



Alzahra University
Faculty of Literature, Languages, and History

A Thesis Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Title

A Qualitative Study of Culture Teaching and Learning:
Iranian EFL Teachers' and Learners' Beliefs

Thesis Advisor

Elaheh Sotoudehnama, Ph.D.

By

Parisa Mehran

September 2012

In the Name of God



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کلیه دستاوردهای این تحقیق متعلق به دانشگاه الزهرا (س) است.

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Alzahra University

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I hereby confirm that the whole of this thesis and any articles derived from it for publication are completely original, and that if clear evidence existed to the contrary, I submit to any grade that my supervisor decides on, as well as any kind of punishment that the department approves, such as revoking my degree, pecuniary retribution, and/or suing in a legal court.

Signature:

Date:

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Submitted for the degree of:

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Name of student:

.....

Name of supervisor:

.....

University and department:

.....
.....

Dedicated to

My dear mother-in-law

And

My dear dad

May God bless their souls to rest in peace

Acknowledgments

"Acknowledgements cannot be seen as merely a naïve listing of gratitude.... For research students, the genre has a potentially important role in reconciling their individual achievement with the interpersonal debts incurred in completing the study."

(Hyland & Tse, 2004, p. 261)

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Abstract

Culture has always been the center of attention in English language teaching (ELT) and there are arguments for and against its teaching. This study is an attempt to explore Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' beliefs about teaching/learning the target (i.e., American or British) culture in the realm of ELT; it also tries to arrive at a definition of culture based on the interpretations of Iranian EFL teachers and learners. Twenty full time and part time instructors of the English Language and Literature Department of Alzahra University attended the present study. Eighty nine undergraduate students of the teacher participants who were non-English majors also participated in the present study. In this study, a qualitative research method was used. To achieve triangulation, the data were collected from three main sources of questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The findings revealed that both the teachers and learners of this study mainly perceived culture in terms of small c culture and in its sociological sense, including beliefs, behaviors, traditions, customs, and way of living. In general, the results of this study demonstrated that most of the teachers and learners supported teaching/learning the target culture in ELT. However, this advocacy was not blind and they believed some prerequisites should be met. Moreover, both the teachers and the learners emphasized that learning the target culture does not mean accepting that culture and the purpose of teaching the target culture is just to make the learners familiar with and aware of the target culture.

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