of ICC is whether the teachers have sufficient knowledge of such a concept. Having addressed the EFL teachers' needs regarding ICC, we asked 75 Iraqi EFL teachers to answer the questionnaire revised by Chao (2015). The results of the study showed that many Iraqi EFL teachers do not have a theoretical understanding of the ICC. Such an issue may negatively influence their teaching performances. The participating teachers seem to have difficulty in employing intercultural aspects of English.

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1. Introduction:

Whereas teaching culture is considered to be a part of teaching English as a foreign language, older models of teaching English is still followed in Iraq. Such models do not seem to develop intercultural competencies of the teachers or students. In the context of Iraq where there are few chances, if any, for using English authentically, the roles played by the teacher and the selected textbook or even teaching method seem to be important.

Intercultural competence is a new concept introduced recently and has attracted the attention of many researchers. According to Bhawuk (2008), our social behavior is formed by culture by which we learn the value system of a language. In other words, it is through culture that an individual learns what works and what does not work. Learning a second or foreign language, on other hand, may provide an opportunity to realize that there are other value systems as good as the one in our native culture. It is here that intercultural exploration and experiences may get started.

Intercultural competence is important in such a way that some researchers embark to talk about cultural intelligence (e.g. Earley & Ang, 2003). Ang and Dyne (2015: 1) define cultural intelligence as "the capability of an individual to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity". Considering literature review demonstrates that new types of intelligence have focused on specific content domains—social intelligence (Thorndike & Stein, 1937), emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1993), and practical intelligence (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2000). Cultural intelligence or cultural quotient (CQ) has also focused on a specific domain, i.e. intercultural settings. It seems that CQ is motivated by globalization in the workplace (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Following Schmidt and Hunter's (2000) definition of general intelligence, (Ang and Van Dyne, 2015:4) considers CQ as "a specific form of intelligence focused on an individual's ability to grasp and reason correctly in situations characterized by cultural diversity". Having extended the definition of cultural intelligence, CQ is composed of metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral facets (Van Dyne, Ang & Koh, 2008), CQ has being explored in cross-cultural and intercultural contexts (e.g., Triandis, 2006; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2006; Earley & Ang, 2003).

Different dimensions of CQ deals with different dimensions of culture. In effect, the cognitive dimension deals with an individual's level of cultural knowledge, metacognitive dimension with an individual's mental processes in acquiring cultural knowledge, motivational dimension with an individual's motivation in learning and adapting to a new cultural context, and behavioral dimension with the appropriateness of an individual's verbal and non-verbal behavior in a cultural interaction (Ang, et al., 2007; Earley & Ang, 2003).

Considering the related literature illustrates that the four dimensions of cultural intelligence (CQ)—metacognition, cognition, behavior, and motivation—are highly related to the notion *openness to experience* (Ang,

Van Dyne, & Koh, 2008) which may be a crucial factor in identity development (Tesch & Cameron, 1987; Sparkman, Eidelman, & Blanchar, 2016). Moreover, review of the related literature suggests that cultural intelligence is highly related to performance prediction (e.g. task performance, cultural decision making, well-being, etc.) (Ang, et al., 2007; Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar, 2006).

One of the related notion to cultural intelligence is Intercultural competence, which refers to “the ability to think and act in intercultural appropriate ways” (Hammer et al., 2003: 476). Bennett (1986) has presented one of the influential models, namely, Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). DMIS, in effect, provides a progressive framework from ethnocentric orientation to ethnorelative orientation. DMIS has compose of two dimensions—three ethnocentric orientations where one's native culture is considered central to reality (Denial, Defense, Minimization) and three ethnorelative orientations where one's native culture is experienced in another culture (Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration).

Intercultural, as a notion in language teaching emerged in the 1980s as a development from the concept of “communicative competence,” which is also reacted to cultural intelligence. Intercultural competence refers to “the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behavior and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions” (Deardorff, 2006: 241).

Some researchers (e.g. Reimann, 2018; Fleming, 2009) differentiate Intercultural and transcultural competence. Transcultural competence deals with changing identifications and intercultural competence with skills, knowledge, and attitudes related to interaction. Hence, transcultural competence is an extension of intercultural competence (Reimann, 2018).

Likewise, culture is a prominent factor in academic contexts especially in the field of English language teaching (ELT). Due to the globalization processes and learning English as a foreign language (EFL), we need to pay more attention to the roles played cultural and linguistic globalization by which local languages, economies and identities are being affected (e.g., Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Pennycook, 2007; Vaish, 2008). One of the areas related to ELT and cultural studies is the field of language teacher education especially in a country like Iraq wherein English is considered as a foreign language (EFL).

One of the issues that has recently attracted the attention of man researchers is the fact that about 80% of individuals who use English are bilinguals (e.g. Crystal, 1997). Henceforth, the status of native speakers is questioned due to the fact that most introduced ELT models are developed based on the needs of the native speakers. Accordingly, the need for developing ELT models for international speakers was felt (e.g., Kachru, 1996; Knapp, 2002; McArthur, 2001; Rampton, 1990; Seidlhofer, 2000; Widdowson, 1994).

Meanwhile, some researchers consider native speakers as the best source for developing target-language models, which they call such an ideology as speakerism (e.g., Holliday, 2005; Pennycook, 1994). Such an ideology was criticized due to several grounds, namely, the fallacy on part

of the native speaker (e.g., Piller, 2001), race (e.g., Kubota & Lin, 2009), prejudice and discrimination (Houghton & Rivers, 2013), and linguistic imperialism (e.g., Phillipson, 1992, 2016).

Language teachers are One of the medium by whom language including English and teaching methods, techniques and strategies are expanded and developed (e.g., Bunce, 2016; Machida & Walsh, 2015; Wong, Lee, & Gao, 2016). One of the recent areas related to teacher education is the field of intercultural competence. Wilberschied (2015: 4) states that

"Ongoing development of one's Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)—understanding and appreciating each aspect of diversity and developing and sustaining relationships that emerge from such appreciation, and doing so in a foreign language (FL)—certainly makes this complex and metamorphosing life easier and more pleasant".

Different researchers among which we can mention better professional opportunities, higher proficiency in negotiating professional responsibilities, and enriched professional experiences numerate some advantages. The significance of ICC is due to the fact that it is related to individual's self-development. Wilberschied (2015) states ICC, as it, results to self-development, foreign language improvement, and development in one's knowledge, understanding and culture. The importance of ICC is even higher for EFL teachers because of the roles played by linguistic and cultural repertoires in the classrooms handled by them.

Having considered the aforementioned issues, 25 undergraduate Iraqi EFL teachers were selected as the participants of the study and were asked to answer to a developed questionnaire to explore their understanding of the concept of ICC and their utilized method to equip their students with such knowledge. To this end, the following questions were raised:

1. How do Iraqi EFL teachers view the concepts of culture?
2. How do Iraqi EFL teachers view ICC in ELT contexts?
3. What implications does the study have for ELT?

2. Review of the Related Literature:

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) refers to a concept composed of a number of capabilities essential for communicating especially with individuals of other cultures. (Giroux ,2005:21) argues that "our diverse identities, subjectivities, experiences, and communities connect us to each other more than they separate us, especially as such borders are continually changing and mutating within the fast forward dynamics of globalization".

One of the complexity of ICC is in the situation where a foreign language is targeted for example English as a foreign language in a country as Iraq. It should be noted that developing ICC is ongoing demanding ongoing development of a range of dimensions of one's life including identity. Enriched cultural exchange and improved security are also among the benefits of developed ICC (Wilberschied, 2015).It is worth mentioning to differentiate between intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence.

I. Intercultural Competence vs. Intercultural Communicative Competence:

Intercultural communicative competence is theoretically based on intercultural competence (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). Byram (1997) considers the knowledge, values, and skills involved for a successful intercultural interaction as the components of IC. To Deardorff (2006), the learner needs to repeatedly work on both internal and external outcomes by which they can develop the required knowledge and attitudes. IC, in fact, appropriacy in communication and interaction in other cultures is essential for IC.

As Wilberschied (2015:70) mentions it, IC is, in effect, a foundation for ICC. ICC enables the individuals to improve their interactions in terms of complexity and variety due to the events other than living and interacting in another cultural context (e.g. self-study, reflection, learning a foreign language, analyzing a foreign or second culture, etc.). To Byram (1997), IC enables individuals "to interact *in their own language* [italics mine] with people from another country and culture".

One of the issues considered in the review of literature is the additional element of foreign language proficiency (FLP) which in this case the concept ICC is preferred (Wilberschied, 2015). Byram (1997) views ICC as the skills, attitudes and knowledge, which are related to IC and are required in using a foreign language. It is worth noting that attitudes regarding the foreign culture and language transform the individuals who are learning the foreign language. It means that knowledge of another culture is integrated with the linguistic knowledge the language learners gather. Such an issue enables the individuals to achieve awareness raising and reflection by which they are capable of recognizing the slight subtleties in both language and culture is different levels (Wilberschied, 2015).

II. Related Empirical Studies:

ICC refers to the ability by which individuals are capable of interacting effectively and appropriately in a non-native language with the individuals with different linguistic and cultural repertoires. ICC has composed of two different competencies: language and intercultural (Tran & Duong, 2018). Whereas, language competence includes linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse components, intercultural competence involves attitudes, knowledge, skills and awareness (Tran & Duong, 2018). The two components need to be integrated in order to enable the individuals to communicate successfully and appropriately and it is crucial in any multicultural society (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2001; Sinicropo et al., 2007). Such an ability is fundamental for EFL teachers whose main responsibility is to enable the language learners especially the Iraqi EFL learners to use an appropriate language in communicating either in speaking or in writing.

Many researchers emphasize that language and culture are, in effect, one entity (e.g. Agar, 1994; Kramsch, 2000). Kramsch (2000: 8) argues that culture is "the very core of language teaching" and should aid language proficiency. Having explored foreign language learners' perspectives and reasons for choosing a foreign language, Yang (2012) mentions several reasons: motivation, textbooks, technology, instruction, and assessment.

Chavez's (2005) study also revealed that the learners did not consider their definition of culture and what they might face in a foreign language class equally. The study showed that some dimensions of culture appeared to have been solely marked for fields of the subject.

According to the review of the related literature, we need to distinguish between culture with capital C and culture with small c, where the former refers to architecture, art, history, literature, and music, and the latter to everyday life, behavior, traditions, and the perspectives of the target people (Hall, 1990). An important argument is represented by The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (National Standards, 1999) in which culture is considered to have been composed of three P's, namely, products, practices, and perspectives. Products and practices are related to facts related to the target language and culture and perspectives mainly deals with interpretive dimension of any culture.

IC is a notion that has integrated the three P's and as Byram (1997) says it is the willingness for considering and respecting other beliefs and behaviors and analyzing those beliefs and behaviors according to the interlocutor's perspective. Liddicoat et al. (2003: 46) say "Intercultural language learning involves developing with learners and understanding of their own language(s) and culture(s) in relation to an additional language and culture" (p. 46). Liddicoat et al. (2003:46) consider intercultural language learning (ILL) as "a dialogue that allows for reaching a common ground for negotiation to take place, and where variable points of view are recognized, mediated, and accepted". However, foreign language learning and teaching demands IC, it is not clear how IC mediates the processes of teaching and learning (Ghanem, 2017).

Several studies investigated the developmental stages of IC and culture raising and reflection among the EFL learners (e.g. Abrams, 2002; Belz, 2005). Several studies also tried to explore teacher's practices in implementing IC in their classes (e.g. Byram & Kramsch, 2008; Kohler, 2015; Sercu, 2006). For instance, Doğançay-Aktuna (2005) studies how IC may help the teachers in their teaching practices. He provided some pedagogical implications to implement IC in teacher's training courses. In Doğançay-Aktuna's (2005) study, IC was not actually taught, so no pedagogical implications were gathered for the mediating role of IC in English-learning classes.

Cushner and Mahon's (2009) study, on the other hand, considers IC in teacher's education and tried to investigate the way classes are arranged wherein exists students with different cultural repertoires. When dealing with a foreign language, we need to examine teachers' intercultural competence.

Having investigated foreign language teachers in terms of IC, Sercu (2006) showed that teachers would like to incorporate IC in their classes. He also found that teachers' training courses according to the teachers' perspectives did not include teaching IC.

There are several studies in which inadequacy of the curriculums for inclusion of IC is discusses (e.g., Omaggio-Hadley, 2001). Related literature review illustrates that there is no practical approach for IC inclusion in

teacher training courses or in the real classrooms by the teachers. Kohler (2015) is another researcher who investigated how the teachers mediate IC in the classrooms. She revealed that there is contradiction and inconsistency between theoretical understandings and teaching practices of the observed teachers.

3. Method:

I. Design of the Study:

This study has adopted a descriptive design because it dealt with the teachers' understanding and perceptions. In this study, the researcher did not manipulate any variable or treatment. In order to provide more dependable results qualitative and quantitative data were also used in this study.

II. Participants:

The participants of the study were 75 Iraqi EFL teachers who were teaching English in the language institutes around Iraq. Background information on the participants were gathered using the questionnaire designed and developed using Google Forms following the purpose of the study. All participants were undergraduates who were teaching between 2 and 10 years. They were between 21 and 43 years old.

Table 1: Participants of the Study

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	43	57
	Male	32	43
Years of Experience	2-4	23	31
	5-7	39	52
	8-10	13	17
Age	21-29	33	44
	30-35	23	31
	36-43	19	25

As table 1 shows, 57% of the participants were female and 43% male. 52% of the participants had between 5 and 7 years of teaching experiences, 31% between 2 and 4 years of teaching experiences and the teaching experiences of 17% of the participants were between 8 and 10 years. Furthermore, 44% of the participants were between 21 and 29 years old, 31% between 30 and 35 and 25% more than 35 years old.

III. Data Collection Tools:

Two questionnaires were selected and adopted for the present study. The first one, in effect, gathered demographic information of the participants, i.e. age, gender, years of experience, etc. for the purpose of the present study, Chao's (2015) EFL Teachers' Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELT (ICC-ELT-EFL) inventory questionnaire which has composed of 24 items—EFL teachers' affective orientations to IC (3 items), EFL teachers' capabilities for IC (8 items), EFL teachers' perspectives on ELT (7 items), EFL teachers' employment of intercultural strategies in ELT (6 items). The questionnaire is, in effect, in liker-scale format (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= partly agree, 5= agree, 6= strongly agree).

IV. Data Analysis Procedures:

After gathering the data, different responses to different items are coded from 1 to 6 which were summed and categorized into four themes of affective orientations, capabilities, perspectives and strategies. Correlation coefficient was examined between each theme and the total score. The results were also analyzed qualitatively.

V. Research Questions:

The present study addressed the following questions:

1. How do Iraqi EFL teachers view the concepts of culture?
2. How do Iraqi EFL teachers view ICC in ELT contexts?
3. What implications does the study have for ELT?

4. Findings:

Having addressed the Iraqi teachers' perception and understanding of ICC, Chao's (2015) EFL Teachers' Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELT were administered among the teachers and the following results were achieved. The participants of the study were 75 Iraqi EFL teachers.

I. Descriptive Statistics:

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the participants in terms of gender. As it is illustrated, 75 Iraqi EFL teachers participated in the study. 34 participants were between 21 and 29, 25 between 30 and 35 and 16 between 36 and 43.

Table 2: Participants of the Study in terms of age

Age Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
21-29	34	84.8529	9.28711	1.59273
30-35	25	82.5600	7.35459	1.47092
36-43	16	84.0000	8.74071	2.18518
Total	75	83.9067	8.51576	.98332

As table 3 shows 43 of the participants were female teachers and 32 were male teachers

Table 3: Participants of the Study in terms of gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
=female	43	85.0000	8.89087	1.35585
=male	32	82.4375	7.88194	1.39334
Total	75	83.9067	8.51576	.98332

Finally, table 3 shows the participants in terms of years of teaching experiences. According to table 4, 24 teachers had teaching experiences less than 5 years, 39 between 5 and 7 years, and 12 teachers more than 7 years.

Table 4: Participants of the Study in terms of the years of teaching experiences

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
=2-4	24	82.0833	8.42314	1.71937
=5-7	39	84.9487	8.66617	1.38770
=8-10	12	84.1667	8.29932	2.39581
Total	75	83.9067	8.51576	.98332

Table 5 reveals the result related to the Iraqi EFL teachers' intercultural communicative competence. Table 5 shows that the highest score of the four themes of ICC among the Iraqi EFL teachers is related to their capabilities for IC and the least score to their affective orientations to IC.

Table 5: EFL Teachers' Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELT

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EFL teachers' affective orientations to IC	75	778.00	10.3733	3.31977
EFL teachers' capabilities for IC	75	2092.00	27.8933	4.56062
EFL teachers' perspectives on ELT	75	1837.00	24.4933	4.96031
EFL teachers' employment of intercultural strategies in ELT	75	1586.00	21.1467	3.87889

II. Inferential Statistics:

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between 75 Iraqi EFL teacher's total IC score and their four IC subcategories of affective orientations to IC, capabilities for IC, perspectives on ELT, and employment of intercultural strategies in ELT. There was a strong, positive correlation between the total score on IC and the three subcategories of capabilities for IC, perspectives on ELT, and employment of intercultural strategies in ELT. Except affective orientations to IC, other three subcategories were found to be positively and significantly correlated with the total IC at level 0.01.

Table 6: Correlation between total IC and its four subcategories

	Sum	Correlation Coefficient	Sum	Affective	Capabilities	Perspective	Strategies
Spearman's rho			1.000	.211	.561**	.573**	.501**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.069	.000	.000	.000
		N	75	75	75	75	75

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In a further step the correlation between total and subcategories of IC and three variables of age, gender and experience were explored. Table 7 shows that the subcategory affective orientations to IC and gender are significantly correlated. In other words, the female teachers had a better performance in terms of the subcategory of affective orientations to IC.

Table 7: Correlation between IC and three variables (age, gender & experience)

	Sum	Correlation Coefficient	Age	Gender	Experience
Spearman's rho			-	-.085	.087
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.091	.440	.456
		N	75	75	75
EFL teachers' affective orientations to IC		Correlation Coefficient	-	-.239*	.021
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.063	.589	.859
		N	75	75	75
EFL teachers' capabilities for IC		Correlation Coefficient	-	.002	-.081
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.096	.413	.987
		N	75	75	75
EFL teachers' perspectives on ELT		Correlation Coefficient	.039	.040	.135
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.740	.734	.247
		N	75	75	75
		Correlation Coefficient	-	-.124	.087
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.113		

	EFL teachers' employment of intercultural strategies in ELT	Sig. (2-tailed)	.335	.288	.460
		N	75	75	75

4. Discussion & Conclusions:

Intercultural competencies are crucial for any individual in general and for EFL teachers in particular which in this case is interpreted as intercultural communicative competence. Such an issue is also emphasized by Cogan and Pederson (2001), as a should. In fact, intercultural competent teachers are more tolerate of the observed differences among people such as different lifestyles. They also demonstrate a clear position against discrimination and prejudices (Spiecker & Steutel, 2001).

The intercultural competence of the Iraqi EFL teachers were found to be problematic especially with regards to the first subcategory, namely, their affective orientations to IC. The Iraqi EFL teachers recognized themselves to be highly capable for IC. As an illustration, they are highly capable for opening and ending conversation in an intercultural context or resolving conflicts or settling misunderstandings during intercultural communication. Meanwhile, the Iraqi EFL teachers were found to be incompetent in terms of affective orientation in encountering differing cultural backgrounds. The teachers seem to have difficulty being open-minded, social initiator, flexible, and emotionally stable. Such a result about the difficulties and problems of the EFL teachers are in line with Polat and Ogay Barka (2014).

The most important approach for resolving the observed problem is rooted in the teaching training courses offered which need to include the methods, techniques and strategies for intercultural inclusion in the language classrooms. To this end, teachers need to be more tolerant of other competing cultures such as American, French, or German cultures. They need to teach the learners that there are equally valuable and important lifestyles. Hence, we need to transform the traditional Iraqi EFL teachers to the prospective teachers who enable the learners not only in using English but also in intercultural capabilities (Lappan & Le, 2002). It should also be noted that the social structures, intercultural environment of Iraq and educational backgrounds of the teachers influence their intercultural communicative competencies.

As it was mentioned, gender was found to be significantly affective in the Iraqi EFL teachers' intercultural perception and understanding especially in terms of affective orientation of the teachers. For instance, female teachers were found to be more open-minded and initiate communication in the intercultural context more than their counterparts. We can conclude that gender is important in terms of emotional stability, which in the present study were higher among the female teachers. Such a result is contradictory with Polat and Ogay Bark's (2014) study in which male teachers outperformed the females in terms of emotional stability dimension.

Considering the related literature revealed that ICC in a foreign context is mainly addressed using literary reading texts (e.g. Hoff, 2016; Kramsch, 2011; Paesani, 2011). In fact, literature and literary texts are used for cultural development, which may also influence intercultural competence among teachers or learners (Hoff, 2016; Paesani, 2011). As an illustration, English short stories may provide an opportunity for meaning negotiation and virtual cultural enhancement among the learners who are learning English as a foreign language (Rezaei & Naghibian, 2018).

Hence, the results of the study may indicate that the Iraqi EFL teachers have imprecise and indefinite understanding of either culture or ICC, which demand revision on the teaching training courses presented for the pre-service teachers or TEFL students. In the teaching training courses, interactive and multimodal resources can be used in order to raise the participants' reflective and critical thinking to be equipped with the required techniques and strategies to be capable to enable the learners in using English appropriately and effectively. Such a suggestion is also in line with some researchers such as Kusumaningputri and Widodo (2018).

An equally important point is that culture is dynamic and situation-based (Kinger, 2009). To this end, networked technologies is recommended to be included in the language classrooms in order to provide at least a virtual learning context in which ICC is developed. Such an idea is in line with several studies in which the integration of technologies with traditional classes are emphasized (e.g. Lewis & O'Dowd, 2016). Telecollaboration is a concept observed in relation to ICC in which technologies facilitate the processes of ICC development (e.g. Kramsch & Thorne, 2002; Ware & Kramsch, 2005).

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