

The Impact of a Proposed Unit Based on the Intercultural Approach on Developing Secondary Students' Writing

By

MANAL LOTFY KABESH

National Center for Educational Research and Development

مجلة الدراسات التربوية والانسانية . كلية التربية . جامعة دمنهور
المجلد الرابع عشر - العدد الرابع - الجزء الثانى - لسنة 2022

The Impact of a Proposed Unit Based on the Intercultural Approach on Developing Secondary Students' Writing

MANAL LOTFY KABESH

Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the impact of implementing the Intercultural approach on developing descriptive writing skills of a group of 54 secondary stage students from one of Cairo language schools. The quasi-experimental design called the non-equivalent group design was employed in the present study where two intact classes were randomly selected to represent both groups. The experimental group received training through the proposed Intercultural approach activities for developing descriptive writing sub-skills, while the control group received traditional instruction. A pre/post writing test was given to the two groups before and after the treatment. The results revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the descriptive writing skills. This proved that the Intercultural approach, not only developed participants' writing skills, but also raised their cultural awareness.

Keywords: Intercultural Approach , Writing , Secondary stage

Introduction

Today's 21st century classroom is all about knowledge construction, probing students to independently and collaboratively learn through the process of exploration, investigation, research, pursuit and study. In other words, Intercultural approach is at the core of 21st century learning. Furthermore, Murdoch (2012) elaborates that in theory through focusing on the process rather than the outcome, students are able to understand the reasoning behind their learning, and therefore engage with their learning on a deeper level. It is obvious that in order to successfully function in a culturally diverse environment, our learners need to develop intercultural communicative competence (Alptekin,2002).In addition to grammatical competence, a culturally competent learner must possess sociolinguistic competence, pragmatic competence, sociocultural knowledge, and intercultural awareness.

Culture tends to be invisible to us in our daily life until we are exposed to contexts in which cultural factors such as beliefs, behavior and language are challenged, either by direct intercultural experiences (e.g. living in another country or cultural context) or by learning experiences that provide us with cultural awareness

The researcher performed a pilot study and interviewed 15 secondary English language teachers and supervisors. These interviews aimed at identifying the methods and techniques currently employed to develop writing skills among secondary students. In addition ,the researcher asked 27 secondary students to write three paragraphs describing an Egyptian festival or a folkloric event they have attended. The results of the pilot study revealed that writing is the least skill which secondary English language students show real desire to carry out, which may be due to the prevailing traditional methods of teaching writing in which teachers impose certain topics on their students to write without any discussion with the students before writing. Most teachers adopt the traditional product -oriented approach to teaching writing and therefore do not offer their students any feedback on their writing until they hand in their written pieces to be graded and are considered as a model for the exam. In addition, secondary students' written expressions in English revealed weakness in several writing sub-skills. They rarely presented a clear, logical and well – developed content.

Moreover, their written expressions lacked paragraph organization skills and coherence, and they seldom used any coherence markers. Furthermore, sometimes they did not stick to the main idea discussed in their written pieces, which resulted in their use of irrelevant material thinking that the more they write, the better marks their writing gets no matter whether what they write is to or off the main point discussed in the topic. Also, they lacked using a wide range of vocabulary and a rich writing style. This was mainly attributed to the teacher who used traditional methods and writing techniques for teaching English language writing in the classroom(Abdel-

Wahab,2020;Saudi,2018;Mohamed,2018;Idris,2017;Hosseini,2015;Ahmed,2011) In fact, Egyptian students often find some difficulties in mastering writing skills. Many complaints are being raised by teachers regarding students' low level in English language writing. Therefore, students need more opportunities to practice writing and use it communicatively such as brochures .This is particularly true of secondary stage schools.

Statement of the problem

The study problem can be stated in secondary stage student's poor mastery of some aspects of the necessary writing skill. This might be attributed to many factors such as the traditional methods of teaching writing still adopted by most EFL secondary stage teachers, the absence of motivating pre-writing activities that enable the learners to brainstorm and be engaged in the writing process.

Questions of the study

The current study attempted to provide answers to the following main question: "What is the impact of using the Intercultural approach on developing the writing skill among secondary students?"

The following sub – questions were derived from this main question:

- 1-What are the writing skills necessary for secondary English language students?
- 2-What are the theoretical bases and principles for Intercultural approach on developing the writing skills for secondary English language students?
- 3-What are the activities to be included in the proposed approach?
- 4-How far is the proposed approach effective in developing the writing skills among secondary English language students?

The study hypothesis:

The study hypotheses were as follows:

Hypothesis one: There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group exposed to the suggested intercultural activities and the control group receiving regular instruction on the post-test in oral presentation in favor of the experimental group.

Hypothesis two: There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-and post-tests writing sub-skills in favor of the post -test scores.

Significance of the study

The significance of the study lies in the fact that: 1- It is an attempt to overcome the current short – comings in teaching the writing skills for secondary language students. 2- It attempts to investigate the impact of using the Intercultural approach on developing the writing skills .

Delimitations of the study:**This study was confined to:**

- 1- Developing writing sub – skills necessary for secondary students; content and language.
- 2- Two intact preparatory classes in Maadi Narmer Language school in Cairo.
- 3- Some activities based on the Intercultural approach for both the Egyptian and Indian students.

Intercultural approach

Obviously, if EFL learners are to become successful intercultural communicators, it is essential to provide them with a thorough and systematic intercultural training, and not only of the culture of the main English speaking countries. EFL students will benefit by gaining solid knowledge of the different world cultures, and they must also develop the ability to compare their native culture to other cultures, to evaluate critically and interpret the results of such comparisons, and to apply this knowledge successfully in both verbal and non-verbal communication (Kramsch,1993,1).

Culture is a broad concept, it seems useful to make a distinction between the so-called big-C and small-c culture. The big-C part of a given culture is usually easy to study, as it constitutes factual knowledge about the fine arts such as literature, music, dance, painting, sculpture, theater, and film. Small-c culture, on the other hand, comprises a wide variety of aspects, many of which are inter-connected, including attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, perceptions, norms and values, social relationships, customs, celebrations, rituals, politeness conventions, patterns of interaction and discourse organization, the use of body language. Needless to say, language is also part of what we call culture, and it also reflects and interprets culture

Moreover, some of the small-c cultural aspects are directly observable and hence easy to grasp and learn (e.g. celebrations and rituals).However, many dimensions of a given culture are hidden from the eyes. Here belong the small-c cultural aspects that being impacted to us from birth , are deeply internalized and subconscious and are often noticed only in contrast with another culture. These non-tangible cultural aspects have an enormous influence on people's way of thinking and their linguistic/non-linguistic behavior (Chlopen,2008,11).

To implement the intercultural approach in an EFL classroom, the focus is the students' own culture. The aim of this stage is to help students look at their native culture at the conscious level and perceive it from an objective point of view. The students' own culture, which has always been taken for granted, should be seen from a totally new perspective, not as the point of reference for the perception and evaluation of other cultures, but as one of the many diverse world cultures, and part of the world's cultural heritage. The aim of the second stage is to widen the learner's

perspectives by getting them to know the cultures and to compare those cultures to their own. Students have to be actively involved in discovering intercultural information. They must also be given a chance to practice their intercultural knowledge. It is not enough for our students to assimilate new information they need to digest it, feel it, and experience it. Nowadays, technology allows students from different cultures to meet in virtual reality. As described by Ho (2000) , email exchanges between two classes from different countries are becoming a popular alternative to traditional in-person exchanges.

Additionally, it has a lot of other advantages. It develops students' language skills, problem-solving skills, creativity, imagination, research skills, and team work skills. There is much emphasis on individualization and the development of students' interests. The end-of-project presentation of students' work is usually a very important event for them, which contributes to sustained motivation during project work. Because the responsibility and choice are theirs, each project is a unique , personal, and memorable experience for students. Effective projects and learning activities in general, teach students where to look for information, how to infer cultural information encoded in a written or spoken text, how to make comparisons between different cultures, and how to make use of the new knowledge.

Intensive intercultural education seems to be a good way to sow the seeds of tolerance, acceptance, understanding, and respect. Learning about diverse cultures of developing intercultural awareness are important, students learn about each other's cultures through various activities. It is vital to raise cross-cultural awareness. Also, the teacher must begin with the students' own cultural background, the role of the teacher is to act as a facilitator. The intercultural approach is a move to self – directed learning with students taking increasing responsibility for their learning and the development of skills in self – reflection. Students' reflection means expressing experience, and thereby being able to move from new concepts into action. It is taking the time to look back at initial questions, the research path, and the conclusion made, in other words, inquiry cycle suggests important aspects of inquiry:

- Reflect on experiences; understand oneself as well as the world around. Ask meaningful questions; formulate one's own goals.
- Investigate through multiple sources and media – create, actively transfer the world – Discuss with others and collaborate.

Rationale for intercultural approach

The theoretical support for intercultural approach stems from widely accepted research on student learning. The approach has its roots in constructivism and is in line with research on motivation, intellectual development and approaches to learning. In exploring the theoretical underpinning that supports and strengthens using intercultural approach, constructivism is strongly highlighted. In constructivism, the

key tenet is that an individual learner must actively construct knowledge and skills. As an individual experiences something new, he or she filters this information through mental structures (schemata) that incorporate prior knowledge, beliefs and preconceptions to make sense of the information (**Prince & Felder, 2006**). Cognitive constructivism draws mainly on Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Piaget (1972) proposed that individuals must construct their own knowledge and that they build knowledge through experience. These experiences allow creation of schemas or mental modes and thus lead to learning. Thus, according to the constructivist theory of learning, effective teaching must offer experiences that:

- Build on what students already know so they can make connections to their existing knowledge structures.
- Encourage students to become active, self-directed learners.
- Provide authentic learning opportunities
- Involve students working together in small groups (i.e in collaborative or cooperative learning)

Writing skills and culture:

Writing is a complex developmental skill that requires the mastery of several sub-skills, (content, organization, mechanics and language). Engaging students in cultural activities combined with an intercultural approach, utilizing instructional technology promoted students 'motivation and enhanced awareness of their culture and identity, at the same time stimulated them to write effectively. Trivedi(1978) views that "Language is a vital constituent of culture ". Robinett (1980) agrees with the view that culture and language cannot be separated, the culture of a society is significantly reflected through the language. Only with a language are societies able to transmit their own cultures, beliefs and ways of life to others and shape their lives with different cultures to which they are exposed. Bassnett (1980, 13-14) states that language is 'the heart within the body of culture". Tomalin (1995) claims that cultural awareness and tolerance should be created in students because it enables students to express their cultural opinions. According to Tomalin and Stempleski (1996) culture is taught for two reasons: "to increase cultural awareness, and to promote cross-cultural interaction" the teaching of culture can raise awareness, appreciation and acceptance of other cultures. Culture learning is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process that engages the learner cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively. (Paige et al.,1999).

There is an inevitable relationship between language and culture. As Wardhaugh (2010 , 335) postulated, the nature of the relationship between language and culture has fascinated, and continues to fascinate people from a wide a variety of backgrounds, furthermore, many authors have pointed out that language and culture are closely related (Ardila – Rey, 2008; Brown, 2007. Damen, 1987; Kuang, 2007). For example, Ardila – Rey (2008) maintained that: "Language and culture are

inextricably linked with each other " . Likewise, Brown (2007 , 189) pointed out the interrelatedness of language and culture:

“Language is a part of a culture, and culture is a part of the language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture”

Also, Kuang (2007,75) stated that : Language is the carrier of culture and culture is the content of language” .

Shrum and Glisan (2005,136) maintained a traditional information acquisition approach to learning about cultures in which students learn information and facts about the target culture as provided by the teacher will not engage students in the actual construction of their own meanings about the target language. In contrast, a process – oriented constructivist approach that “provides learners with experiences they need to approach, appreciate and bond with people from other cultures.” is likely more suitable to the culture in such a way that they can engage in active construction of their own understandings and reflection about the target culture. This type of active construction should allow them to better develop intercultural competence.

Brown (2007) defined culture as a way of life as the context within which people exist, think, feel and relate others, as the ‘glue’ that binds groups of people together. Moreover, culture can also be defined as the ideas, customs, skills, arts, and tools that characterize a certain group of people in a given period of time (Swoden, 2007).

One way to actively engage students in understanding and reflecting upon the target culture is through the use of meaningful technology – enhanced tasks, such as web Quests, which Dodge (1995,2) defined as “an inquiry – based activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with from resources on the internet” .

Cavalcanti (1996) confirmed that the aim of teaching culture is to increase students’ awareness and to develop their curiosity towards the target culture and their own, to make comparisons among cultures. Being actively involved in the discovery process develops students’ ability for deeper thinking that promotes comparing and contrasting cultures.

“Culture” and identity” are pervasive but invisible until they are pointed out, so most people are unaware of their culture or identity until they are confronted with other cultures and identities. Culture, transmitted from one generation to another, defines the identity of a society and distinguishes it from other societies. Nostrand (1989 , 51) defines culture as the “ground of meaning”, the codes of behavior and

characteristics of a society. Turkan and Celik (2014) maintained that culture teaching is inevitably a motivating and engaging component of language teaching and learning. They discussed some commonly applied ways and strategies of integrating culture into language education, they noted that the potential activities and strategies are endless. Some of the strategies they suggested are the utilization of movies, lectures from the native speakers of the target language, audio-taped interviews with native speakers, video-taped observations of the target language community, and authentic readings and realia. They also, suggested that popular themes, such as celebrating festivals, would be a simple and effective way to start approaching and teaching culture in language classrooms. Paige, et al. (2013) pointed out in their research findings that the current materials, mainly textbooks, are shallow and superficial with respect to their treatment of culture. They are therefore inadequate to the task of teaching culture specifics in the deeper sense (values, norms, beliefs, etc.) and that there is a serious absence of impact studies which examine the effects of different types of materials and methods on culture learning.

Gholson and Stumpf, (2005) argued that to learn about culture will aid the new Canadian in attaining cultural awareness, and that it is imperative to develop strategies for teaching about culture. Using folklore is a critical methodology in the ESL classroom in such a strategy. Because folklore is an intrinsic part of everyday life, its use promotes and enables cross – cultural understandings and the understandings of North American cultures.

Dema and Moeller (2012) maintained an approach for teaching culture and language through the theoretical construct of the 3Ps (Products, practices, perspectives), combined with an inquiry – based teaching approach utilizing instructional technology, this approach promotes students' motivation and engagement that can help overcome past issues of stereotyping and lack of intercultural awareness. They also proved that technology – based activities together with an inquiry learning approach allow students to interact directly and effectively with the second language and its culture without time and place restrictions and to explore and construct a deeper understanding of L2 and L1 cultural knowledge. Moreover, Romadloni & Mantosial (2016) observed the influence of intercultural approach to students' motivation during foreign language learning process and proved its effectiveness.

Kramersch (1993) highlighted that the paradigm shift from passive receivers of information to active constructors of knowledge places the learners in the role of inquirers who investigate and discover their own, as well as a second culture. The students are engaged in meaningful learning that fosters higher – order thinking to assist students in uncovering and exploring the hidden meanings and significances embedded in L2 culture. Peterson and Coltrane (2003) suggested some instructional strategies to teach language and culture that may seem helpful for teachers looking for some practical ways to integrate culture in their language lessons –using authentic materials such as films, television shows, websites, photographs, magazines, travel

brochures, and other printed materials to engage the students in discussion of cultural issues. Presenting objects such as jewelry or tools that originate from the target culture to serve as a foundation from which that teachers can discuss other cultural, historical, and linguistic factors, or the students can be asked to do further research to find more information about the items presented.

Neff and Rucynski (2013) devised an action research project for the first – year university English classes in Japan. Their goal was to improve the English speaking abilities of their students while making them more aware of the importance of intercultural proficiency and stimulating their interest in foreign cultures. They designed their English courses to include the PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) sequence of activities. Students enjoyed their activities and it was noted their stimulation of interest in foreign cultures, both the one they presented as well as those covered in other groups' presentations.

Aldosari's (2013) study is based on the assumption that culture learning is a developmental process that requires development of both culture – specific knowledge and culture – general skills. It was revealed that the students' background heritage was a significant factor that affected their performance in cross – cultural competence and their perceptions of the relationship between language and culture.

A great number of researchers (Thu, 2010, Jiang, 2009, Vernier, 2008 ;Abbaspour et al., 2012; Abloghasem, 2010, Derme et al., 2011) pointed out that culture is an indispensable part of any language class since language learning also involves foreign culture learning, in order to communicate with target language speakers effectively and efficiently. However, very few researches tackled using culture as a topic to develop the writing skills through implementing the Intercultural approach. Culture in the current study was used as a topic(the Egyptian and Indian cultures and folklore) to enhance developing the writing skill. Students used the intercultural approach to investigate and collect information about the Egyptian culture and benefit from the authentic, collaborative, and contextualized learning tasks that resulted in a well – organized, rich piece of writing about the Egyptian culture. The integration of content, pedagogy, and instructional technology when constructing knowledge promotes a rich and engaging learning environment for foreign language learners. As a result of the shift from teaching to learning, the acquisition of culture, much like that of language, should be changing from teacher teaching about culture to students discovering culture first hand through intercultural tasks and activities, placing the learner at the center of the learning process. Such an approach changes the nature of a classroom from a place where language is taught, to one where opportunities for learning of various kinds are provided through the interaction that takes place between and among the participants. It is important that teachers recognize that students need to have sufficient knowledge and

understanding of their own culture that will allow them to create a bridge from their culture to L2 culture.

Method

Participants

A group of fifty four (54) secondary stage students were selected from one of Cairo Language schools, namely Maadi Narmer Language school, in the school year 2020 – 2021 (27 students in the experimental group and 27 students in the control group).

Research Design

The quasi – experimental design called the non – equivalent group design was employed in the present study. This design is identical to the pretest – posttest control group/ experimental group design in all aspects except that intact groups rather than randomly assigned ones are used, creating a control problem in terms of selection bias. This makes the use of a pre – test necessary for this particular design. In this study , two intact classes were randomly selected to represent the experimental and the control group. The experimental group received training throughout the proposed Intercultural approach for developing writing skills.

On the other hand, students in the control group received regular instruction. A pre / post writing test was given to the two groups before and after the treatment. The independent variable was the suggested activities based the Intercultural approach, and the dependent variables were the pre-post test , and the writing sub – skills.

Measures:

The present study made use of two main tools:

- A writing skills checklist
- A pre – post writing test.

a- The writing skills checklist

The checklist was meant to determine the most important writing sub – skills necessary for this stage specified for secondary stage students. It was designed in light of the objectives included in the Ministry of Education document and the previous literature and related studies concerned with developing writing skills at this stage for ESL/EFL students, the checklist, including 2 writing skills ,was submitted to a panel of jury in the field of EFL methods of teaching to determine the degree of importance of each skill, appropriateness of skills suggested as well as the relationship of each skill to the secondary stage.

The writing - skills selected by the study according to their high percentages were as follows:

-Content:

- The writing is generally focused on the topic and purpose.
- Ideas are clearly stated and supporting details.
- Using some transitional words and starting to use (topic sentence/body/conclusion).

-Language:

-Using rich vocabulary and style, correct spelling and punctuation.

-Using correct subject-verb agreement and grammar.

b- The writing test

Objectives of the test

A pre/post writing test was constructed and administered by the researcher. It was used prior to the program implementation to make sure that students of both groups were at the same writing level before starting the experiment, and hence, the progress achieved by the experimental group would be attributed to the suggested activities based on the intercultural approach they had been exposed to. As a post – test, it was used to investigate the effectiveness of the proposed intercultural activities, in developing the writing skills.

Description of the test

The pre-post test consisted of a task asking the students to write a touristic brochure about Egypt.

The writing task included in the test was unseen by the students, because a writing test is a performance test and it aimed at assessing students' writing ability .

Test validity and reliability

To measure the test content validity, the first version of the test was given to 7 EFL supervisors and teachers to evaluate it in terms of content appropriateness, and suitability of the test to the students' level.

In order to establish the test reliability, the test – retest method was employed with an interval of two weeks on a sample of 27 secondary students of the pilot study. The Pearson's correlation coefficients was used to calculate the reliability coefficient which was 0.92, and which was relatively high.

Piloting the test

The test was piloted on a group of 10 students to determine item difficulty, the suitable time for writing test, and the suitability of the task selected to extract the expected skills. Results revealed that the majority of students obtained low scores. Moreover, students reported that the writing test was difficult. This may be due to their lack of writing skills and the fact that they were accustomed to memorizing certain statements in a given topic. In addition , it was estimated that a period of 45 minutes would provide ample time to complete the test. This time was estimated in the following way:

Time taken by the fastest student + time of the slowest student

$$\underline{30 + 60} = 45 \text{ minutes}$$

The pre-test was administered to both groups in normal classroom conditions three days prior to the experiment. The post – test was administered four days after the experiment ended.

Inter-rater Reliability

To ensure reliability of scoring, analytical scoring was utilized to evaluate students' writing during the pre – post test, which was done by three raters based on the checklist of the reading comprehension skills. It was assessed through Pearson's correlation coefficients, the following table shows the correlation coefficients among individual raters of the pre-post test.

Summary of the correlation coefficients among individual raters

Table (2)

Test	Raters		
Pre	1.11	1.111	11.111
	0.851	0.848	0.856
Post	0.927	0.869	0.925

Through comparing the correlation coefficients extracted from the statistical table at 0.01 level, it was found that the estimated correlation coefficients were statistically significant at 0.01 level. This shows reliability of scoring. Hence, scores were pooled to get an average score for each reading comprehension skill.

Suggested activities based on Intercultural approach

Learning objectives

Students were expected to master the identified writing sub – skills (content and language) by the end of the treatment.

Duration and description of the activities

The activities based on the intercultural approach were taught in six weeks. The first classroom period was an introductory one aiming at introducing students to the aims of the tasks and the intercultural approach activities they were going to do.

The Title of the project : Connecting Bridges Between Countries: Connecting People and Cultures. The Indian school B.D.M. International and the Maadi Narmar School participated in the project. The project is a collaborative effort by the students of Egypt and India to develop their writing skills and to nurture the intercultural learning of the students of both countries.

The researcher used zoom meetings for students' presentations on weekly basis. The presentations were artistic and creative. A follow-up, in class discussion was necessary, connecting on the content of the end-product of slide-shows, videos, songs, pictures of food and handcrafts. Project work lends itself very well to the development of learners' intercultural knowledge because it is typically content-oriented.

The main objective of the project: To enable the students to acquire knowledge about the rich cultural heritage of both countries of Egypt and India and develop their writing skills. The sessions will provide the students with information and

knowledge about the culture and heritage of both countries. They would also be enriched with the geographical and historical facts related to both the countries. The project will be divided to four zoom sessions, and four preparation sessions, each session will deal with one topic: (Festivals , Food and drinks, National costumes and songs and folkloric dancing, and finally the wonderful landmarks).Each session will be divided between the two groups from the two countries through zoom meetings(45 minutes) for each group. Students will be discussing the previous topics using various tools to collect information about the topics using digital tools, such as videos, films, and end with a power point and oral presentation including a Touristic brochure/poster.

The activities' validity

Sample activities were given to EFL specialists who approved them, and suggested some modifications. The panel of jury approved the activities as valid and suggested allocating more time to teaching the activities and giving students more practice on the writing sub – skills specified for the secondary students especially in the brochure writing.

Piloting the activities

A small pilot study was carried out, 22 students were randomly selected from the primary stage and were asked to perform four activities, the pilot study aimed at determining the time taken by the students to do the tasks and to what extent they had fun and enjoyed the activities, the results revealed that students enjoyed the activities and were enthusiastic about the intercultural approach especially gathering information about authentic and folkloric food and costumes , and videos about Egyptian touristic landmarks, folkloric dances and songs.

Results

Results of the study are presented in terms of the study hypotheses.

Hypothesis one:

There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group exposed to the suggested Intercultural approach activities and the control group receiving regular instruction on the post-test in reading comprehension in favor of the experimental group.

T-tests for independent samples were conducted in order to compare the post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups in writing sub-skills (content and , language). The results of the t-test proved to be statistically consistent with the above stated hypothesis. Therefore, the first hypothesis was supported. Table (2) shows this statistical significance.

To investigate the differences between both the experimental and control groups with respect to each determined content sub-skill, t-tests for independent samples were used and they revealed statistically significant differences at 0.05 level.

Table (3):T-test results of the post-test of both the control and experimental groups in each content sub-skill

Content	Experimental group		Control group		t-value	Level of sig.	Effect size
	means	SD	means	SD			
Presenting a clear content	2.78	.506	1.19	.396	12.875	Sig. at 0.05	3.79
Sticking to the main idea	2.70	.542	1.11	.320	13.150	Sig. at 0.05	3.82
Total	5.48	.893	2.30	.465	16.434	Sig. at 0.05	4.28

The above table shows that there were statistically significant differences at 0.05 level between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the post-test in each content sub-skill in favor of the experimental group, since the estimated t-values were (12.875) for presenting a clear, logical and well-developed content and (13.150) for sticking to the main idea and avoiding the use of irrelevant material. Moreover, the effect size values (3.79) and (3.82) for the first and second content sub-skills respectively reveal that the proposed program had a large effect on experimental group students' content sub-skills on the post-test as compared to those of the control group receiving regular instruction.

In addition, to examine the differences between the control and experimental group with respect to each determined language sub-skill, t-tests for independent samples were conducted and they revealed statistically significant differences at 0.05 level. This is indicated in the following table.

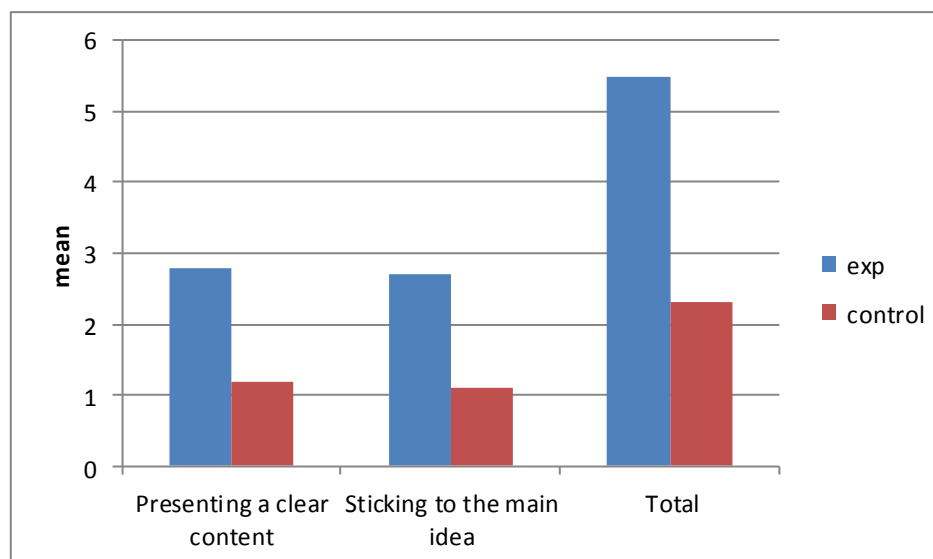
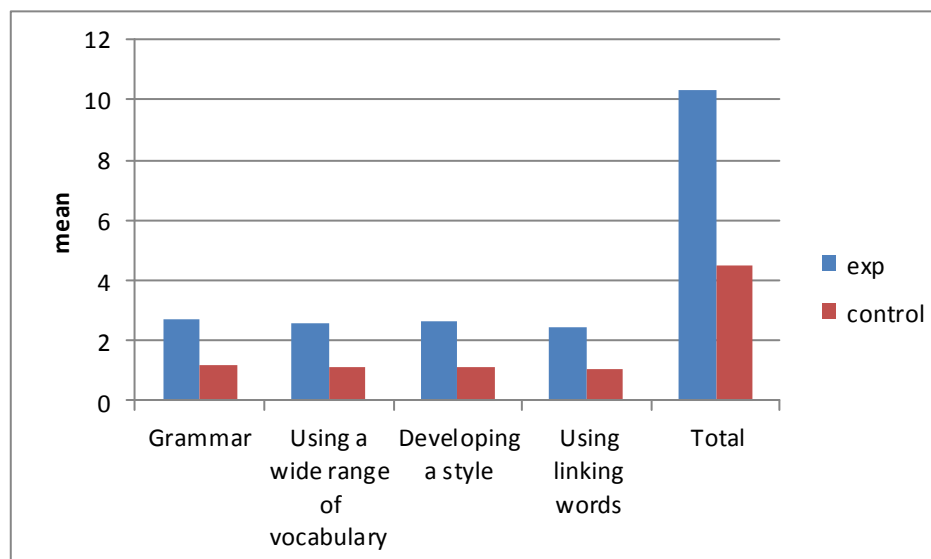


Table (4): T-test results of the post-test of both the control and experimental groups in each language sub-skill

Language	Experimental group		Control group		t-value	Level of sig.	Effect size
	means	SD	means	SD			
Grammar	2.70	.609	1.19	.396	10.869	Sig. at 0.05	3.51
Using a wide range of vocabulary	2.59	.747	1.11	.320	9.469	Sig. at 0.05	3.31
Developing a style	2.63	.688	1.11	.320	10.401	Sig. at 0.05	3.44
Using linking words	2.41	.844	1.07	.267	7.827	Sig. at 0.05	3.09
Total	10.33	2.370	4.48	.935	11.936	Sig. at 0.05	3.66

The above table shows that the estimated t-values were (10.869), (9.469), (10.401) and (7.827) for grammar, vocabulary, using figurative language and using linking words skills respectively were statistically significant at 0.05 level in favor of the experimental group. Moreover, the estimated effect size values (3.51), (3.31), (3.44) and (3.09) shown in the above table reveal that the proposed activities had a large effect on experimental group students' third and fourth language sub-skills (i.e. using figurative language, and using linking words), whereas it had a very large effect on grammar and vocabulary sub-skills as compared to those of the control group.



Hypothesis two:

There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the writing pre-and post-tests in writing sub-skills in favor of the post-test scores.

In order to verify the validity of this hypothesis, t-tests for paired samples were used. The t-test results proved that there were statistically significant differences between the pre-posttests mean scores of the experimental group in writing sub-skills (content and language). In other words, the results of the t-tests proved to be statistically consistent with the above stated hypothesis. Therefore, the second hypothesis was accepted.

To investigate the differences between the experimental group students' content sub-skills before and after being exposed to the program, t-tests for paired samples were used for each determined content sub-skill. The following table shows the existence of statistically significant differences at 0.05 level in this respect.

Table (5):T-test results comparing the pre-test vs. post-test means for the experimental group in each content sub-skill.

Content	Administ ration	N	M	S.D	Paired differences		D.F	't' value	Level of sig.	Effect size
					M	S				
Presenting a clear content	post	27	2.78	.506	1.71	.609	26	14.546	Sig. at 0.05	4.02
	pre	27	1.07	.267						
Sticking to the main idea	post	27	2.70	.542	1.44	.751	26	9.993	Sig. at 0.05	3.39
	pre	27	1.26	.447						
Total	post	27	5.48	.893	3.15	.989	26	16.548	Sig. at 0.05	4.29
	pre	27	2.33	.480						

The above table indicates that there were statistically significant differences at 0.05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-post tests in favor of the post-test in both content sub-skills, since the estimated t-values were (14.546) for the first content sub-skill and (9.993) for the second content sub-skill. Moreover, the calculated effect size values (4.02) and (3.39) for the first and second content sub-skills respectively reveal that the proposed activities had a large effect on experimental group students' both content sub-skills on the post-test as compared to the pre-test.

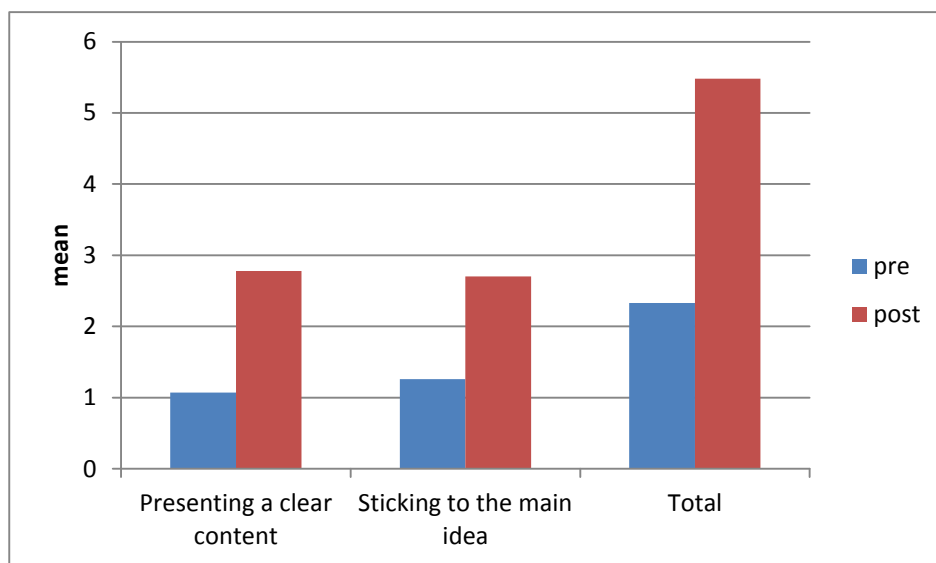
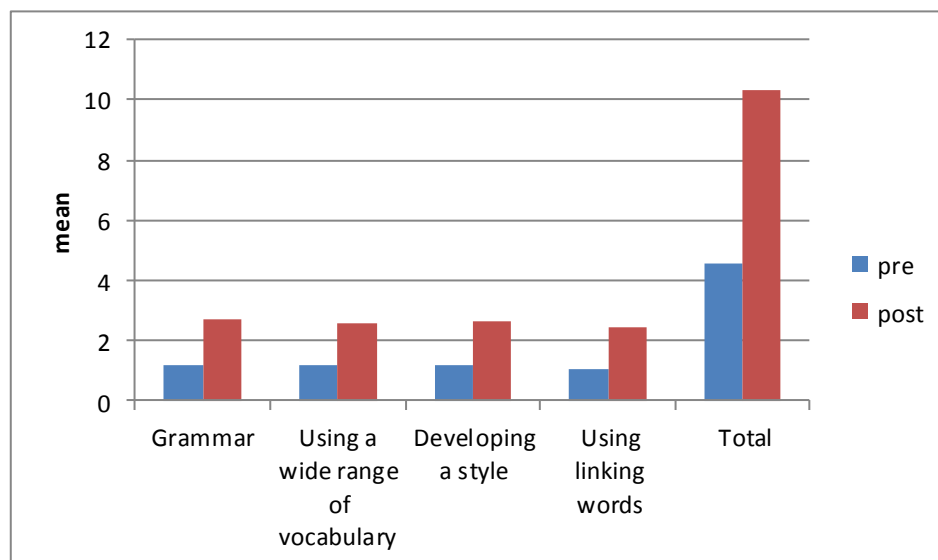


Table (6): T-test results comparing the pre-test vs. post-test means for the experimental group in each language sub-skill.

Language	Administration	N	M	S.D	Paired differences		D.F	't' Value	Level of sig.	Effect size
					M	S				
Grammar	post	27	2.70	.609	1.55	.698	26	11.580	Sig. at 0.05	3.61
	pre	27	1.15	.362						
Using a wide range of vocabulary	post	27	2.59	.747	1.40	.797	26	9.175	Sig. at 0.05	3.27
	pre	27	1.19	.396						
Developing a style	post	27	2.63	.688	1.44	.801	26	9.374	Sig. at 0.05	3.30
	pre	27	1.19	.396						
Using linking words	post	27	2.41	.844	1.37	.839	26	8.488	Sig. at 0.05	3.18
	pre	27	1.04	.192						
Total	post	27	10.33	2.370	5.77	2.207	26	13.602	Sig. at 0.05	3.89
	pre	27	4.56	.698						

The above table indicates that there were statistically significant differences at 0.05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-post tests in favor of the post-test in both content sub-skills, since the estimated t-values were (11.580) for the first language sub-skill and (9.175) for the second content sub-skill, and (9.374) for the third sub-skill and (8.488) for the last one. Moreover, the calculated effect size values (3.61), (3.27), (3.30) and (3.18) for the first, second, third and fourth language sub-skills respectively reveal that the proposed activities had a large effect on experimental group students' both language sub-skills on the post-test as compared to the pre-test.



Discussion

The Egyptian culture was chosen for the Egyptian students to write the touristic brochure as the final product and the Indian culture for the Indian school. The Egyptian students in the experimental group displayed presentations through zoom meetings and ended with a descriptive touristic brochure about the Egyptian folkloric songs and dances, food, drinks and costumes, landmarks and customs and habits. Moreover, the Egyptian and Indian students showed respect and appreciation of both cultures. They were highly motivated and curious about the intercultural activities they have practiced, as they gained knowledge, values, research skills and most importantly they developed their writing sub-skills. Students successfully integrated culture in their language lessons –using authentic materials such as films, television shows, websites, photographs, magazines, travel brochures, and other printed materials and were engaged in an interactive way in discussions of cultural issues. Presenting objects such as jewelry, costumes, food and drinks or tools that originate from the target culture.

As far as writing sub – skills (content and language) are concerned, students had noticeably achieved progress in all identified sub – skills. Participants managed to write and describe the touristic brochure in an expressive, elaborated, powerful vocabulary and figurative style.

In other words, participants' improvement was demonstrated in their word choice usages. Participants could retrieve words they learned through the activities such as (synonyms and order of adjectives).

Furthermore, results revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in both content and language writing sub – skills. For example ,

participants used transitional words to empower their writing, which made their writing more organized and coherent.

Implementing an inquiry – based approach in learning and teaching helped students not only to obtain valuable knowledge, but also they developed a range of transferable skills around cognition, analysis and investigation. Moreover, with a focus on collaborative group work, students were given the opportunity to develop essential soft skills such as communication and team building – all of which helped to provide complete and holistic learning experiences.

It is noteworthy that because the Intercultural approach is a pedagogical approach that invites students to explore academic content by posing, investigating and answering questions and reflect on their experiences. Hence, the role of the teacher in the Intercultural approach classroom is quite different from that of a teacher in a conventional classroom.

Remarkably, using the Intercultural approach in EFL classes enhanced students' engagement and fostered an effective and meaningful learning experiences and facilitated learning transfer students enjoyed participating in the Intercultural activities, investigated, created, discussed and reflected on this rich culture by writing about the wonderful fascinating Egyptian and Indian culture.

Integrating culture with writing through the Intercultural approach not only increased the students' cultural awareness, but also promoted cross – cultural interaction, appreciation and acceptance of other cultures. Teachers should practice empathy as they relate to their students in cultural matters: behavior patterns, and openness to new ways of thinking – when cultural differences emerge teachers should help their students to appreciate and celebrate diversity

Integrating content, pedagogy, and instructional technology when constructing knowledge promoted a rich and engaging learning environment for foreign language learners. Hence, Intercultural teaching approach is a viable way to incorporate the study of culture into foreign language courses. This is consistent with Yi-Lee's (2004) .Fattahi and Haghverdi's(2014) results.

Moreover, technology – based activities together with Intercultural approach allowed students to interact effectively and directly with the second language and the new culture.

It is noteworthy to remark that learning happens as a function of the activity, context and culture in which it occurs, rather than through abstract and de-contextualized presentations. Students thus learn through their participation in a community of practice through utilizing a wide range of available sources, such as readings, videos and the media , authentic materials from the target culture, and personal experiences , if applicable . Students' interest in the target culture should be cultivated and maintained at a level in which the students are actively engaged in the

material, merely because intercultural competence will make them more aware of their own culture, as well as the target culture, these results are consistent with the studies of (Paige (2013);Dema and Moeller(2012);Peterson and Coltrane (2003),and Aldosari (2013).

Teachers need to build up enrichment activities to make culture learning a consistent component of their language classes, because no textbook perfectly integrates language and culture education by integrating digital media together with intercultural learning into instruction to create a rich and meaningful environment in which students interact with authentic data and build their own understanding of a foreign culture's products, practices, and perspectives.

Suggestion for further studies:

- 1- Further research is necessary to explore the effectiveness of other treatments based on Intercultural approach on developing other language skills.
- 2- More studies are needed with different student populations to investigate the effectiveness of similar treatments in developing writing.
- 3- More studies are needed to compare the relative efficacy of using Intercultural approach to address different reading and writing genres (narrative, descriptive, expository).
- 4- More studies are needed to investigate the effectiveness of applying similar Intercultural approach activities with different cultures over a longer period of time on students' skills especially on vocabulary, writing and speaking sub – skills.

References

- Abbaspour, E. ,Rajae,M.andZare, J. (2012). How to Integrate Culture in Second Language Education.Journal of Education and Practice.3(10).
- Abdel-Wahhab, A. (2020). The Effectiveness of Using the Process Genre Approach on Developing Reflective Writing Skills and Genre Awareness of EFL Faculty of Specific Education Sophomore Students .Faculty of Specific Education - Zagazig University, Faculty of Specific Education, research published in the educational magazine, Faculty of Education in Sohag(73).
- Abolghasem,S.F. (2010). Culture Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Teaching General English. Paper presented at EABR and ELTC conference. Dublin. Ireland (pp.371-376).
- Agudelo,J.(2007).An Intercultural Approach for Language Teaching Developing Critical Cultural Awareness.Ikala, revista delenguajey cultura,12918).2007,185-217.
- Ahmed, R.(2011) . The Effect of Using Journal Writing on Developing Some Creative Writing Skills for the Secondary Stage Students . Master's degree in Curricula and Methods of Teaching English Language Cairo University, Institute of Educational Studies and Research.
- Aldosari , H. (2013). Integrating Culture learning into foreign language education.. 11 Muharram 1435 Ah.Nov.2013.
- Alptekin,C.(2002).Towards Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELT. *ELT Journal* 56(1).57-64.
- Altstaedter , L. & Jones , B. (2009). Motivating Students' Foreign Language and Culture Acquisition Through Web-based Inquiry.*Foreign Language Annals*, 42,(4).
- Ardila-Rey,A.(2008). Language, Culture ,Policy, and Standards in teacher preparation: Lessons from research and model practices addressing the needs of CLD children and their teachers.In M.E.
- Brown , H.D. (2007). Teaching by Principles : An interactive approach to language pedagogy . New York , NY: Pearson Education.
- Bruce, B. C. & Bishop, A. P. (2002).Using the web to support inquiry-based literacy development.*Journal of Aolescent and Adult Literacy*, 45 (8), 706-714.
- Chlopek,z.(2008). The Intercultural Approach to EFL Teaching and Learning. *English Teaching Forum*.2008(4).
- Damen , L. (1987) . Culture Learning : The fifth dimension in the language classroom . Reading , MA : Addison- Wesley .

- Dema, O. and Moeller, A., (2012). Teaching Culture in the 21st century language classroom. Digital commons.University of Nebraska-Lincoln Faculty Publications: Department of Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education.(8)
- Deneme, S.,et.al(2011). Teaching A Foreign Language and Foreign Culture to Young Learners .*International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology*.
- Dodge,B. (2008). Some thoughts about Web-Quests.<http://webQuest.sdsu.edu/about-webQuest.html>.
- Gholson, R.&Stumpf, C. (2005). Folklore, Literature, Ethnography, and Second-language acquisition: Teaching Culture in the ESL classroom. *TESL Canada Journal* .22(2)Spring 2005.
- Gillon , K. ,&Stotter, J. (2011). Inquiry Learning with senior secondary students : Yes it can be done. Access, 25 (3), 14-19.
- Ho,C.M.L. (2000). Developing Intercultural Awareness and Writing Skills through Email Exchange. *The Internet TESL Journal* 6(12).
- Hosseini, H. (2015) .Investigating the Effectiveness of a Project-Based Training Program on Developing EFL students' Writing Skills and Positive Thinking, published research - Ain Shams University, College of Girls, Department of Curricula and Teaching Methods.
- Idris, A. (2017)The Effectiveness of webbing in Developing EFL Writing skills and Reflective Thinking among secondary school Students.Menoufia Faculty of Education,department of Curricula and teaching methods.
- Jiang ,Y. (2009). On the Integration of Culture into EFL Teaching.www.ccsenet.org/journal.html.
- Kramersch, C. (1998) . Language and Culture .Oxford , England : Oxford University Press.
- Kramersch,C. (1993). Context and Culture in Language teaching.Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Kramersch,C. (1995). The Cultural Component of Language Teaching. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*.8 (12),83-92.
- Kuang, J.F.(2007). Developing Students' cultural awareness through foreign language teaching.*Sino_US English Teaching* , 4 (12 0), 74-81.
- Mohamed, S. (2018), Using Authentic Materials for Developing Vocabulary Acquisition among EFL Students , published research, *Journal of the Faculty of Education*, Banha University, (29)
- Neff, P. and Rucynski, J. (2013).Tasks for Integrating Language and Culture Teaching.*English Teaching Forum*. (2).
- Paige, R.et al. (1999). Culture learning in language education : A review of the literature. In R. Paige , D. Lang, & Y. Yershova (Eds.), Culture as the core : Integrating culture into the language curriculum (pp.47-114). Minneapolis, MN : The Center for Advanced Research on Language acquisition . University of Minnesota.

- Paige,R.,etal.,(2013). Culture Learning in Language Education : A Review of the Literature.
- Peterson , E. .and Coltrane , B. (2003). Culture in Second language teaching .*ERIC Clearing house on Language and Linguistics*.http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0309_peterson.html.
- Piaget, J. (1971). *The Psychology of the Child*. New York: Basic Books.
- Prince, M. J. and Felder,R. (2006). Inductive teaching and learning methods. Definitions, comparisons , and research bases.*Journal of Engineering Education*.Vol. 95.123-138.
- Robinett, B.W. (1980). *Teaching English to Speakers of other languages : Substance and technique*. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press. (*JSTOR*).
- Romadloni,A.& Mantasial,R.(2016).Intercultural approach in Foreign Language Learning to Improve Students' Motivation.Assian EFL Journal,(98)
- Saudi, A. (2017) A Strategy Based on Generative Learning for The Development of Creative Writing Skills and Self-Organization to Its Learning Among Secondary School Students. *Studies in Curricula and Teaching Methods*, Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University, Cairo, pp. 91-127
- Shrum, J., &Glison,(2005). *Teacher's handbook : Contextualized language instruction* (3rd ed.) Boston : Thompson Heinle.
- Spronken-Smith, R., Anglo, T.,Matthew, H. Osteen, B. & Robertson , J. (2007). How effective is inquiry- based learning in linking teaching and research ? Paper prepared for *An international Colloquium on International Policies and practices for Academic Enquiry*.
- Swoden , C . (2007) . Culture and the good teachers in the English language classroom .*ELT Journal* , 61 (4) , 304-310.
- Thu, T, H. (2010) *Teaching Culture in the EFL / ESL Classroom* Paper presented at The Los Angeles Regional California TESOL.
- Tomalin, B. (1995). *Cultural Awareness : Some ideas for creating it*. In *Perspectives*. The British Council, Prague,(6) 24-29.
- Trivedi, H.C.(1978). Culture in Language Learning.ELT. 32 (2), 92-97.
- Turkan, S. and Celik, S. (2014). Integrating Culture into EFL Texts and Classrooms : Suggested lesson plans . Novitas- Royal, 1 (1) , pp. 18-33.
- Wardhaugh , R. (2010) . *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* .Malden , MA : Wiley _ Blackwell .

