A Descriptive Study of an Intercultural Approach in English Language Teaching: a Study of Students' and Teachers' Perception in Pakistan

SIDRA KHURSHEED
Assistant professor
Government Postgraduate College for Women
Shad Bagh Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
MUHAMMAD ASIF
PhD Scholar, School of Foreign Languages
Shanghai University, China

Abstract:

The recent study analyses how second language (L2) learners find out the differences between the home culture and the target culture. The purpose of the study is to emphasize the importance of intercultural communication in ELT and the necessity to develop students' intercultural communicative competence. The study makes use of the work of Byram (1997) to reach its desired findings. Data were collected from the different institutions of public and private universities of the Lahore region (Pakistan). The survey questionnaire was adapted from Will Baker Scale of ICA (using e-learning to develop intercultural awareness in English language teaching) for L2 learners. One sample t-test was used to get the required results. The gender-based analyses have also incorporated the variation regarding teachers' and students' perceptions. The finding of the study reveals the effectiveness of intercultural communication. This study measures the perceptions and attitudes of teachers and second language learners as to what role can culture play in language learning. It is impossible to deny the significant role of the intercultural approach in ELT in general and in the context of ELT in Pakistan in particular. However, to improve certain limitations, the research also suggests some recommendations.

Key words: Intercultural, L1, L2, ELT, Intercultural Approach, Perception

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The world at present is exemplified by a raising number of contacts bringing about communication between people with different social foundations. At the point when people from particular gatherings meet up, their experience, encounters, society, and language all consolidate to encourage the sharing of importance and comprehension through communication. This blend makes special and particular gatherings of people which add to view of each other, in this manner constraining the capacity of societies to impart viably.

Culture is a big reality as a language. A teacher's job is not limited to teach his/her own community or the pupils of the language that he/she speaks. Culture has a close link with language and nobody can separate both of them. A competent teacher cannot neglect the cultural factor during his teaching process. There are so many approaches available to follow in English Language Teaching (ELT) but this study covers the Teachers' and students' perceptions and vision about the significance of an Intercultural approach in ELT At the point when people from particular gatherings meet up, their experience, encounters, society, and language all consolidate to encourage the sharing of importance and comprehension through communication. This mix makes special and particular gatherings of people which add to the impression of each other, accordingly constraining the capacity of societies to convey viably. Having a rich background, culture is implicated in every instance of language in use. In this scenario, culture is reflected in people's habitual patterns of interaction, routine forms of social practice, recurrent uses of the symbol and framework of value and belief. Language as a code is finite while cultures are boundless and it is difficult to anticipate what features of contexts will be significant for communication.

The purpose of the study is to find the role of intercultural theory in promoting intercultural communicative competence. This study measures the perceptions and attitudes of teachers and second language learners as to what role can culture play in language

learning. The purpose of the study is to shed light on increasingly important roles intercultural communication in ELT and the necessity to develop students' intercultural communicative competence. This research anticipates creating awareness among language learners to observe and understand how their culture influences their interaction with individuals of other cultures. This study examines the centrality of developing intercultural awareness, and to distinguish the role of culture that plays in correspondence, decides the issues and results identified with intercultural communication.

This study aims to highlight intercultural communication in ELT to develop students` intercultural communicative competence. This study emphasizes the increasingly important role of intercultural communication in ELT and the necessity to develop with its principal objective to impart intercultural competence in second language learners. This study focuses on raising the awareness of intercultural communication, understanding of intercultural communicative competence in ELT. It also promises to alert the learners to the operation of cultural differences by providing techniques for comparing target culture with their home culture.

The study will answer the following research questions:

1. How does the intercultural theory help the L2 learners explore the differences between the target and home culture?
2. To what extent does the intercultural approach help L2 learners in achieving communicative competence?
3. What strategies can be adopted in implementing the intercultural theory in ELT?

1.2 Significance of the Study

- It is argued that this study will help the ELT educators in encouraging intercultural communication and also enhancing communication tasks among L2 learners of various societies.
- The current study will also be beneficial to perceive the teachers' and learners' behavior, perceptions, opinions, and preferences.
- The study focuses on teachers' and students' preferences in teaching and learning about other cultures, i.e. their preferred topics, resources, and methods.

- Teaching pedagogies always need time to establish and it is enforced that, within academic discourse, they are analyzed and evaluated according to how well they are recognized and what prerequisites to be done to improve them.

1.3 Research Methodology

The present study constitutes a qualitative approach. This research has been conducted at the University of Central Punjab and University of Management and Technology, Lahore. With convenient sampling and questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. Two hundred students of BS, B.COM, BBA and M.BA level and 50 teachers have been served with the questionnaire. The eclectic approach was adopted to collect data. The population undertaken for the study consisted of 200 students of BS and master level from different public and private universities of Lahore District. Besides this, for more genuine and authentic data, 50 English language teachers of different institutions were also being served with the questionnaire.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the mid to late 1980s, various educators and educationalists have been contending that an 'intercultural methodology' to second dialect show prompts us to rethink the most fundamental suspicions about what dialect does, and what a dialect course ought to try to accomplish. Current "communicative" strategies for showing the second dialect typically watch dialect as a medium or channel of organizing or arranging a data vacuum. Open dialect adapting additionally presumes that by crossing over a succession of data holes, learners will intuitively broaden their space of semantic information, examples, ways and aptitudes, in the end to the position where they will achieve local speaker competence.

This investigation of language and etymological development has been slanted to disparage society. Stern (1992) takes note of that, in spite of a supported and reliable collection of work, especially in America, attracting consideration regarding the significance of society in language instructing, "the cultural component has remained difficult to accommodate in practice". Truth be told, the social

substance was frequently stripped from learning materials. Pulverness (1996) says ELT in the 1970s:

> "English was seen as a means of communication which should not be bound to culturally-specific conditions of use but should be easily transferable to any cultural setting. Authenticity was a key quality, but only insofar as it provided reliable models of language in use. The content was important as a source of motivation, but it was seen as equally important to avoid material which might be regarded as 'culture-bound'" Pulverness (1996).

The entire time since the 1970s till a significant part of the 1980s, educational programs configuration, syllabus and materials composing were propelled by necessities investigation, and the section of society was subordinated to presentation destinations. Be that as it may, all the more as of late, there have been new endeavors to incorporate "culture" into the open educational modules. While recognizing the conspicuous significance of dialect as a method for conveying data, backers of an intercultural approach additionally underscore its social capacities; for instance, the procedures in which dialect is utilized by speakers and journalists to talk about their position in social and shared gatherings and chains of importance. It has for quite some time been clear that the routes in which these arrangements happen to change from group to group.

Guilherme (2002) argues that the possible focus of an intercultural viewpoint on language educating and learning is not so many local speakers like competence, but instead an intercultural communicative skill. Intercultural informative ability includes the bent to fathom the dialect and conduct of the pointed group and explains it to partners of the home-group – and the other way around. Considering another way, an intercultural approach trains learners to be envoys or negotiators, competent to watch different and assorted societies from a viewpoint of well-familiar perception, absorption and comprehension. This target effectively uproots the revered, if once in a while accomplished, the motivation behind instructing learners to perform local speaker competency or capability. Noticeably, one prime goal of an intercultural approach keeps on being dialect development and extension; by and by, this target gets hitched to the equally basic goal of intercultural comprehension and mediation.

The English language educating has for some time been a multidisciplinary field practically speaking, however, it has drawn primarily upon examination in phonetics and brain research for its hypothetical bits of knowledge. An intercultural approach keeps on drawing upon these controls, however, gives level with weight to different regions of examination and practice in the humanities and sociologies. Some of these orders, for example, humanities and scholarly studies, are entrenched; others, for example, media and social studies, are moderately youthful and as yet creating. The presentation of ethnography, characterized comprehensively as 'the logical investigation of various races and societies', into school and college remote language learning is most nearly related in Britain with the work of Byram (1997) and his partners.

Defenders of the ethnographic way to deal with language learning recognize that it includes tolerating another arrangement of purposes for dialect learning and educating. Investigation of a fruitful learner from Lao recommends that her capacity to decipher the occasional outsider requests of the staff and her pleasure in taking care of those requests were a key component in her prosperity: Her balanced way to deal with social securing empowered her to remain back and analyze the principles – decides that empowered her to make analogies about errands, to comprehend the way of higher request thinking aptitudes (e.g. examining), to endeavor models and to structure new talk. She discovered the joy in grappling with this remote society and its inaccessible workforce. Unmistakably, not each learner picks up joy from distinguishing and adjusting to the requests of teachers will effectively or inactively oppose accommodating, and challenge the standards of their educators. In any case, an intercultural approach the acknowledgment that groups bunch around an arrangement of shared objectives, qualities and convictions which are explained in and through various sorts of dialect and conduct – ought to help learners recognize all the more unmistakably those groups with which they wish to adjust themselves, to watch the way they work, and to arrange all the more successfully their own place in these groups.

At last, in the event that the sum total of what guideline has been fruitful, what ought to our "intercultural" L2 learner resemble? As officially noticed, the talked or implicit objective of L2 guideline

and learning has been "native speaker", an amorphous and infrequently accomplished objective. As Loveday (1981) watches, the idea of local speaker ability has been liable to re-assessment in the course of recent decades Kachru (1986) and Byram's advancement of "intercultural" informative fitness' further prompts a reconsideration of 'local speaker' capability as a definitive objective of language learning. Intercultural L2 learners are both less and more talented than a monolingual local speaker. They are less talented in so far as they don't have complete competence in the L2 language system.

Errors have dependably been judged cruelly by L2 educators, however, most likely less brutally by those outside the instructive framework. Kachru (1999) argues that the rule for "right" spoken in English for the L2 learner is Standard English, which is itself in light of a codification of a composed assortment of the dialect utilized by the informed and intense. A little number of local English-speakers totally fit in with Standard English in their own particular open or international yield, yet at the same time today, when recordings have presented an extraordinary assortment of accents into the L2 classroom, there is still moderately minimal orderly consideration paid to non-standard language.

3. DESCRIPTION OF DATA ANALYSIS

One sample *t*-test is a statistical procedure often performed for testing the mean value of a distribution. It can be used under the assumption that the sampled distribution is normal.

Table: 1 One-Sample Statistics

	Test Value = 4					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Intercultural Awareness of a language facilitates second language learners	-1.689	249	.093	-.120	-.26	.02
Fulfills the gap among cultures	-1.413	249	.159	-.104	-.25	.04
Language behavior	-4.503	249	.000	-.320	-.46	-.18
Culture and language are linked together	-.532	249	.595	-.036	-.17	.10
English is a link language	3.642	249	.000	.224	.10	.35
Cultural knowledge allows learning English language Independently.	1.010	249	.313	.056	-.05	.17

Different cultural backgrounds	-3.246	249	.001	-.236	-.38	-.09
Development of better relationships	.594	249	.553	.036	-.08	.16
Communication skills vs. high level jobs	-6.954	249	.000	-.576	-.74	-.41
Intercultural knowledge in ELT	-1.937	249	.054	-.128	-.26	.00
Teachers defined set of purposes	-3.405	249	.001	-.224	-.35	-.09
Development of communicative competence	-6.839	249	.000	-.540	-.70	-.38
Students' performance in language learning.	-4.221	249	.000	-.300	-.44	-.16
Teacher's high degree of motivation	-6.954	249	.000	-.576	-.74	-.41
Learning outcomes	-1.937	249	.054	-.128	-.26	.00
Role of activity based learning	-3.405	249	.001	-.224	-.35	-.09

From the above table it can be seen that for the question statement highlighted in red color the T -statistics (observed) values lie outside the range (-2., +2) and the P-value of these categories are less than Significance value= 0.05 so we will reject our null hypothesis and go in favor of the alternative hypothesis for these statements. For the remaining questions, we will accept the null hypothesis because the P-value of these categories is greater than the Significance value= 0.05.

HYPOTHESIS:

Statement

> **H₀:** The average response of the respondents for intercultural communication fulfills the gap among cultures is found as "agree".
>
> **H₁:** The average response of the respondents for intercultural communication fulfills the gap among cultures is not found as "agree".

Level of Significance

> We set the level of significance at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Test Statistic

> The statistic is given by

$$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu_0}{s/\sqrt{n}}$$

Calculations

> The value of test statistic from the sample data is: ***t = .159***

P -value:

> Reject H₀ if p-value $\leq \alpha$

Accept H_o if p-value $> α$
Sign value = .750

As it falls in the acceptance region, so Ho is accepted and we conclude that the average response of the respondents for intercultural communication fulfills the gap among cultures is found as "agree".

4. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we'll try to recapitulate all the findings of our study. It provides a quick look at the topic, research questions and the analysis of these questions. The present research has been conducted to study "A descriptive study of An Intercultural Approach in English Language Teaching: A Study of Students' and Teachers' Perception in Pakistan". Then the sample population was collected from various campuses in the Lahore region. A sample of 250 populations was selected for research purposes out of which 200 were the students and 50 were teachers. A questionnaire was developed in the English language with the utmost considerations of the research problem. The descriptions and reports of all the variables were found. One sample T-test was used to enunciate how much variation is explicated by the required results. Bar graphs and tables have also been used to show the graphic description of the research data. The graphic descriptions of the research data have been manifested scrupulously through bar graphs and tables.

4.1 Findings
Analyzing the hypotheses statistically tested, it is crystal clear that the results established the facts about the significant role of the Intercultural approach for second language learners and dynamic aspects of language and culture, it would provide reliable information that can be inferred to reach the final conclusions. Moreover, it is substantial to establish that opinion and estimation of either group of samples do not stand as a criterion. However, it replicates views of "An Intercultural Approach for English Language learning at the graduate and postgraduate level in Pakistan". It is also evident by reference to a theoretical framework of this study, that intercultural approach is a key component and mediator for Second language

learning (English) at the graduate and post-graduate level in Pakistan. Furthermore, with the relevance of the present study, this is an eye-opener fact that in the Intercultural approaches the dexterity and competence of the teacher play a powerful role as he is the mainstream, a live wire and key to success for students by enhancing their communicative competence. Being a facilitator enables the students to acquire their anticipated goals-communicative competence.

The gender classification is in such a way as both the male and female were in different numbers, i.e. 100 males and 150 females, 40% male 60%females. It is being observed that the majority of respondents are below 25 years old i.e. 90% and 10% of the respondents were above 25 years old.

The researcher has elucidated the minute difference between male and female respondents. It was found that the majority of the respondents are agreed with the proposition that an Intercultural awareness of a language facilitates second language learners, only 7% students disagreed. The majority of the respondents have agreed positively the hypothesis language fulfills the gap among cultures, only 4% participants disagreed.

The results indicate that the majority of the participants are agreed with the statement that learning a language means learning a new kind of behavior and values only .5% strongly disagreed from this standpoint.

The findings appear to express this significant point that the greater part of the respondents are agreed that English is mainly a link language across cultures today, only .5% contestants disagreed. The present study illustrates strongly that the majority of the participants have accepted the hypothesis cultural knowledge allows learning the English language independently in enhancing communication skills, only .5% of respondents disagreed. This fact was also discovered through data analysis that the majority of the students has agreed about cultural knowledge allows learning the English language independently as enabling them to communicate and keeping in touch with all modern developments in global perspective through English language learning with its acute cultural knowledge, but only .5% contestants disagree with this query. A majority of respondents are agreed to cultural awareness enables the

second language learners to communicate with people of different cultural backgrounds in this context English language helps people to bring closer to each other as a common link language, a source of communication only .6% disagreed. The study demonstrates that the majority of the respondents have approved the premise an intercultural communication is necessary for English language learning for the development of better relationships because of its being a global language on the other hand only .5% contradict this investigation. It is credible to note that the majority of the respondents have approved the notion that communicative competence helps second language learners in getting high-level jobs 38.4% agreed.

The result did indicate that most of the teachers (40.8%agreed) inveterate the proposition an intercultural approach provides teachers a clearly defined set of purposes. Analysis denotes the notion that most of the teachers (40.8) were agreed that activity-based learning plays a dynamic role in developing intercultural communicative competence. It is notable that respondents did not show a significant difference in their opinion about the assumption an intercultural knowledge is indispensable in English language teaching as 35.2% confirmed the statement with conviction. Again the findings on this question appear to express that there is not the major variance in responses as the statement presented 33.6% teachers agreed that an intercultural study helps teachers to develop communicative competence of second language learners and 20% disagreed though it is not a minute difference of opinion from the side of respondents.

Regarding prerequisite goals of study the findings of this notion are of significant importance as the majority of teachers (44%agreed) confirmed an intercultural knowledge affects students' performance in language learning. It is observed that most participants showed their consensus about this query increased the consistency of the statement. The study shows that the majority of the English language instructors (38.4%) are agreed that a high degree of motivation contributes to improving students' language learning skills. Respondents had interpreted this question in the same way, as a result, revealed no significant difference (35.2%) about intercultural knowledge helps second language teachers in achieving desired

learning outcomes. Some of the differences between these two results may be related to the respondents' diverse perceptions and priorities about a high degree of motivation and achieving desired learning goals.

The results of the study clearly disclose the fact that the learners of the English language in Pakistan are highly motivated as there are a higher number of respondents showing their consent for the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" options for enhancing their language skills in the questionnaire. Thus the primary motivational orientation of English language learners in Pakistan is towards career and educational enhancement as English has become the major medium of instruction in the country. The results show that the learners of both graduates as well as post-graduate level are more motivated to learn this language in order to enable them to cope with the global challenges, access the online material for their assignments and study purposes, going abroad for higher studies and improving their oral presentation skills via the English language.

On the contrary, there is a small number of respondents who are inclined to learn English in order to interact with native English speakers, to enjoy English music and literature. On the contrary, their entire motivation and their major drive behind their effort to learn the English language is getting high-level jobs and to avail the opportunities from the global perspective.

4.2 Suggestions and Recommendations

The present study recommends the following steps to be taken in developing intercultural communicative competence as well as strategies for the teaching of the English language in Pakistan. These include:

- Language-based activities should be introduced in conventional classroom settings.
- English language teachers should be well aware of how to incorporate Intercultural Approach in the L2 learning class.
- Discussion activities should be organized with a good learning atmosphere in class in pairs or in groups to encourage the learners to interact in L2.

- Intercultural research-based journals and magazines should be published to make the students aware of innovations and development in respective fields.
- For enhancement of creativity and language and communication skills, there should be online, blogs along with the course websites should be introduced.
- Teacher training programs should be arranged by the public or private sector to incorporate cultural awareness among English language teachers.
- The open discussion forum should be organized to motivate Pakistani learners.
- To reduce students' stress and anxiety that usually generated during the cross-cultural interaction among the learners.
- For cross-cultural orientation, English language teachers should engage their students in using the language interactively. They should prepare the lesson plans, innovative language learning activities to enhance the confidence and communication skills of L2 learners.

4.3 Area for further Research

Unfortunately, in Pakistan, no crucial research work is done on the Intercultural approach in ELT in recent decades. But it is the need of the time that revolutionary efforts are required to meet such challenges in this field. It is necessary to carry out and extend research in intercultural studies in English language teaching at all levels. Research should also be carried out on how to overcome the problems of intercultural knowledge in ELT. There is a dire need to conduct research in this field to enhance the communicative competence of L2 learners in the Pakistani perspective.

5. CONCLUSION

It is clear that intercultural communication is significantly imperative in English language teaching in Pakistan as English has increasingly become an international language and Pakistani learners have more and more chances to be involved in intercultural communication. The present research study focuses on the increasingly important role of

intercultural communication in ELT and the necessity to develop students' intercultural communicative competence.

It is crystal clear that the integration of cultural awareness into language teaching is of immense value in developing students' communicative competence. The present research also sheds light on a very important fact, i.e. the development of linguistic competence and communicative competence is equally important. Various researchers are consistent in their claim to consider culture as a fifth language skill with other four language skills, i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In this stance, the prime purpose of ELT is to maximize the effectiveness of intercultural approaches to empower language learners. The study offers insights into how language teachers and learners can incorporate intercultural dimensions through language teaching practices. The results of this study also highlight that adapting to a new culture can have quite positive and optimistic outcomes. However, motivation and emotion play critical role in intercultural communication.

REFERENCES

[1] Byram, M. (1997a) Cultural studies and foreign language teaching. In Bassnett (ed.) Studying British Cultures (pp. 53–64). London: Routledge.
[2] Klauer, K. C., & Stern, E. (1992). How attitudes guide memory-based judgments: A two-process model. Journal of experimental social psychology, 28(2), 186-206.
[2] Byram, M. (1997b) Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
[3] Pulverness, A. (1996) Worlds within words: Literature and British Cultural Studies. In David A. Hill (ed.) Papers on Teaching Literature from The British Council's Conferences in Bologna 1994 and Milan 1995. The British Council, Italy.
[4] Guilherme, M. (2002) Critical Citizens for an Intercultural World. Foreign Language Education as Cultural Politics. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

[5] Byram, M. and Fleming, M. (eds) (1993) Language Learning in Intercultural Perspective: Approaches Through Drama and Ethnography. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[6] Loveday, L. (1981) The Sociolinguistics of Learning and Using a Non-Native Language. Oxford: Pergamon.

[7] Kachru, B. (1986) The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of NonNativeEnglishes.Oxford: Pergamon Press.

[8] Kachru, Y. (1999) Culture, context and writing. In E. Hinkel (ed.) Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning (pp. 75–89). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[9] Widdowson, H. G. (1994) The ownership of English. TESOL Quarterly, 28 (2): 377–379