University of Zawia

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The Role of Students' Awareness of the Target Language's culture in Developing their Communicative Competence

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Applied Linguistics

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Dedication

This research project is dedicated to all my affectionate family for making me believe that anything was possible.

Acknowledgement

My foremost thanks go to Almighty Allah for granting me the strength and health to complete my studying and carrying out this research. I would like to thank all those who supported me and for their encouragements that have made this research possible.

Firstly, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor ***Dr. Ramadan Mohamed*** for his encouragement and guidance throughout the preparation of this research. I will forever remain indebted to him; you have been a constant source of motivation throughout this research. I could not have asked for a better supervisor.

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Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my university professors, colleagues and friends for their contributions and comments as well as motivational encouragement from the initial stage until the completion of this research.

Declaration

I hereby clarify that all materials in this thesis are own original work. And not have been included or identified in any other work except the identified work in the literature review.

Mohammed Mustafa

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Abstract

This thesis examined the relationship between students' awareness of the target language's culture and their communicative competence at various Libyan universities. Furthermore, it stressed the importance of using language in context and it aimed at confirming that culture can help students enhance their performance which leads them to better master the language.

The study utilized a quantitative methodology with a questionnaire distributed to 52 undergraduate students. Results showed a positive correlation between cultural awareness and communicative competence. The findings suggested the need to consider cultural aspects in language instruction to promote intercultural understanding. The study highlighted the interdependence of language and culture, and the significance of cultural context in language learning. The study provided some pedagogical implications for language teachers to enhance students' communicative competence, emphasizing the importance of incorporating cultural knowledge and activities into language learning.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

x

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 General Background

When it comes to the realm of teaching and learning, as Gao (2006: 59) presents it, the interdependence of language learning and cultural learning is so evident that one can conclude that language learning is cultural learning and consequently, language teaching is cultural teaching.

Once learners have sufficient awareness of the major traits of the target culture, they will understand that there are no superior or inferior people, but that there are variations among people of various cultures. Having sufficient knowledge of the target language's culture can generate a smooth and purposeful interaction among individuals. Gleason (1961) indicated that languages are not only the products of cultures, but also the symbols of cultures. The growth of a language inevitably affects its associated culture, and cultural patterns of cognition and custom are often explicitly coded in language.

Culture as a social phenomenon, is concerned with how people use language and communicate in specific situations. They are more likely to acquire many languages in an attempt to reach their communicative needs in their academic and professional activities. Learning a second or foreign language demands not only the practice of linguistic forms but also familiarity with the culture of the target language to interpret intercultural communication. Therefore, in the learning of English as a Second or Foreign Language (Henceforth ESL/EFL), it is necessary to provide learners with cultural contexts to obtain proficiency in intercultural communication in the target language which in turn will develop their communicative competence.

Communication competence is an essential component of foreign language learning and teaching. This shows the significance of it. Communicative competence has been defined by Hymes (1972) as the ability to use language in culturally appropriate ways to achieve communicative goals in specific situations.

As previously mentioned, culture is an essential component of language learning. Language and culture are intertwined, and their interrelationship is fundamental to language learning, as language is a culturally conditioned phenomenon. Considering the importance of

culture in language learning and teaching this study investigates the role of culture in developing EFL students' communicative competence at various Libyan universities.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

Culture as a social custom covers a wide spectrum of things related to human life and society. It is represented by ways, styles, and customs of daily life, and by various commodities such as houses, food, and clothes involved in everyday life. Culture may also refer to whatever a person must know in order to function in a particular society.

According to Wei (2005:56), language has a dual character: both as a means of communication and a carrier of culture. Language without culture is unthinkable, so is human culture without language. A particular language is a mirror of a particular culture.

As a researcher I have noticed that, learners at various Libyan Universities confront some problems communicating language in context. A number of language instructed programs focus on the development of skills, i.e. (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) it is supposed that less attention is paid toward introducing cultural context in any of the language learning programs. However, the understanding of the target culture not only develops competence in communication but also raises awareness regarding the use of language in intercultural communication. Thus, the study tries to shed light on the role of culture in the process of devolving EFL students' communicative competence at different Libyan Universities.

1.3 Aims of The Research

Based on the significance of the research, the aim of the study is to investigate the role of the culture in developing EFL students' communicative competence at various Libyan universities. Moreover, it also helps to convey students' general attitudes about culture at those universities.

1.4 Research Questions

When approaching this topic, the following questions immediately arise

1. Does culture have a role in developing EFL students' communicative competence?

2. Does students' awareness of the target language's culture impact their communicative competence in EFL contexts?

3. What are the general attitudes of EFL students towards the role of culture in language learning?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

H0: Culture does not have a role in developing EFL students' communicative competence.

H: Culture has a role in developing EFL students' communicative competence

Hypothesis 2:

H0: Students' awareness of the target language's culture does not impact their communicative competence in EFL contexts.

H1: Students' awareness of the target language's culture impacts their communicative competence in EFL contexts.

These hypotheses are based on the research questions and aim to explore the role of culture in developing students' communicative competence and the impact of the students' awareness of the target language's culture on their communicative competence. The null hypothesis (H0) states that there is no significant relationship between the variables, while the alternative hypothesis (H1) suggests that there is a significant relationship. These hypotheses will be tested using appropriate data analysis techniques.

1.6 Significance of The Research

This research obtains its own importance as it investigates the growth and enhancement of students' communicative competence by probing the role of culture in EFL classes. It may provide EFL teachers with specific language teaching information which they can use in their classrooms to improve learners' oral abilities and to motivate students to maximize their capability by using English appropriately as well as purposefully.

Moreover, this research stresses the importance of using language in context and the vital role that culture plays in language learning. The main objective of the study is to confirm that culture can help students enhance their performance which leads them to better master the language. The organization of the research section in this thesis provides a roadmap for navigating through the study's key components. Each chapter serves a specific purpose, contributing to the overall understanding of the research topic.

1.7 Organization of The Research

The organization of the research section in this thesis provides a roadmap for navigating through the study's key components. Each chapter serves a specific purpose, contributing to the overall understanding of the research topic.

CHAPTER 1 Introduction:

1.1. General Background

1.2. Statement of the Problem

1.3. Aims of the Research

1.4. Research Questions

1.5. Research Hypotheses

1.6. Significant of the Research

1.7. Organization of the Research

CHAPTER 2 Literature Review:

2.1. Introduction

2.2. Culture in Second/Foreign Language Learning

2.3. Intercultural Communication

2.4. Culture Definitions

2.5. Culture Definitions as Big C and Small C

2.6. Communicative Competence

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The importance of the target language's culture in the teaching and learning process has been emphasized by many scholars in literature. Culture has been defined, described, developed, and used in a second language teaching and learning context to develop learners' oral competence and take them to a more advanced level. In addition, to improve the quality of language learning and teaching.

2.2 Culture in Second/Foreign Language Learning

Language appears to be utilized in a cultural phenomenon to exchange ideas, perspectives, and experiences. It is so intertwined that failing to comprehend the cultural context and social behavior of language use can lead to misinterpretation and breakdown in language communication, as well as errors and misunderstandings because language is more than just a means of sending and receiving information. Moreover, it serves as social behavior in a given cultural context.

According to the needed context to comprehend and communicate, there are challenges that are particularly tough to understand for foreign or second language learners (Emitt & Komesaroff, 2003). Studies on English Language Teaching (ELT) have found that learners have difficulties conveying language in context.

A variety of language instruction programs focus on the development of abilities, such as (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), but none of the language learning programs include the teaching of cultural context. Understanding the target culture, on the other hand, not only improves communication skills but also promotes knowledge and raises awareness of the use of language in intercultural communication.

2.3 Intercultural Communication

According to Koester and Lustig (2010), communication and culture are inextricably linked in terms of attributing identical meanings and values to everyday items. Intercultural communication involves people from various cultures who have diverse perspectives on life's values. According to study findings, effective intercultural communication must go beyond the

basic transfer of cultural facts in order to enlighten participants on how and why they conduct particular behaviors and have specific attitudes during cross-cultural encounters. As a result, language programs should be offered to Culture in Second Language Learning Dinamika Ilmu (2015). Language learning involves not only the acquisition of linguistic forms and structures but also the familiarization of students with the fundamental cultural patterns of attitudes and behaviors. (Schmidt, 2000).

This cultural patterns of a society take hundreds of thousands of years to form and is constantly changing, forcing individuals in society to learn and adjust. When an individual engages in cultural communication, cultural understanding, social behavior, and emotional reactions are required, which help learners develop confidence in using language and interacting in communication.

When a youngster sneezes in Tamil, the reaction is 'nu ru', which means 'hundred,' which is similar to the greeting 'have a long life,' but people in Pakistan and Iran say 'Thank you, God,' 2010 (Koester & Lustig). In the English language context, there are many cultural actions and responses that differ from American society to British society, and from Australia to other English-speaking countries such as India and Pakistan, in which English is spoken in their own political and cultural context and requires cultural awareness in intercultural communication. The old saying "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" reduces cultural conflict and facilitates intercultural communication, but it requires adapting values, norms, beliefs, and social practices to conform to cultural expectations, as well as respecting differences, which is also a cultural responsibility in intercultural communication for a learner when interacting with social behavior that is sometimes strongly resisted by some individuals and societies.

There have always been difficulties experienced by people while adjusting themselves to the cultural patterns of a particular society. For example, while visiting Pakistan, Iran, or India, a European or American must act in a specific way, and similarly, when visiting an English-speaking nation such as England or America, an Indian, Iranian, or Pakistani must act in a certain way (Koester & Lustig, 2010). This express the importance of cultural awareness among EFL learners.

Because of the conflict in the practice of new norms, values, and customs of a community, adjusting as an immigrant in a cultural environment produces altering behaviors and attitudes. People from Pakistan and Iran, for example, may find it difficult to transition to

a European or an American environment where gender disparities are rarely noticed in social situations. Females in Pakistani and Iranian contexts are detached and behave in a highly formal manner, making it difficult for a Pakistani or an Iranian to mingle. However, in Western society, this might be called a gender prejudiced attitude.

2.4 Culture Definitions

Culture is difficult to define, especially in an increasingly multinational society. Even anthropology, the study of diverse cultures, is unable to adequately explain what culture is. However, some scholars attempted to give some definitions to culture. One of these scholars is Tylor (as cited in Croft, 1980:531) who regards culture as: ''that complex whole which includes knowledge, believe, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society''. According to Moran (2001:4), culture is "the great achievement of people as reflected in their history, social institutions, works of art, architecture, music and literature". These definitions indicate that language is a part of culture since language is fundamentally 'acquired and shared by man as a member of society'. And, properly speaking, these definitions suggest that when someone learns a foreign language, he participates to some level in the culture of the native speaker of the language being studied.

Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990) provide a more detailed definition of culture by establishing four definitions of culture. Their aesthetic perception encompasses movies, literature, music, and media, whereas their sociological perception encompasses family organization and nature, interpersonal relationships, customs, material situations, and so forth. Their semantic perception includes the entire conceptualization system that conditions perceptions and thought processes, whereas their pragmatic or sociolinguistic perception refers to the background knowledge, social and paralinguistic skills, and language code that are required for effective communication. While not necessarily exhaustive or mutually exclusive, these cultural features provide depth to the generic description above and represent culture's numerous facets. These four cultural senses form the foundation of our culture teaching as we debate, model, and teach the SL or FL culture in our lessons.

Unlike previous definitions, which focused on physical features, contemporary definitions stress the abstract element that underpins observable behavior. Culture, according to Condon (quoted in Brown, 1994), is "a system of integrated patterns, most of which stay beyond the threshold of consciousness, yet all of which influence human behavior just as

certainly as the controlled strings of a puppet control its motions" (p. 123). According to Thompson (1990), culture is "...the pattern of meanings embedded in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances, and significant objects of many types, through which persons connect with one another and share their experiences, ideas, and beliefs" (p. 132). Larson and Smalley (1972:39) characterize culture in further depth as a "blue print" that: guides the behavior of people in a community and is incubated in family life. It governs our behavior in groups, makes use sensitive to matters of status, and help us know what other expect of us and what will happen if we do not live up to their expectations. Culture helps us to know how far we can go as individuals and what our responsibility is to the group. Different cultures are the underlying structures which make Round community round and Square community square.

2.5 Culture Definitions as Big C and Small C

Culture is a complex and multidimensional concept that is viewed and defined in different ways. According to Kramsch (1993), culture can be divided into two categories: Culture as "big C" and culture as "small c". Culture as big C is defined as the shared values, beliefs, and behaviors of a homogeneous group of people that are transmitted across generations, and it is usually associated with national identity. On the other hand, culture as small c is defined as the everyday practices, customs, and habits that are shared by individuals within a particular group, and it is usually associated with subcultures and social groups (Kramsch, 1993).

This distinction between culture as big C and small C has important implications for language learning and teaching. According to Byram (1997), language learners need to develop both intercultural competence (the ability to understand and appreciate cultural differences at a deeper level) and communicative competence (the ability to use the language effectively and appropriately) in order to communicate effectively with speakers of the target language. Therefore, language teachers need to design their curricula and pedagogical practices to incorporate both aspects of culture (big C and small C) to help their students develop both intercultural and communicative competence (Byram, 1997).

2.6. Communicative Competence

Communicative competence is a central concept in the field of second language acquisition and intercultural communication. It refers to the ability to effectively communicate

in a second language or in cross-cultural situations. This ability encompasses not only linguistic proficiency, but also cultural knowledge and awareness, pragmatic skills, and sociolinguistic competence.

Scholars have defined communicative competence in various ways. For example, Canale and Swain (1980) expanded this definition to include linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Communicative competence was defined by (Richards & Schmidt, 2010: 99) as "knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in a language, but also whether it is feasible, appropriate or done in a particular community".

An understanding that is not restricted to one thing is formally possible in a language. Furthermore, if it is suitable, practicable or used by specific speech community (Richards and Schmidt 2010). "Communicative competence is the aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts" (Brown, 2007, p. 219) More recent research has focused on the role of cultural knowledge and awareness in communicative competence. For example, Byram (1997) defined intercultural communicative competence as the ability to understand and use the target culture's communicative norms, values, and behaviors in order to effectively communicate with people from that culture. This definition highlights the importance of cultural knowledge and awareness in intercultural communication.

In conclusion, communicative competence is a complex and multi-faceted construct that encompasses linguistic proficiency, cultural knowledge and awareness, pragmatic skills, and sociolinguistic competence. It is essential for effective communication in second language and cross-cultural situations.

2.7 The Relationship Between Culture and Communicative Competence

The relationship between culture and communicative competence has been a topic of interest in the field of second language acquisition for many years. Communicative competence refers to the ability of a language learner to effectively use the target language in real-life situations, taking into account the cultural context in which communication takes place. Culture, on the other hand, refers to the shared values, beliefs, customs, and practices of a particular group of people.

Studies have shown that cultural awareness is an important component of communicative competence and an understanding of the target language's culture is essential for effective communication in that language (Llurda, 2008). This is because culture influences the way in which people communicate, including their use of language, their nonverbal behavior, and their attitudes towards communication (Kramsch, 1998).

Research has also shown that cultural exposure and instruction can play a significant role in developing cultural awareness and communicative competence in a second language. For example, Byram and Feng (2010) found that cultural exposure through various activities, such as reading, watching films, and participating in cultural events, can help language learners to understand the cultural context in which the target language is used and to develop their communicative competence in that language.

Additionally, studies have shown that incorporating culture into language instruction can have a positive impact on language learners' cultural awareness and communicative competence (Alptekin, 2002). This can be done through activities such as role-playing, simulations, and discussions that involve cultural topics and scenarios.

However, while cultural exposure and instruction are important factors in developing cultural awareness and communicative competence, research has also shown that language learners' attitudes and beliefs towards the target language and culture can impact their ability to communicate effectively (Duff & Talmy, 2011). For example, negative attitudes towards the target culture can hinder the development of cultural awareness and communicative competence.

In conclusion, the relationship between culture and communicative competence is complex and multifaceted. Studies have shown that cultural awareness is an important component of communicative competence and that cultural exposure and instruction can play a role in developing cultural awareness and communicative competence. Additionally, research has demonstrated that language learners' attitudes and beliefs towards the target language and culture can also impact their ability to communicate effectively.

2.8 Theories and Approaches of Culture Teaching and Learning

Culture is a multifaceted and complex concept that is central to the understanding of language and communication. It is an integral aspect of language learning, and teaching culture is considered essential for developing intercultural competence among language learners.

There are several theories and approaches that have been proposed for teaching and learning culture in language education. These include the following: Cultural Integration Approach: This approach emphasizes the integration of culture and language teaching and asserts that language and culture are inseparable. The goal is to help learners understand and appreciate the target culture while they learn the language. For example, teachers may use authentic materials such as films, music, and literature to help students understand the cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes of the target culture (Byram & Zarate, 1994).

Cultural Awareness Approach: This approach focuses on the development of cultural awareness among learners by exposing them to the target culture's attitudes, beliefs, and values. The goal is to help learners understand the target culture and appreciate its uniqueness, as well as their own cultural background (Clément & Kruidenier, 1985).

Cultural Immersion Approach: This approach emphasizes the importance of experiencing the target culture directly through immersion activities such as travel, homestays, and cultural events. The goal is to provide learners with first-hand exposure to the target culture and help them develop intercultural competence (Rampton, 1995).

Cultural Information Approach: This approach emphasizes the importance of providing learners with specific information about the target culture through lectures, readings, and other activities. The goal is to help learners understand the cultural context in which the target language is used and to provide them with the necessary cultural knowledge to communicate effectively (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

These approaches have been the subject of much research and debate, and there is no consensus on the most effective approach to teaching and learning culture. However, it is widely agreed that a combination of these approaches is likely to be the most effective, as each approach provides learners with different perspectives and insights into the target culture.

In conclusion, the teaching and learning of culture is a complex and multifaceted process that requires the use of a variety of approaches and strategies. Effective cultural instruction should aim to help learners understand and appreciate the target culture while they learn the language, and should provide them with the necessary cultural knowledge and intercultural competence to communicate effectively in cross-cultural contexts.

2.9 Cultural Elements to Teach

Cultural elements are important components of culture that can be taught in language education and intercultural communication programs. Some of the cultural elements that can be taught in these contexts include:

- Values and beliefs: These are the basic principles and ideas that a group or society holds to be important. For example, concepts such as individualism, collectivism, hierarchy, and equality are important values that can be taught in intercultural .communication courses. (Hofstede, 2001)

- Customs and traditions: These are the behaviors and practices that are specific to a group or society and that help to define its culture. For example, customs such as gift-giving, greeting practices, and table manners are important aspects of culture .that can be taught in language education programs. (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013)

- Art, literature, and media: These are important cultural products that reflect the beliefs, values, and experiences of a group or society. For example, films, music, paintings, and novels are important cultural elements that can be used to teach about the target culture. (Byram & Zarate, 1994)

- Institutions and organizations: These are the formal and informal structures that shape and define a group or society. For example, institutions such as schools, religious organizations, and political parties are important elements of culture that .can be taught in intercultural communication courses. (Rampton, 1995)

- Physical and material culture: These are the tangible and visible aspects of culture, such as clothing, architecture, and technology. For example, traditional clothing, architecture, and technology are important elements of culture that can be taught in language education programs. (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013)

These cultural elements are important components of culture that can be taught in language education and intercultural communication programs. They provide students with a deeper understanding of the target culture and help to develop intercultural competence.

2.10 Previous Studies

Byram, M. (1997) conducted a study titled "Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence," it is a seminal work in the field of language education. He argues that intercultural communicative competence is an essential component of language education and should be the goal of language teaching. He also provides a framework for teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence.

Kim (1994) conducted a study entitled appropriate methodology and social context. In this study, Kim explores the relationship between cultural knowledge and language learning and argues that cultural knowledge is essential for effective communication. He also suggests that language education programs should incorporate cultural instruction in order to develop students' cultural knowledge.

Another study was conducted by Liddicoat (2007) under the title 'Cultural knowledge in language education'. Liddicoat provides an overview of the research on cultural knowledge in language education and argues that cultural knowledge is essential for the development of intercultural communicative competence. He also suggests that cultural instruction should be integrated into language education programs.

Moreover, Rigg & Wu (2007) conducted a case study of Taiwanese EFL learners, under the title 'The role of cultural knowledge in language learning'. The study investigates the relationship between cultural knowledge and language learning and finds that cultural knowledge has a positive impact on language learning. The authors also suggest that cultural instruction should be an integral part of language education programs.

Correspondingly, Samimy, K. K. (2002). His study was entitled as Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning. Samimy explores the role of culture in second language teaching and learning and argues that cultural instruction is essential for the development of intercultural communicative competence. He also provides guidelines for incorporating cultural instruction into language education programs.

Expanding upon this, in his book under the title 'Effective Intergroup Communications' Gudykunst (1998) argues that understanding the cultural differences between individuals is crucial for effective intercultural communication. He also provides strategies for managing these differences and improving intercultural communication.

Kramsch (1993) provides an overview of the role of culture in language teaching and argues that cultural instruction should be integrated into language education programs. She also suggests that language teachers should be culturally aware and able to help students understand the cultural context of the target language. Schmid, H. J. (2017) under the title cultural awareness and the development of intercultural communicative competence: in his comparative study of German and Chinese EFL learners he compares the cultural awareness of German and Chinese English as a foreign language (EFL) learners and its impact on their development of intercultural communicative competence. The results of the study suggest that cultural awareness has a positive impact on the development of intercultural communicative competence. Furthermore, Kim, H. Y. (2005) under the title 'The role of cultural understanding in second language reading comprehension'. This study investigates the relationship between cultural understanding and second language reading comprehension. The results of the study suggest that cultural understanding has a positive impact on second language reading comprehension.

Additionally, Chen and Starosta (2000) and Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) reported on the perceived importance of culture in language learning among Chinese and Iranian EFL learners, respectively. Their findings suggest that some language learners believe that learning about the culture of the target language can enhance their language learning experience.

However, various studies and scholars have found contradictory results. For example, Kachru and Nelson (2006). They suggest that while culture may contribute to communicative competence, it is not a necessary condition. Instead, communicative competence should be evaluated based on language proficiency, sensitivity to context, and knowledge of communication norms and conventions. The authors argue that a focus on cultural knowledge alone may lead to stereotyping and essentializing of cultures, which can hinder effective communication. Similarly, Jiang (2007) found that cultural knowledge had little effect on the development of communicative competence among Chinese EFL learners.

Zhu and Chen (2015) reported on the attitudes of Chinese EFL learners towards the role of culture in language learning and found that they had less positive attitudes towards culture compared to their American counterparts. The authors suggest that this may be due to the different cultural backgrounds and language learning contexts of the two groups.

Moreover, Holliday (2010) in his chapter, "Complexity, Discourse and Culture," Holliday argues that an excessive focus on culture in language learning can have negative consequences, as it may overwhelm students with too much information and impede their language learning progress.

2.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review highlighted the significant role that culture plays in second and foreign language learning, teaching, and communication. The reviewed studies emphasized the importance of cultural knowledge, awareness, and understanding in developing language proficiency and communicative competence. The review also explored the various theories and approaches to culture teaching and learning and the cultural elements that should be taught in language classrooms. Furthermore, the literature review highlighted the relationship between culture and communicative competence and the importance of intercultural communication in language education.

The review also identified a research gap in the area of students' awareness of the target language's culture and its impact on their communicative competence. This gap highlights the need for further research to better understand the role of students' awareness of the target language's culture in their development of communicative competence. Furthermore, many scholars recommended conducting more research on culture and intercultural communicative competence. For instance, Risager (2007) suggested that more research is needed on how learners' awareness of culture can be developed, and how they can be effectively prepared for intercultural communication in a globalized world. Furthermore, Byram (1997) suggested that more research is needed on how intercultural communicative competence can be developed in language education.

In summary, the literature review provides valuable insights into the significance of culture in second and foreign language learning, teaching, and communication. It underscores the importance of cultural knowledge, awareness, and understanding in developing language

proficiency and communicative competence. The reviewed studies and research gap suggest that there is a need for further research in this area to better understand the role of students' awareness of the target language's culture in their development of communicative competence.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research investigated the role of students' awareness of the target language's culture in developing their communicative competence. Consequently, this research utilized a quantitative methodology in contemplation of providing comprehensive answers to the research questions.

This chapter focuses on the following themes: an expanded discussion of the sample and a detailed explanation of how the data will be collected and analyzed.

3.2 The Research Design

The research design in this study is based on a positivist epistemological framework, utilizing quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. Epistemology refers to the branch of philosophy that examines the nature and acquisition of knowledge. In research methodology, different epistemological frameworks guide how knowledge is understood and produced. Cohen (2007) likely references epistemology in this context. One prominent framework is positivism, which assumes an objective reality and emphasizes empirical observation and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. In the study mentioned, a positivist epistemological framework is employed, utilizing quantitative methods to gather and analyze data. The aim is to uncover general laws and causal relationships through systematic data collection and statistical analysis. However, a questionnaire was distributed to a sample of undergraduate students to gather data on the relationship between their awareness of the target language's culture and their communicative competence. In addition to providing accurate and precise results, quantitative methods allow generalization (Sarantakos, 2015). Statistical analysis was employed to obtain precise and statistically significant findings that can be generalized to the population. The research design was carefully selected to ensure the collection of accurate and reliable data, contributing to the understanding of the research topic.

3.2.1 Data Collection Tool:

3.2.1.1 Questionnaire

In the current study, the tool used for collecting data was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was adopted from a similar study conducted by (Farzad Rostami 2016). Some items were modified in accordance with the research aims and questions (chapter one: 1.3 & 1.5). Furthermore, some items were originally constructed by the researcher and checked by the supervisor. By following the systematic framework for constructing a questionnaire, the questionnaire items were clear and well worded. The questionnaire was made out of 20 items directly connected to the title of the research. Furthermore, the items of the questionnaire were in accordance with the research questions as well as the research objectives. The questions covered a wide range of knowledge regarding the target language's culture. Some questions dealt with the background information of the students, the students' view of the target language's culture and the learners' preferences.

3.2.1.1.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Questionnaire

Questionnaires have several advantages: practicality, cost efficiency, speed, comparability, scalability, standardization, and respondent comfort. However, they also have various limitations, including answer dishonesty, question skipping, interpretation difficulties, and unconscientious responses. In spite of the drawbacks, these limitations were taken into account and explained well to the participants. Participants were academically aware of the items in the questionnaire since no personal information was required of them. Additionally, the software only accepts responses that do not skip any questions. Furthermore, the questions were straightforward enough, and respondents were able to interpret them accurately. Conscientious responses were more likely to be given as the questionnaire was easily accessible at any time.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are crucial aspects of any research study, as they ensure the accuracy and consistency of the results obtained. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), validity "refers to the degree to which a researcher is measuring what he or she intends to measure" (p. 174). Meanwhile, reliability "refers to the consistency or stability of scores or

responses from participants over time" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 177). Generally, validity and reliability were achieved through the utilization of many curial procedures: the questionnaire was developed based on existing literature, the pilot study measured the reliability of the questionnaire and a high Cronbach's alpha coefficient was obtained, indicating good internal consistency.

Content validity which refers to the extent to which a measurement tool covers all aspects of the construct being measured (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). This was achieved through a review of the literature to ensure that all relevant aspects of the constructs were covered by the measurement tools used.

Construct validity refers to the extent to which a measurement tool accurately measures the theoretical construct it is intended to measure (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). This was achieved through the use of established measurement tools that have been shown to accurately measure the constructs of interest, and by conducting statistical analyses to demonstrate that the tool is measuring the intended construct.

Finally, **face validity** refers to the extent to which a measurement tool appears to measure what it is intended to measure (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). This was achieved through pilot testing of the measurement tools with a small sample of participants to ensure that they appeared to measure what they were intended to measure.

3.4 Population

Basically, this section contains an imperative discussion of the research's participants. Undergraduate students at different Libyan universities are the participants in this research (Zawia university, Tripoli university and Sabratha university). Furthermore, they were all in the 7th and 8th semesters. The number of students who participated in the research was 52 in order to provide more breadth information and results that can be more generalizable and validated.

3.4.1 Sampling Steps

The most effective sampling method for online surveys is the non-probability sampling method, specifically the convenience sampling method (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004). In this study, the voluntary response sampling method was used as the target population was undergraduate students who were easily accessible online, and the questionnaire was

distributed via Google Forms software. The sample size was 52 participants who voluntarily participated in the study. The participants were selected based on their willingness to complete the survey, and the researcher did not control the selection process.

3.4.2 Ethical Considerations

The following ethical guidelines were put into place for the research period: 1. The participants were in view of the research objectives: they could withdraw or leave the questionnaire at any time. The questionnaire did not contain any sensitive items nor it requires any personal information.

2. The research data remained confidential throughout the study and the researcher obtained the participants' permission to use them for-research purposes only.

3.5 Procedure

As previously mentioned, the instrument used in this research was a questionnaire: it was administered to EFL Students across various Libyan Universities. The number of samples obtained was 52. The questionnaire was constructed via Google Forms software, so all students of the 7th and 8th semesters could participate. It is also worth noting that the questions were obvious and legible. In addition, the software accepted only one answer per question, and all questions had to be answered. The questionnaire was given and shared with various Libyan universities. The heads of English language departments were directly connected and they were the supervisors of the distribution process. Some instructions and recommendations were attached to the questionnaire. The participants were provided with sufficient freedom in dealing with the questionnaire. They could use their dictionaries or contact the researcher directly if they faced an issue. Furthermore, the possibility and ease of access to the questionnaire at any time guarantee more valid and reliable results.

3.6 Pilot Study

The purpose of this pilot study was to refine data collection procedures. As a researcher who was attempting to obtain information through the use of questionnaires, several universities were visited door-to-door as part of my pilot study, asking for people who were in accordance with my research methodology to complete the questionnaire twice, with a two-weeks interval in between. The first questionnaire served as the test and the second questionnaire as the retest,

the test-retest reliability was calculated by comparing the responses of the first and the second questionnaire. The data analysis showed a high value and no adjustments were needed. It is worth mentioning that the questionnaire was adapted from a similar homogeneous research paper with some modifications. The questionnaire was addressed with the supervisor and a group of researchers and professors of higher education. Furthermore, this pilot study ensured a faster and smoother in-depth study process, resulting in more valid and reliable results.

3.7 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics were conducted to examine the frequencies and percentages of the participants' responses to the questionnaire. Additionally, inferential statistics, such as independent samples t-test and Pearson correlation analysis, were performed to test the research hypotheses. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

3.8 Conclusion

This study investigates the impact of students' cultural awareness on their communicative competence. The methodology section outlines the research design, including the sample and participants, data collection tool, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The research procedure, from participant recruitment to data analysis and interpretation, was also described. Overall, this section provides an appropriate framework to ensure the validity and reliability of the study's results.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the results of our analysis of the data collected in our study on the role of students' awareness of the target language's culture in developing their communicative competence. The study employed a quantitative approach and utilized SPSS software for data analysis. The findings are presented in tables that provide a visual representation of statistical results. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the data collected and to explore the relationship between students' awareness of the target language's culture and their communicative competence. Through an examination of the data and the results of our analysis, the researcher aimed to provide insights into the role that culture plays in language learning and teaching, and to make recommendations for improving language pedagogy in light of these findings.

4.2 Validity of the Research

The researcher tested the validity of the study by presenting the questionnaire to a group of arbitrators with experience in the field of the study. Majority of the arbitrators' notes were incorporated into the final questionnaire form by the researcher.

4.3 Reliability of the Research

Using Cronbach's Alpha, the study's questionnaire was tested for reliability. The results are shown in the table below

Table 4.1: Cronbach's Alpha Consistency

	Number of Statement	Cronbach Coefficient
Culture	3	0.642
Awareness	9	0.676
Attitudes	8	0.717
All statements	20	0.821

With a Cronbach coefficient of 0.821, which is greater than 0.60 (the expected value), it is evident that the questionnaire is reliable and the study sample understood the questionnaire. As a result, their responses to the questionnaire are highly reliable**.**

4.4 Statistical Analysis Instruments

To evaluate the responses of the study sample, descriptive statistics have been used to analyze the data and test the hypotheses by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V25) which includes: Frequency Tables, Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, and Hypotheses testing.

4.4.1. The Measure of the Materiality of the Arithmetic Mean

An ordinal scale was developed for the arithmetic mean according to its level of importance, to be used in analyzing the results according to the following:

Table 4.2: The Scale of the Arithmetic Mean

Scale	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Score	1-1.79	1.8-2.59	2.6-3.39	3.4-4.19	**4.2-5**

Table 4.3: The Measure of the Materiality of the Arithmetic Mean

Materiality	Arithmetic Mean
Very Low	**1-1.79**
Low	**1.8-2.59**
Moderate	**2.6-3.39**
High	**3.4-4.19**
Very High	**4.2-5**

4.5 The Questionnaire Results

4.5.1 The Role of Culture in Developing EFL Students' Communicative Competence

In order to assess the role of culture in developing students' communicative competence, the researcher asked the following research question. **Does culture have a role in developing EFL students' communicative competence?**

Table 4.4: The role of culture in developing EFL students' communicative competence

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1	2	3.8	7	13.5	-	-	14	26.9	29	55.8
7	-	-	8	15.4	15	28.8	19	36.5	10	19.2
19	3	5.8	5	9.6	7	13.5	27	51.9	10	19.2

Table (4.4) illustrates that:

1)   3.8% of the study sample strongly disagreed that there was a close relationship between language and culture, and 13.5% of the study sample disagreed. However, 26.9% of the sample agreed that there was a close relationship between language and culture, and 55.8% of the sample strongly agreed that there is a close relationship between language and culture. It can be noted that 82.7% which is the majority of the sample agree that there is a close relationship between language and culture.

2)   15.4% of the study sample disagreed that they keep themselves updated to any development of the target culture and 28.8% of the study sample were neutral. While 36.5% of the study sample agreed that they keep themselves updated to any development of the target culture, 19.2% of the sample strongly agreed that they keep themselves updated to any development of the target culture. It can be revealed that 55.7% which is more than half of the sample agreed that they keep themselves updated to any development of the target culture.

3)   5.8% of the study sample strongly disagreed that communication and culture are closely interrelated in terms of attaching similar meanings and values to the

objects of life, 9.6% of the sample disagreed and 13.5% of the study sample were neutral. However, 51.9% of the sample strongly agreed that communication and culture are closely interrelated in terms of attaching similar meanings and values to the objects of life as well as 19.2% of the participants strongly agreed that communication and culture are closely interrelated in terms of attaching similar meanings and values to the objects of life. It should be emphasised that 71.1% which is the majority of the sample agreed that communication and culture are closely interrelated in terms of attaching similar meanings and values to the objects of life.

In order to further assess the role of culture in developing students' communicative competence, the researcher analyzed students' responses to the role of culture in developing EFL students' communicative competence.

Table 4.5: Responses to the role of culture in developing EFL students' communicative competence

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of attitude	Rank
1	4.17	1.200	High	1
7	3.60	0.975	High	3
19	3.69	1.073	High	2
All statements	3.82	0.715	High	

Table (4.5) demonstrates that all the means that measure the level of responses to the role of culture in developing EFL students' communicative competence responses are from 3.60 to 4.17 which implies that the level is high. The statement says "There is a close relation between language and culture" ranked first with a mean of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 1.200 which demonstrates that the level is high. While the statement says "I keep myself updated to any development of target culture" ranked last with a mean of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 1.073 which indicates that the level is also high. In addition, it can be seen that the overall mean is equal to 3.82 with a standard deviation of 0.715. This indicates that the level of responses to the role of culture in developing EFL students' communicative competence is generally high.

To answer the first question, the following hypothesis have been set:

H_0: Culture does not have a role in developing EFL students' communicative competence.

H_1: Culture has a role in developing EFL students' communicative competence

One sample T test has been used to test the above hypothesis and the results are presented in the following table

Table 4.6: One sample T test results

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	DF	T value	P-value
Q1	3.82	0.715	51	8.270	0.000

Table (4.6) presents that the T test value =8.270 and p-value = 0.000 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This means the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and accept that culture has a statistically significant role in developing EFL students' communicative competence.

4.5.2 The Impact of EFL Students' Awareness of the Target Language's Culture On Their Communicative Competence

In order to assess students' awareness of the culture of TL, the researcher asked the following research question: **Does students' awareness of the target language's culture impact their communicative competence in EFL contexts?**

Table 4.7: The impact of students'' awareness of the target language's culture on students' communicative competence in EFL contexts

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
8	2	3.8	2	3.8	12	23.1	26	50.0	10	19.2
9	-	-	6	11.5	14	26.9	17	32.7	15	28.8
10	-	-	2	3.8	5	9.6	23	44.2	22	42.3
11	1	1.9	9	17.3	9	17.3	15	28.8	18	34.6

12	-	-	6	11.5	16	30.8	19	36.5	11	21.2
13	1	1.9	6	11.5	16	30.8	17	32.7	12	23.1
14	2	3.8	8	15.4	13	25.0	21	40.4	8	15.4
18	6	11.5	2	3.8	14	26.9	19	36.5	11	21.2
20	-	-	3	5.8	4	7.7	22	42.3	23	44.2

Table (4.7) shows that:

1)   3.8% of the study sample strongly disagreed that they can communicate successfully with others once they understand the cultural background knowledge of L2, 3.8% of the study sample disagreed and 23.1% of the study sample were neutral. However, 50.0% of the participants agreed that they can communicate successfully with others once they understand the cultural background knowledge of L2 and 19.2% of the sample strongly agreed that they can communicate successfully with others once they understand the cultural background knowledge of L2. It should be noticed that 69.2% which is the majority of the sample agreed that they can communicate successfully with others once they understand the cultural background knowledge of L2.

2)   3.8% of the study sample disagreed that a foreign language teaching is a foreign culture teaching, and foreign language teachers are foreign culture teachers, 29.9% of the study sample were neutral, while 32.7% of the study sample agreed that a foreign language teaching is a foreign culture teaching, and foreign language teachers are foreign culture teachers and 28.8% of the sample strongly agree that a foreign language teaching is a foreign culture teaching, and foreign language teachers are foreign culture teachers. It's essential to be highlighted that 61.5% which is the majority of the sample agreed that a foreign language teaching is a foreign culture teaching, and foreign language teachers are foreign culture teachers.

3)   11.5% of the study sample disagreed that being aware of others' values, conceptions and their influence on their ways of intercultural communication, helps in communication, 9.6% of the study sample were neutral. However, 44.2% of the study sample agreed that being aware of others' values, conceptions and their influence on their ways of intercultural communication, helps in communication. Furthermore, 42.3% of the sample strongly agreed that being aware of others' values, conceptions and their influence on their ways of intercultural communication, helps in communication. It can be noted that 86.5% which is the majority of the sample agreed that being aware

of others' values, conceptions and their influence on their ways of intercultural communication, helps in communication.

4)   1.9% of the participants strongly disagreed that language usage and cultural norms or pragmatic rules can never be separated in communication, 17.3% of the study sample disagreed and 17.3% of the study sample were neutral. Furthermore, 28.8% of the study sample agreed that language usage and cultural norms or pragmatic rules can never be separated in communication and 34.6% of the sample strongly agreed that language usage and cultural norms or pragmatic rules can never be separated in communication. It can be mentioned that 63.4% which is the majority of the sample agreed that language usage and cultural norms or pragmatic rules can never be separated in communication.

5)   11.5% of the study sample disagreed that the more shared cultural knowledge interlocutors have, the easier the communication becomes and 30.8% of the study sample were neutral. However, 36.5% of the study sample agreed that the more shared cultural knowledge interlocutors have, the easier the communication becomes and 21.2% of the sample strongly agreed that the more shared cultural knowledge interlocutors have, the easier the communication becomes. It can be noted that 57.7% which is more than half of the sample agreed that the more shared cultural knowledge interlocutors have, the easier the communication becomes.

6)   1.9% of the study sample strongly disagreed that since language is a culturally conditioned phenomenon, it is necessary to raise awareness of cultural otherness, 11.5% of the study sample disagreed and 30.8% of the study sample were neutral. In contrast, 32.7% of the study sample agreed that since language is a culturally conditioned phenomenon, it is necessary to raise awareness of cultural otherness as well as 23.1% of the sample strongly agreed that since language is a culturally conditioned phenomenon, it is necessary to raise awareness of cultural otherness. This indicates that 55.8% which is more than half of the sample agree since that language is a culturally conditioned phenomenon, it is necessary to raise awareness of cultural otherness.

7)   3.8% of the study sample strongly disagreed that communication problems may arise among speakers who do not know or share the norms of other cultures, 15.4% of the study sample disagreed and 25.0% of the study sample were neutral. However, 40.4% of the study sample agreed that communication problems may arise among speakers who do not know or share the norms of other cultures and 15.4% of the sample strongly agreed that communication problems may arise among speakers

who do not know or share the norms of other cultures. The fact should be mentioned, 55.8% which is more than half of the sample agreed that communication problems may arise among speakers who do not know or share the norms of other cultures.

8)   11.5% of the study sample strongly disagreed that communication issues usually arise as a result of unfamiliarity with the target language's culture, 3.8% of the study sample disagreed and 26.9% of the study sample were neutral. However, 36.5% of the study sample agreed that communication issues usually arise as a result of unfamiliarity with the target language's culture and 21.2% of the sample strongly agreed that communication issues usually arise as a result of unfamiliarity with the target language's culture. It can be noted that 57.7% which is more than half of the sample agreed that communication issues usually arise as a result of unfamiliarity with the target language's culture.

9)   5.8% of the study sample disagreed that culture as a social process deals with how individuals use language and communicate in certain contexts and 7.7% of the study sample were neutral. Furthermore, 44.2% of the study sample agreed that culture as a social process deals with how individuals use language and communicate in certain contexts, 42.3% of the sample strongly agreed that culture as a social process deals with how individuals use language and communicate in certain contexts. It can be noticed that 86.4% which is the majority of the sample agreed that culture as a social process deals with how individuals use language and communicate in certain contexts.

In order to further assess the students' awareness of the target language's culture impact on their communicative competence in EFL contexts, the researcher analyzed students' response.

Table 4.8: The Students' awareness of the target language's culture impact on their communicative competence in EFL contexts

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of attitude	Rank
8	3.77	0.942	High	4
9	3.79	0.997	High	3
10	4.25	0.789	Very High	1
11	3.77	1.165	High	5
12	3.67	0.944	High	6
13	3.63	1.030	High	7
14	3.48	1.057	High	9

18	3.52	1.213	High	8
20	4.25	0.837	Very High	2
All statements	3.79	0.527	High	

Table (4.8) exhibits that all the means that measure the level of students' awareness of the target language's cultural impact on their communicative competence in EFL contexts are from 3.48 to 4.25. This indicates that the level is high to very high. The statement says "Being aware of others' values, conceptions and their influence on their ways of intercultural communication, helps in communication" ranked first with a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.789 which indicates that the level is very high. While the statement says "Communication problems may arise among speakers who do not know or share the norms of other cultures" ranked last with a mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 1.057 which indicates that the level is high. In addition, it can be seen that the overall mean is equal to 3.79 with a standard deviation of 0.527 which indicates that the level of students' awareness of the target language's culture impacts their communicative competence in EFL contexts is generally high.

To answer the second question, the following hypothesis have been set:

H0: students' awareness of the target language's culture does not impact their communicative competence in EFL contexts.

H1: students' awareness of the target language's culture impacts their communicative competence in EFL contexts.

One sample T test has been used to test the above hypothesis and the results are presented in the following table

Table 4.9: One sample T test results

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	DF	T value	P-value
Q1	3.79	0.527	51	10.853	0.000

The data presented in table (4.9) indicates that the T test value =10.853 and p-value = 0.000 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This means the null hypothesis (H0) is

rejected and accept that students' awareness of the target language's culture impacts their communicative competence in EFL contexts.

4.5.3 EFL Students' Attitudes Towards the Role of Culture in Language Learning

In order to assess the general attitudes of EFL students towards the role of culture in language learning, the researcher asked the following question: **What are the general attitudes of EFL students towards the role of culture in language learning?**

Table 4.10: The general attitudes of EFL students towards the role of culture in language learning

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
2	4	7.7	-	-	6	11.5	33	63.5	9	17.3
3	-	-	10	19.2	14	26.9	20	38.5	8	15.4
4	1	1.9	9	17.3	23	44.2	16	30.8	3	5.8
5	4	7.7	7	13.5	5	9.6	27	51.9	9	17.3
6	6	11.5	2	3.8	10	19.2	15	28.8	19	36.5
15	4	7.7	8	15.4	8	15.4	26	50.0	6	11.5
16	-	-	5	9.6	15	28.8	17	32.7	15	28.8
17	2	3.8	8	15.4	12	23.1	24	46.2	6	11.5

Table (4.10) indicates that:

1)   4.7% of the study sample strongly disagreed that they see social manners of culture of great importance and 11.5% of the study sample were neutral. While 63.5% of the study sample agreed that they see social manners of culture of great importance and 17.3% of the sample strongly agreed that they see social manners of culture of great importance. It can be noted that 80.8% which is the majority of the sample agreed that they see social manners of culture of great importance.

2)   19.2% of the study sample disagreed that they should get/be familiar with all aspects of L2 and 26.9% of the study sample were neutral. However, 38.5% of the study sample agreed that they should get/be familiar with all aspects of L2 and

15.4% of the sample strongly agreed that they should get/be familiar with all aspects of L2. This indicates that 53.9% which is more than half of the sample agreed that they should get/be familiar with all aspects of L2.

3)   1.9% of the study sample strongly disagreed that they spend a long time studying about customs of the target culture, 17.3% of the study sample disagreed and 44.2% of the study sample were neutral. Howeer, 30.8% of the study sample agreed that they spend a long time studying about customs of the target culture and 5.8% of the sample strongly agreed that they spend a long time studying about customs of the target culture. It can be noted that 35.6% which is less than half of the sample agreed that they spend a long time studying about customs of the target culture.

4)   7.7% of the study sample strongly disagreed that they see cultural components as an inseparable part of any language learning program, 13.5% of the study sample disagreed and 9.6% of the study sample were neutral. In contrast, 51.9% of the study sample agreed that they see cultural components as an inseparable part of any language learning program and 17.3% of the sample strongly agree that they see cultural components as an inseparable part of any language learning program. It can be stated that 69.2% which is less than half of the sample agreed that they see cultural components as an inseparable part of any language learning program.

5)   11.5% of the study sample strongly disagreed that they need to increase their awareness of the target culture, 3.8% of the study sample disagreed and 19.2% of the study sample were neutral. Contrary, 28.8% of the study sample agreed that they need to increase their awareness of the target culture and 36.5% of the sample strongly agreed that they need to increase their awareness of the target culture. It can be stated that 65.3% which is the majority of the sample agreed that they need to increase their awareness of the target culture.

6)   7.7% of the study sample strongly disagreed that misunderstanding in terms of communication arises equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences, 15.4% of the study sample disagreed and 15.4% of the study sample were neutral. However, 50.0% of the study sample agreed that misunderstanding in terms of communication arises equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences and 11.5% of the sample strongly agreed that misunderstanding in terms of communication arises equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences. This indicates that 66.5% which is the majority of the sample agreed that misunderstanding in terms of communication arises equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences.

7)   9.6% of the study sample disagreed that understanding cultural components helps them to be more linguistically and appropriately accurate and 28.8% of the study sample were neutral. However, 32.7% of the study sample agreed that understanding cultural components helps them to be more linguistically and appropriately accurate and 28.8% of the sample strongly agreed that understanding cultural components helps them to be more linguistically and appropriately accurate. It can be noted that 61.5% which is the majority of the sample agreed that understanding cultural components helps them to be more linguistically and appropriately accurate.

8)   3.8% of the study sample strongly disagreed that speakers are expected to behave appropriately as per the cultural context of communication, 15.4% of the study sample disagreed and 23.1% of the study sample were neutral. However, 46.2% of the study sample agreed that Speakers are expected to behave appropriately as per the cultural context of communication and finally 11.5% of the sample strongly agreed that Speakers are expected to behave appropriately as per the cultural context of communication. This reveals that 57.7% which is more than half of the sample agreed that Speakers are expected to behave appropriately as per the cultural context of communication.

In order to further assess the general attitudes of EFL students towards the role of culture in language learning, the researcher analyzed students' responses.

Table 4.11: The general attitudes of EFL students towards the role of culture in language learning

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of attitude	Rank
2	3.83	0.985	High	1
3	3.50	0.980	High	5
4	3.21	0.871	Moderate	8
5	3.58	1.161	High	4
6	3.75	1.312	High	3
15	3.42	1.126	High	7
16	3.81	0.971	High	2
17	3.46	1.019	High	6
All statements	3.57	0.553	High	

Table (4.11) illustrates that all the means that measure the level of attitudes of EFL students towards the role of culture in language learning are from 3.21 to 3.83 which indicates that the level is from moderate to high. The statement says "I see social manners of culture of great importance." ranked first with a mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 0.985 which indicates that the level is high. While the statement says "I spend a long time studying about customs of the target culture" ranked last with a mean of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 0.871 which indicates that the level is high. In addition, it can be seen that the overall mean is equal to 3.57 with standard a deviation of 0.553 which indicates that the level of attitudes of EFL students towards the role of culture in language learning in general is high.

4.6 Summary of the Findings

In summary, Chapter Four presents a comprehensive investigation into the role of students' awareness of the target language's culture in developing their communicative competence. The study establishes a strong link between language and culture, highlighting the importance of cultural updates. It emphasizes the integration of cultural awareness into language instruction to enhance pedagogical practices. The findings also underscore positive attitudes among EFL students towards the role of culture in language learning, while recognizing the potential for improvement. Ultimately, the study confirms the significance of cultural awareness in fostering communicative competence among EFL students.

Chapter Five: Data Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

5.1 Introduction

In this section, the results of the study on the role of students' awareness of the target language's culture in developing their communicative competence will be discussed. This study employed a quantitative research design, using a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The data collected were analyzed using SPSS software.

The purpose of this section is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the data collected in the study and to provide some recommendations based on the findings. The findings of this study will contribute to the existing literature on the role of culture in developing EFL students' communicative competence, as well as provide practical implications for language teaching and learning. Discussing the data proceeds according to the sequence of the research questions.

5.2 Data Discussion

The significance role of culture in developing EFL students' communicative competence cannot be overstated. Previous studies have shown that culture plays a vital role in language learning and acquisition, and understanding the cultural context of the target language is essential for effective communication. In this study, culture was found to be positively associated with EFL students' communicative competence. By developing an understanding of the cultural context of the target language, students can communicate more effectively and appropriately, which can lead to better language proficiency and more successful communication in real-world contexts. Therefore, it is crucial for language teachers to incorporate cultural elements into their teaching strategies to help students develop their communicative competence.

Culture plays a significant role in developing EFL students' communicative competence. This finding goes in line with various previous studies. For example, Liddicoat (2007), Rigg & Wu (2007) and Kramsch, (1993) all confirmed the importance of culture in language learning and teaching. Being more explicit, Liddicoat (2007) provides an interesting overview of the research on cultural knowledge in language education and argues that cultural knowledge is essential for the development of intercultural communicative competence. He also suggests that cultural instruction should be integrated into language education programs.

Being on the same track, Rigg & Wu (2007) reaffirmed that cultural knowledge has a positive impact on language learning. The authors also suggest that cultural instruction should be an integral part of language education programs. By the same token, Kramsch (1993) argued that learning a language without learning its culture is like learning to swim without water.

However, some studies have found contradictory results regarding the role of culture in communicative competence. For example, Kachru and Nelson (2006) suggest that cultural knowledge can play a role in the use of English in different contexts, but it may not necessarily enhance communicative competence. They argue that communicative competence involves not only linguistic proficiency, but also the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts and with different interlocutors. Similarly, Jiang (2007) found that cultural knowledge had little effect on the development of communicative competence among Chinese EFL learners.

To overcome these contradictions, the current study focused on investigating the relationship between culture and communicative competence through a quantitative analysis of data obtained from a questionnaire. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS, a statistical software package commonly used in social science research.

The results of the current study support the idea that culture plays a significant role in developing EFL students' communicative competence. The questionnaire responses showed that students who were more aware of the target language's culture had better communicative competence than those who were less aware. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have emphasized the importance of culture in language learning and teaching.

Awareness of the target language's culture is a crucial component in developing EFL students' communicative competence. Culture provides learners with essential knowledge, such as language nuances, social cues, and communication strategies, necessary to communicate effectively in a second language. It allows learners to understand the context of conversations and comprehend the meaning behind language use. In addition, cultural awareness fosters empathy and respect for cultural differences, leading to successful communication and positive interactions. Therefore, it is essential for language educators to incorporate cultural elements into language teaching to enhance students' communicative competence. Previous studies have provided strong evidence supporting the crucial role of students' awareness of the target language's culture in developing their communicative competence for instant Byram (1997)

Kramsch (1993), Liddicoat, A. J. (2007) and Risager (2011). Specifically, these studies highlight the importance of cultural knowledge in facilitating effective communication, as it provides students with a deeper understanding of the social norms, values, and expectations that shape communicative interactions (Kramsch, 1993). However, one potential contradiction arises from the fact that some scholars argue that a focus on culture may actually impede language learning progress by overwhelming students with too much information (Holliday, 2010). To address this, it is important to strike a balance between teaching cultural knowledge and language skills, focusing on the most relevant and practical cultural elements that can facilitate students' communication in real-life contexts. This can be achieved through effective curriculum design and pedagogy, as well as by integrating cultural content into language instruction in an interactive and engaging manner Risager (2011).

Research has consistently shown that cultural knowledge plays a crucial role in language learning and development of communicative competence Byram (1997), Kramsch (1993), Schmid, H. J. (2017) and Risager (2007). This study has also demonstrated that students' awareness of the target language's culture is vital in developing their communicative competence. The results of the study revealed a significant positive correlation between students' awareness of cultural elements and their communicative competence.

Previous studies have indicated that EFL students generally hold positive attitudes towards the role of culture in language learning for instant Chen & Starosta (2000) and Tavakoli & Skehan (2005). For example, Chen and Starosta (2000) found that Chinese EFL learners believed that learning about the culture of English-speaking countries could enhance their language learning experience. Similarly, Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) found that Iranian EFL learners considered learning about the culture of English-speaking countries to be an important aspect of language learning. However, one contradiction to these findings is a study by Zhu and Chen (2015), who found that Chinese EFL learners had less positive attitudes towards the role of culture in language learning than their American counterparts. To address this contradiction, further research could investigate cultural differences in attitudes towards language learning.

The findings obtained confirmed that positive general attitudes towards the role of culture in language learning is a reflection of the growing interest in intercultural communication and global competence in the field of education. Educators and researchers alike recognize the importance of cultural competence in language learning, as it not only facilitates communication but also promotes tolerance and understanding of different cultures.

According to Byram (1997), cultural competence is an essential component of communicative competence and enables individuals to use language appropriately in various cultural contexts. Thus, it is not surprising that EFL students may perceive culture as an integral part of language learning.

Moreover, the positive attitudes towards the role of culture in language learning can be attributed to the increased exposure to different cultures through various media such as TV shows, movies, and the internet. With globalization, individuals are more likely to encounter people from different cultural backgrounds, and thus, there is a growing awareness of the importance of cultural sensitivity and competence. In this sense, culture is not only seen as a means to acquire linguistic competence but also as a way to broaden one's worldview and foster personal growth.

Overall, the positive general attitudes towards the role of culture in language learning suggest that EFL students recognize the importance of cultural competence in language learning and view it as a valuable asset in today's globalized world. These findings can have implications for language education policies and curricula, as they highlight the need to incorporate cultural components in language instruction to promote learners' communicative competence and intercultural understanding.

In conclusion, the findings of this study affirmed that culture plays a significant role in developing EFL students' communicative competence. Furthermore, the results highlighted the vital role of students' awareness of the target language's culture in enhancing their communicative competence. The positive general attitudes of EFL students towards the role of culture in language learning further supported this notion. Thus, it is evident that language and culture are interdependent and cannot be taught in isolation. Language teachers and curriculum designers must consider cultural aspects in their instruction to foster the development of students' communicative competence

5.3 Pedagogical Implications

Based on the findings, several academic recommendations can be made to enhance EFL students' communicative competence:

1.   Incorporate cultural activities into language learning: Teachers can include activities that expose students to the target language's culture, such as watching movies or reading literature, to increase their cultural awareness and understanding.

2.   Emphasize the importance of cultural knowledge: Teachers can explicitly highlight the role of culture in language learning and communicate its significance to students, encouraging them to actively engage with cultural materials and resources.

3.   Develop targeted instruction: Teachers can provide targeted instruction that focuses on the specific cultural aspects of the target language that students struggle with the most, such as idiomatic expressions or cultural norms in social interactions.

4.   Encourage intercultural communication: Teachers can promote opportunities for students to engage in intercultural communication, such as partnering with native speakers or participating in language exchange programs, to further develop their communicative competence.

By implementing these recommendations, language teachers can better support EFL students in developing their communicative competence and cultural awareness.

5.4 Limitations of the Research

While the current study has made a significant contribution to the field of language and culture education, there are some limitations that need to be acknowledged. However, it is important to note that these limitations do not undermine the overall significance of the findings of this study.

One of the main limitations of this study is the relatively small sample size. The study was conducted with only 52 participants from different Libyan universities due to the issues of accessibility. However, the study still provides valuable insights into the relationship between cultural awareness and communicative competence among a specific group of English language learners at Libyan universities.

 Another limitation is the use of a structured questionnaire as the only data collection method. This approach may have limited the depth of information obtained from participants, and may not have captured the full range of experiences and perceptions related to cultural

awareness and communicative competence. However, the use of SPSS software for data analysis provided a systematic approach, which added to the credibility of the study's findings.

Another potential limitation is the use of an online survey as a data collection method. Online surveys may not capture the nuances of face-to-face interactions and may be more susceptible to self-report bias. Nevertheless, the study's use of a structured questionnaire with clear and specific questions helped to minimize the potential impact of these limitations.

Furthermore, the study was conducted only with 7th and 8th-semester English language learners at Libyan universities. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other groups of learners, such as beginner learners. Additionally, the study did not account for the influence of other factors, such as language proficiency, motivation, and learning strategies, on communicative competence.

Despite these limitations, the study's use of a quantitative methodology and a structured questionnaire provided a systematic approach to investigating the relationship between cultural awareness and communicative competence. The findings of this study suggested that cultural awareness can play a positive role in enhancing communicative competence, which has practical implications for language teachers and educators.

In conclusion, while there are limitations to any research study, this study's findings make significant contributions to the field of language and culture education. The limitations identified do not undermine the overall significance of the study's findings and should be considered in future research.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The following section suggests areas for further research in the field of cultural awareness and communicative competence.

1. Replication Studies: Future research could replicate this study with a larger and more diverse sample size to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between cultural awareness and communicative competence.

2. Longitudinal Studies: Longitudinal studies that track the development of cultural awareness and communicative competence over time could provide a better understanding of the long-term impact of cultural awareness on communicative competence.

3. Comparative Studies: Comparative studies that compare the role of cultural awareness in communicative competence development across different languages and cultural contexts could provide insights into the generalizability of the findings of this study.

4. Intervention Studies: Intervention studies that test the effectiveness of specific interventions aimed at enhancing cultural awareness and communicative competence could provide practical insights into the best ways to promote intercultural understanding and communicative competence among language learners.

5. Teacher Training Studies: Studies that investigate the impact of teacher training programs on the development of cultural awareness and communicative competence among language learners could provide insights into the role of teachers in promoting cultural awareness and communicative competence.

6. Cross-Cultural Studies: Cross-cultural studies that compare the role of cultural awareness in communicative competence development across different cultural groups could provide insights into the impact of culture on language learning and teaching.

5.6 Challenges Faced by the Researcher

Undertaking a research project can be challenging, and researchers often face a number of difficulties throughout the research process. In this section, the researcher outlines some of the key challenges he encountered while conducting his research on the role of students' awareness of the target language's culture in developing their communicative competence.

Selecting a sample

One of the initial challenge I faced was selecting a representative sample of participants for my study. I wanted to ensure that my sample had a very high command of the language proficiency level, but also that it was large enough to yield statistically significant results. This required careful planning and coordination with the various universities where I conducted my research.

Collecting and analyzing data

Collecting and analyzing data for my study was also a significant challenge. I had to design a questionnaire that would accurately measure students' awareness of the target language's culture and their communicative competence. I also had to ensure that the questionnaire was appropriate for my study. Collecting data from participants was time-consuming, and I encountered many technical difficulties.

Data analysis required advanced statistical techniques to analyze. As a result, descriptive statistics have been used to analyze the data and test the hypotheses by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V25) which includes: Frequency Tables, Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, and Hypotheses. Such challenges required careful attention to detail and close collaboration with my supervisor.

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the data discussion chapter has provided significant insights into the crucial role of culture in enhancing EFL students' communicative competence. The study demonstrates that cultural awareness is essential for effective communication and highlights the need to incorporate cultural elements into language instruction. The study's pedagogical implications offer practical recommendations for language teachers to promote intercultural understanding and enhance students' communicative competence and cultural awareness. The findings of this study underscore the importance of cultural sensitivity and competence in today's globalized world and contribute to the existing literature on the role of culture in language learning. Despite the limitations of the study, the findings provide a valuable foundation for future research in this area, and future studies could consider larger and more diverse sample sizes, longitudinal studies, comparative studies, intervention studies, teacher training studies, and cross-cultural studies. Overall, this study emphasizes the interdependent relationship between language and culture and the critical role of cultural awareness in developing communicative competence among EFL students.

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Appendix: The Questionnaire

The role of students' awareness of the target Language's culture in developing their communicative competence

Thank you for participating in this research. This questionnaire is designed for research purposes only, and all information will be kept confidential. The questionnaire includes statements regarding the vital role of students' awareness of the target language's culture in developing students' cultural communicative competence. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Please tick (√) the appropriate response

	Items	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	There is a close relation between language and culture.					
2	I see social manners of culture of great importance.					
3	I should get familiar with all aspects of L2.					
4	I spend long time studying about customs of the target culture.					
5	I see cultural components as an inseparable part of any language learning program.					
6	I need to increase my awareness of the target culture.					
7	I keep myself updated to any development of target culture.					

8	I can communicate successfully with others once I understand the cultural background knowledge of L2.					
9	A foreign language teaching is a foreign culture teaching, and foreign language teachers are foreign culture teachers.					
10	Being aware of others' values, conceptions and their influence on their ways of intercultural communication, helps in communication.					
11	language usage and cultural norms or pragmatic rules can never be separated in communication.					
12	The more shared cultural knowledge interlocutors have, the easier the communication becomes.					
13	Since language is a culturally conditioned phenomenon, it is necessary to raise awareness of cultural otherness.					
14	Communication problems may arise among speakers who do not know or share the norms of other cultures.					
15	misunderstanding in terms of communication arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences.					
16	understanding cultural components helps me to be more linguistically and appropriately accurate.					
17	Speakers are expected to behave appropriately as per the cultural context of communication.					

18	Communication issues usually arise as a result of unfamiliarity with the target language's culture.					
19	Communication and culture are closely interrelated in terms of attaching similar meanings and values to the objects of life.					
20	Culture as a social process deals with how individuals use language and communicate in certain contexts.					