

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



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Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages  
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**Sociocultural Aspects and Pedagogical Implications of  
Iranian EFL Students' Biculturality and Bilinguality  
Within Cultural Awareness**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Ph.D. in Teaching  
English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

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Tehran, Iran  
2012



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Entitled:

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Be Accepted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

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Tehran, Iran

2012

## To My Teachers

*Having reserved the thought*

*That:*

My Grandparents were my *Dreamland* Teachers,

My Parents are my *Real-life* Teachers,

My Students my *All-time* Teachers,

My Friends my *Best-time* Teachers,

&

My *Teacher* Teachers' badge of honour

I'll behold loud and proud.

## **Abstract**

This study, based on the *Investment Hypothesis* of language learning, attempted to investigate MA EFL Iranian students' personal identity development in the course of their L2 learning and its due effect on their achieved proficiency in English language. L2 learners' investment to reconstruct their identity in the course of their L2 learning was investigated in this work. Five personality features, recognized as Multicultural Personality Traits (MPTs), Cultural Empathy (CE), Open-mindedness (OM), Social Initiative (SI), Emotional Stability (ES), and Flexibility (FL) were measured in the community of Iranian EFL students by means of using Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ). Participants in this study were 104 BA, 80 MA, 31 Ph.D. EFL students, 72 Persian language and 30 English language native students.

MA EFL students' biculturality, measured in English-language-dominated context and Persian-language-dominated context, revealed that their total MPTs in these two contexts were not significantly different, but their manifested CE, OM, and FL in English and Persian contexts were found to be significantly different. Iranian MA EFL students' divergence from their L1 cultural norms investigated revealed that MPTs and OM of EFL and Persian language students were significantly different. Investigation on MA EFL students' convergence on their L2 cultural disclosed that there was a statistically significant difference at the  $p \leq 0.05$  level in MPTs, CE, and OM among EFL, Persian language and English language native students.

Iranian EFL students' degree of MPTs development in the course of their EFL studies from BA to MA and to Ph.D. was found to be significantly different in these three stages of their academic studies. The investigations on the relationship between MA EFL students' MPTs and their English language proficiency revealed that there were significant positive high correlations between TOEFL & MPTs [ $r = .62$ ] in the high-proficiency EFL students, whereas there were no significant correlations between TOEFL and MPTs in the low-proficiency EFL students. These findings proved that the higher the EFL proficiency, the higher the MPTs, and consequently the shorter the distance between EFL and English language native students' MPTs.

Finally the effect of teaching EFL with a cultural consciousness raising orientation on MPTs development revealed no significant difference from T<sub>1</sub> to T<sub>2</sub> in total MPTs of the participants, but their CE was found to be significantly different from T<sub>1</sub> to T<sub>2</sub>. An independent sample *t*-test conducted on post-tests data of CG and EG found no significant differences.

The findings of this study concluded that advancement in EFL students' academic career resulted in a concomitant development in their MPTs. It also supported the understanding that language learning and cultural acquisition develop abreast, a unified process that gradually reconstructs EFL students' identities in a style different from their monolingual counterparts.

## Acknowledgements

First of all, I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to **Dr. Khatib**, whose passionate and humanistic approach to TEFL during my studies deeply impressed me and constituted the very first seeds of this study; furthermore, it was for his kind and corrective guidelines, as the advisor of my thesis, that this Ph.D. work came into existence and was finally accomplished.

I also owe a great deal of debt to **Dr. Marefat** and **Dr. Tajeddin**, whose full support and significant guidelines throughout this study helped me direct my chaotic thoughts into an academic frame. I am really appreciative of their kindness.

I am extremely grateful to all my dear professors at Allameh University, especially **Dr. Fahim**, whose encouraging words, in the very first place, helped me to start my Ph.D. studies and whose ideas have always been a source of inspiration of innovative and humanitarian thoughts to me.

The respected professors at TEFL and Translation Departments who provided me with opportunities to conduct the experiments and questionnaires in their classes and meanwhile gave me very useful suggestions to enrich my work have carved sign on my soul as if on stones.

I would like to express my best regards to **Pro. Van Oudenhoven**, Professor at The University of Groningen in the Netherlands, who let me have a copy of his MPQ plus the permission to use it in this study and **Dr. Behjo** who took the responsibility of conducting MPQ at Indiana University in the USA among English language native students and sent me the collected data.

Finally, I am appreciative of the kindness of my friends and the students' who spent their precious time completing the questionnaires: *thanks, thanks, thanks*.

Last but not the least; I would like to present my best words to my extended family members who were always on my side helping me by their tolerance of the hard times I had created for them in these years.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>CE:</b>	Cultural Empathy
<b>L1C:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Language Culture
<b>L2C:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Language Culture
<b>EADL:</b>	English as an Additional Language
<b>IEFLS:</b>	Iranian EFL Students
<b>ES:</b>	Emotional Stability
<b>FI:</b>	Flexibility
<b>IMAEFLS:</b>	Iranian MA EFL Students
<b>MPQ:</b>	Multicultural Personality Questionnaire
<b>MPTs:</b>	Multicultural Personality Traits
<b>OM:</b>	Open-Mindedness
<b>SAD:</b>	Sociocultural Acquisition Device
<b>SI:</b>	Social Initiative

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# Chapter One

# **Introduction**

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## 1.1. Background

There is no doubt that language and culture are intertwined with each other and neither one's supremacy can be established over the other one. It is almost impossible to understand all the subtleties of a foreign culture without mastering its language (Kramsch, 2005). On the other hand mastering a foreign language without a complete understanding of its culture is also next to impossible (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). Kramsch (2005) in describing the integration between language and culture believes that language expresses, embodies, and "symbolizes cultural reality." That is why almost all language learning programs and materials either intentionally or inevitably include cultural aspects of language alongside its linguistic features. Agar (1994 cited in Risager 2006, p. 112) states that "culture is in language and language is loaded with culture." Chastain (1988, p. 298) states that "language and culture are inseparably bound" and Eglin (2000, p. 27) asserts that "language and culture are inseparable." Studies on L2 learning with an eye on its cultural aspects also support the understanding that language learning is concomitant with cultural acquisition and this process which results in identity construction is materialized through socializations or meaningfully contextualized interactions (Fogle 2007; Hinkel, 2006). Therefore, it can be concluded that a seamless bound between culture and language creates a unified body and it becomes very difficult to have cases of L2 learning without its culture (L2C) juxtaposing itself upon the learning process.

There have been attempts to coin linguistic terms to present the unanimity of language and culture. "Languaculture" is introduced by Agar (1994, cited in Risager, 2006) to capture the unanimity of culture and language and it is defined as the sum of what one possess, i.e. culture and what one is the "spokesman of", i.e. language. Therefore,