



# Relationship between Teachers' Pragmatic Competence and Iranian EFL Learners' Acculturation

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**Abstract:** *The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers' pragmatic competence and Iranian EFL Learners' acculturation. The study was conducted on 80 Iranian students aged 18-21 who were selected from among 140 accessible students based on the results of OPT from Homayezarrin and Pejwak language institutes in Zarrinshahr. In order to control the effect of language proficiency, only intermediate-level students were asked to proceed with the rest of the investigation. Teachers' pragmatic knowledge was assessed through using multiple discourse completion test (MDCT) and students' level of acculturation through the acculturation questionnaire. Then the results were correlated in order to find out whether teachers' pragmatic knowledge plays any role in acculturation of Iranian EFL students or not. The results exhibited a significant relationship between the students' overall level of acculturation and their teachers' pragmatic knowledge. In addition, the results indicated that there was no significant difference between Iranian male and female acculturation as far as teachers' pragmatic knowledge was concerned. The findings of the current study led to the suggestions to improve Iranian EFL learners' English learning and their pragmatic knowledge in particular.*

**Key words:** *pragmatic knowledge, acculturation, EFL learners*

## INTRODUCTION

Communication regardless of its kind may happen between people of same culture and language or of different cultures. There are often more problems in cross-cultural communication which happens between people of different cultural backgrounds than in communication between people of the same cultural background. Each participant may interpret the other's speech according to his/her own cultural conventions and expectations. If the cultural conventions of the speaker are widely different, misinterpretations and misunderstandings can easily arise, even result in total breakdown of communication (Richards, 1985).

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In fact, conveying messages especially while producing a foreign language whose native speakers have different culture is something which curriculum designers should consider in the process of developing a sound educational program. A lot of researchers around the world have tried to show the importance of such awareness in their researches and studies (Devine, Baum, and Hearn, 2009; Tayyebi&Zare, 2014; Frank, 2013). That is, in order to prepare language learners for today's fast-paced world and aiding them

to turn into communicatively competent in a foreign language, a need for moving away from previous theoretical frameworks which considered language as a formal system based on grammatical rules towards a more communicative perspective has become a major issue on the agenda. In addition, teachers' pragmatic competence is another issue which can be addressed in this field and find out its possible relation with cultural awareness of EFL learners.

Indeed, language is affected and shaped by culture and it is the basis of culture. Some social scientists state that without language, culture would not be possible. In the broad sense, language is the symbolic representation of people and it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking (Deng Yanchang, 1989). A close relationship can be seen between language and culture from the above definitions, that is to say, they interact with each other. On the one hand, they evolved together and have been equally dependent throughout their history and understanding one requires understanding of the other. On the other hand, cultures are different from one another, therefore languages are diverse. Consequently, teaching English well means more than simply teaching learners the vocabulary, structures and grammars. It means teaching them how to slip into the English culture without their foreignness exposed as well. Learners should be informed how native speakers of English see the world and how the English language reflects the ideas, customs, and behavior of their society. In other words, to have a good command of grammatical rules of a language contributes to accuracy of sentence structures whereas familiarity with as much cultural knowledge of that language as possible guarantees discourse appropriateness. Only with the combination of language competence and cultural awareness can language accomplish its communicative function.

Considering EFL learners' cultural awareness, (Devine et al. 2009) maintained that cultural and social theories should be applied in practice and putting them in the curriculum plays a very important role in developing cultural diversity competencies and skills. In addition, (Tayebi and Zare, 2014) mentioned, cultural understanding is something without which communicative competence in the target language will not be achieved and it's the core of language acquisition. Besides, they believed that such kind of understanding and engaging in the target language, particularly Western countries' cultures can harm their own cultures and beliefs. (Frank, 2013) had made similar effort to maintain that having acquaintance with the grammar, syntax, phonetics, and some other social conventions is not enough to understand and have a real understanding of native speakers' culture, and a part of language learning should be familiarity with the culture.

Bearing in mind the increasingly intercultural dimension of communication in the 21st century, one of the aims in EFL pedagogy has been to ensure the development of the learners' intercultural awareness and to improve their capability to communicate efficiently and properly in different situations. In other words, the changing pedagogical perspective has had a significant impact on EFL teaching-learning process and also on its indispensable component that is the course books. Consistent with a view of language as an intercultural behavior, course books are considered to be one of the most important tools used particularly in an EFL setting (Altbach, 1991). As Herlihy (1992) highlights the proof is so obvious and great that course books and other print materials are a key part of the teaching-learning process.

Actually, due to the inseparable relationship between language and culture, there has been an increase in the number of language educators who emphasize the significant role of culture in the ELT classroom. For instance, (McKay, 2002) noted that the integration of cultural components into language teaching can increase motivation in a language class. (Nault, 2006) invited scholars, language educators and practitioners to reconsider the existing condition of cultures and their representation for the development of EIL. He pointed out that English educators should also pay attention to other target cultures besides British and American. Additionally, ELT specialists should select and design the curriculum using international source materials.

In the same vein, defining culture is a not an easy task. (Brown, 2000) defines culture as "the ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools that characterize a given group of people in a given period of time". Information, thoughts and feelings are conveyed by language in a language community or culture (Brown, 2000). Moreover, (Fantini, 1995) pointed out the interdependent relationship between language and culture since language affects and reflects culture and vice-versa. Echoing Fantini, Brown stated that language and culture are closely connected and are inseparable. Language is regarded as a means by which people communicate and interact with others, which in turn is responsible for cultural development. Indeed, culture and language are so interdependent that knowledge of cultural contexts and frames is essential for successful and effective language use in both one's mother tongue and target language. As (Thompson, 1993) indicates, knowledge of social values, norms of behavior and interaction, and cultural

discourse can be considered as a crucial component of overall linguistic competence. Likewise, language functions as a primary agent in the transmission of cultural knowledge.

Actually, target culture knowledge has long been a main component in the English classroom because it enhances student motivation toward learning languages (McKay, 2002). The author's consideration of using target culture in the classroom makes it possible for users from different societies to make optimal use of the same materials in both EFL and ESL contexts. Also, since it is difficult for native English speaking ELT textbook writers to source cultural data other than from their own culture, they should look to the target culture for that information (Alptekin, 1993). Thus, the links between culture, language teaching deserve a closer investigation.

Furthermore, students' attitude has frequently been reported to be an essential component of second language learning pedagogy (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993). (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), (Ellis, 1985) and (Dörnyei, 1994, 2001) hold that attitude is one of the essential factors shaping the rate, proficiency, and accomplishment of L2 learning. Attitude, being negative and positive, is believed to have a strong impact on students' success in language learning. In fact, learners with a positive attitude towards the target culture and its people can learn the target language better than those who do not have such positive attitude (Chamber, 1999; Gardner, 1985).

In fact, language learning goals and attitudes are central concepts in L2 learning research (Gardner, 1985, 2000). So far, nonetheless, it is not known how having different goals and attitudes for learning an L2 affects adaptation in the foreign culture. This adaptation process, referred to as acculturation, characterizes the changes that happen once individuals from diverse cultures come into continuous and direct contact (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936; Berry, 1997; Castro, 2003). Since learning an L2 in a foreign country entails living of individuals in a different culture, face exposure to unknown experiences and to some extent, adapting to the new culture (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000; Rocas, Horenczyk & Schwartz, 2000), the link between motives, goals and acculturation is very vital.

As said by (Gardner, 1979), since acquiring an L2 requires a person to include aspects of another culture into his or her own life space, in the process of L2 acquisition the student's harmony with his own cultural community and his readiness or capability to identify with other cultural communities become important considerations. Therefore, acculturation experiences relating to both the native culture and the mainstream culture represent a relevant psychological outcome of L2 learning. Moreover, the acculturative changes that take place once individuals from diverse cultures come into contact with each other are relevant to individual experience since they can influence the experience of stress (Dona & Berry, 1994), adaptation (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999) and psychological well-being (Downie, Koestner, El Geledi & Cree, 2004).

Traditionally, language classrooms have been considered as poor input environments for developing pragmatic ability in a TL. Compared to real interaction outside the classroom, classroom discourse is functionally and formally limited for the achievement of this goal. This statement is associated not with the instructed character of these learning contexts per se but with the ways in which SL and EFL classrooms are organized to enable or prevent the acquisition of the TL pragmatics. It is an undeniable fact that teacher fronted initiation –response– follow-up (IRF) is an unproductive format for the development of pragmatic and discursual abilities in the classroom. As (Cook, 2001) states, EFL instructional settings are characterized by restricted input and practice due to two facts. First, the TL tends to be treated as an object of study instead of as a means of socialization and a communication tool and second, that classroom organization is teacher-fronted. In consequence, one function of pragmatic instruction is to compensate for incomplete or misleading input offered to learners by academic talk, instruction, and L2 learning materials. Other researchers have characterized traditional teacher-student talk as an unequal status encounter, where the teacher's speech does not serve as a good model for the speech of the learners (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1996). Similarly, (Mir, 1992) found that instruction sometimes emphasizes one semantic formula over others, encouraging the inappropriate overuse of some formulas. Likewise, the vast majorities of L2 learning materials frequently do not present realistic input or sometimes neglect particular speech acts or language functions. Given this limitation, pragmatic instruction based on authentic and research-informed materials becomes a very helpful tool to provide L2 learners, and especially EFL learners, with contextualized, pragmatically appropriate input from early stages of acquisition.

The role of explicit pragmatic instruction becomes even more important in EFL classrooms where opportunities for the full range of human interactions are limited and in consequence learners have more difficulties in acquiring appropriate language use patterns (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). These ideas constitute a rationale for pedagogical intervention, with the two-fold goal of first, making learners aware of their previous knowledge and the ways to take advantage of it by using their existing pragmatic

foundations in appropriate sociopragmatic contexts and second, helping learners to attend to both the linguistic forms of utterances and the relevant social and contextual features with which they are associated (Schmidt, 2001).

As it can be observed in above review of studies, a good deal of previous studies has been conducted on the effect of culture learning and language learning. On the other hand, the researcher has mentioned some studies on students' attitude and language learning. But the researcher has not found any studies which have been practiced on the teachers' pragmatic knowledge and its impact on learners' acculturation. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between teachers' pragmatic competence and Iranian EFL Learners' acculturation.

### **1.3. Objectives of the study**

Teachers are the most basic source of oral use of a foreign language in EFL classes. According to Deda (2013), the definition of pragmatic should be analyzed from perspectives of users and it must take into account the different choices that speakers are able to make when using the target language, depending on the social interaction of their communication. The notion of choice leads to another aspect into consideration useful to language learners, namely, developing the ability to make the right choices among a variety of pragmatic elements. In fact, taking the disadvantage of EFL environment in terms of intercultural input into account, teachers can be considered as one of the most crucial tools playing role in these settings. Thus, the links between culture, language teaching and teachers' role in fostering students' cultural awareness deserve a closer investigation carried out with a critical eye. Therefore the present study was an effort in Iranian context to investigate the relationship between teachers' pragmatic competence and learners' acculturation and the results can be used by language practitioners and curriculum developers as well.

In fact, conveying messages especially while producing a foreign language whose native speakers are having a different culture is something which curriculum designers should consider in the process of developing a sound educational program. A lot of researchers around the world have tried to show the importance of such awareness in their researches and studies (Devine, Baum & Hearn, 2009; Tayyebi & Zare, 2014; Frank, 2013). Besides, teachers' pragmatic competence is another issue which can be addressed in this field and find out its possible relation with cultural awareness of EFL learners.

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### **1.4. Research Questions**

The following question was the focus of the current study:

1. Is there any meaning relationship between teachers' pragmatic competence and Iranian EFL Learners' Acculturation?
2. Is there any significant relationship between Iranian male and female acculturation as far as teachers' pragmatic knowledge is concerned?

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Participants**

The study was conducted on 80 Iranian students aged 18-21 who were selected from among 140 accessible students based on the results of OPT from Homayezarrin and Pejwak language institutes. In order to control the effect of language proficiency, only intermediate-level students were asked to proceed with the rest of the investigation. In order to detect the influence of the gender both male and female students were taken into consideration. That is, half of the participants in the study consisted of the males and the other half were females. In addition, to find out the relationship between the teachers' pragmatic competence

and learners' acculturation, 10 EFL teachers who were teaching the same materials namely American English File 2 were randomly selected among 30 accessible teachers and for each one of the 10 teacher 8 students including 4 males and 4 females were selected.

## **2.2. Instruments**

According to the nature of research question and instruments which were going to be used, the ideal type of study was a descriptive one. To collect the data required for finding out whether there is a relationship between the teachers' pragmatic knowledge and the amount of their learners' acculturation, the current study employed three tests.

### **2.2.1. Oxford Placement Test (OPT)**

Then the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) version 2004 was used to measure the participants' language proficiency and place them into the same level of proficiency. In other words, a proficiency test tends to test overall general language proficiency. Based on the results of the OPT, only intermediate-level students were asked to proceed with the rest of the investigation. The OPT consisted of 100 items. Fifty minutes were given for completion of this part. Test-takers were asked to read the stem with a blank and to choose one of the three options for filling in the blank. The test was in a multiple-choice format.

### **2.2.2. Multiple discourse completion test (MDCT)**

Another instrument which was used in this study in order to measure Iranian EFL teachers' pragmatic competence was a multiple discourse completion test (MDCT) by SETOGUCHI (2008) and consisted of 42 multiple questions.

### **2.2.3. Acculturation questionnaire**

Finally, the third instrument in this study was a questionnaire, which was an acculturation test by (Ashraf et al. 2013) which checked the cultural attitudes of Iranian EFL learners towards the cultural elements. In order to validate the questionnaire, two experts in the field were already asked to check and give comments on the items included in the questionnaire by the developers of it, and then it was revised. The questionnaire consisted of 44 items and was a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) "strongly agree" to (5) "no idea". The time allotted for answering the questionnaire was estimated to be 15 minutes. As for the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was run through SPSS and the estimated reliability turned out to be 0.870.

## **2.3. Procedures**

Prior to the administration of the tests, in order to control such factors as language proficiency and hence to make the sample homogeneous the researcher decided to administer a placement test namely OPT and participants were selected based on the results of the OPT. The next step of the study was conducting the MDCT among teachers who were teaching the same levels of proficiency, namely American File 2 at an intermediate level. Then their students received the questionnaire on cultural attitude to find out their level acculturation and the results were analyzed accordingly.

## **3. Results**

### **4.1. Research Null Hypotheses Analyzed**

#### **4.2.1. First Research Hypothesis: there is no significant relationship between teachers' pragmatic competence and Iranian EFL Learners' acculturation.**

Regarding the first question and to see if there is a significant relationship between teachers' pragmatic competence and Iranian EFL Learners' acculturation, the correlation coefficient of the teachers'

pragmatic knowledge and their students' level of acculturation was obtained to measure the degree and direction of association between the two tests. The results are shown in Table (4.1).

**Table (4.1) The Pearson Correlation between the teachers' pragmatic knowledge and their students' level of acculturation**

		Mean of teachers scores	Mean of students' scores
Mean of teachers scores	Pearson Correlation	1	.676*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.032
	N	10	10
Mean of students' scores	Pearson Correlation	.676*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	
	N	10	10

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results showed that there was a significant correlation between the teachers' pragmatic knowledge ( $r=0.676$ ) and their students' level of acculturation ( $p < .05$ ). Therefore, we can claim that the two variables are significantly related to each other. Thus, the research null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between teachers' pragmatic competence and Iranian EFL Learners' acculturation is rejected.

**4.2.2. Second Research Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between Iranian male and female student acculturation as far as teachers' pragmatic knowledge is concerned.**

In order to answer the second research question and to measure the effect of gender on perceived relationship of teachers pragmatic knowledge and students level of acculturation, and also to understand whether the difference between males and females, if any, was significant or not, t-test was conducted between the level of acculturation of males and females in each group of the study.

**Table 4.2. the results of t-test for level of acculturation of males and females in group 1**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
group1	Equal variances assumed	.047	.835	.517	6	.624	.26250	.50798	-.98047	1.50547
	Equal variances not assumed			.517	5.754	.625	.26250	.50798	-.99349	1.51849

According to Table 4.2, it can be seen that the amount of t-observed ( $t_{\text{observed}} = .517$ ) is not significant at the probability level of  $p = .05$  which doesn't stand for a statistically significant difference. Differently stated, for group 1 there is no significant difference between male and female students level of acculturation.

**Table 4.3. the results of t-test for level of acculturation of males and females in group 2**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
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		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
group 2	Equal variances assumed	.008	.930	-.095	6	.928	-.03250	.34347	-. .8729 5	.8079 5
	Equal variances not assumed			-.095	5.997	.928	-.03250	.34347	-. .8730 3	.8080 3

As it can be seen in Table 4.3, the amount of t-observed (t-observed= .095) is not significant at the probability level of p= .05 which doesn't stand for a statistically significant difference. Differently stated, there is also no significant difference between male and female students level of acculturation for the second group.

**Table 4.4. the results of t-test for level of acculturation of males and females in group 3**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
group3	Equal variances assumed	.306	.600	-.781	6	.465	-.37500	.48027	#####	.80018
	Equal variances not assumed			-.781	5.067	.470	-.37500	.48027	#####	.85467

According to Table 4.4, it can be seen that the amount of t-observed (t-observed= .781) is not significant at the probability level of p= .05 which doesn't stand for a statistically significant difference. In other words, there is no significant difference between male and female students level of acculturation for the third group.

**Table 4.5. the results of t-test for level of acculturation of males and females in group 4**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
group4	Equal variances assumed	5.767	.053	-.115	6	.913	-.06750	.58906	-. 1.50887	1.37387
	Equal variances not assumed			-.115	4.639	.914	-.06750	.58906	-. 1.61786	1.48286

According to Table 4.5, it can be seen that the amount of t-observed (t-observed= .115) is not significant at the probability level of p= .05 which doesn't stand for a statistically significant difference. In other words, there is no significant difference between male and female students level of acculturation for the fourth group.

**Table 4.6. the results of t-test for level of acculturation of males and females in group 5**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
group		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
5	Equal variance s assumed	.000	.989	-.891	6	.407	-.39250	.44034	- 1.4699 7	.6849 7
	Equal variance s not assumed			-.891	5.968	.407	-.39250	.44034	- 1.4713 9	.6863 9

According to Table 4.6, it can be seen that the amount of t-observed (t-observed= .891) is not significant at the probability level of p= .05 which doesn't stand for a statistically significant difference. In other words, for group 5 there is no significant difference between male and female students level of acculturation.

**Table 4.7. the results of t-test for level of acculturation of males and females in group 6**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
group		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed )	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
6	Equal variance s assumed	.377	.562	-.187	6	.858	-.09500	.50693	- 1.3354 2	1.1454 2
	Equal variance s not assumed			-.187	5.143	.859	-.09500	.50693	- 1.3872 5	1.1972 5

According to Table 4.7, it can be seen that the amount of t-observed (t-observed= .187) is not significant at the probability level of p= .05 which doesn't stand for a statistically significant difference. In other words, for group 6 there is no significant difference between male and female students level of acculturation.

**Table 4.8. the results of t-test for level of acculturation of males and females in group 7**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
group		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper



group 7	Equal variances assumed	.335	.584	1.075	6	.324	.44750	.41632	-.57120	1.46620
	Equal variances not assumed			1.075	5.858	.325	.44750	.41632	-.57723	1.47223

According to Table 4.8, it can be seen that the amount of t-observed (t-observed= 1.075) is not significant at the probability level of p= .05 which doesn't stand for a statistically significant difference. In other words, for group 7 there is no significant difference between male and female students level of acculturation.

**Table 4.9. the results of t-test for level of acculturation of males and females in group 8**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
group8	Equal variances assumed	.000	1.000	-.681	6	.521	-.34000	.49920	-.156149	.88149
	Equal variances not assumed			-.681	5.930	.522	-.34000	.49920	-.156498	.88498

According to Table 4.9, it can be seen that the amount of t-observed (t-observed= .681) is not significant at the probability level of p= .05 which doesn't stand for a statistically significant difference. In other words, for group 8 there is no significant difference between male and female students level of acculturation.

**Table 4.10. the results of t-test for level of acculturation of males and females in group 9**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed )	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
group 9	Equal variances assumed	.788	.409	-.268	6	.798	-.13500	.50464	-.136980	1.09980
	Equal variances not assumed			-.268	5.087	.800	-.13500	.50464	-.142559	1.15559

According to Table 4.10, it can be seen that the amount of t-observed (t-observed= .268) is not significant at the probability level of p= .05 which doesn't stand for a statistically significant difference. In other words, for group 9 there is no significant difference between male and female students level of acculturation.

**Table 4.11. the results of t-test for level of acculturation of males and females in group 10**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed )	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	Lower	Upper
group10	Equal variances assumed	.004	.951	.637	6	.548	.25750	.40443	-.73211	1.24711
	Equal variances not assumed			.637	5.983	.548	.25750	.40443	-.73277	1.24777

According to Table 4.11, it can be seen that the amount of t-observed (t-observed= .637) is not significant at the probability level of  $p = .05$  which doesn't stand for a statistically significant difference. In other words, for group 10 there is no significant difference between male and female students level of acculturation.

As a result, and considering the fact that all the results of t-test in all the groups showed no significant difference between male and female participants level of acculturation it can be concluded that gender had no impact on students level of acculturation as far as their teachers' pragmatic knowledge is concerned. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that "There is no significant difference between Iranian male and female acculturation as far as teachers' pragmatic knowledge is concerned." is not rejected.

#### 4. Discussion

Here those results are discussed about in details. Actually, in this study an attempt was made to further our understanding of the relationship between teachers pragmatic knowledge and cultural awareness of Iranian EFL learners hoping that the findings can bring about a positive change in the English learning and teaching at Iranian schools and universities as well.

##### 4.1.1. Is there any meaningful relationship between teachers' pragmatic competence and Iranian EFL Learners' acculturation?

Regarding the first research question of the study, the findings of the present study demonstrated that teachers pragmatic knowledge have had a significant impact on learners' acculturation. Thus, the research null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between teachers' pragmatic competence and Iranian EFL Learners' acculturation was rejected. The finding is in line with (EslamiRasekh, 2005) study that the teachers' pragmatics knowledge does influence the EFL learners' acculturation. Actually, while attending the classes through indirect way of asking the learners the researcher could see that nearly the majority of EFL learners were unconsciously under the influence of their English teachers' pragmatic knowledge.

In fact, given that language and culture are inseparable teaching culture must be an indispensable part of EFL classroom since for many EFL students the only exposure to diverse culture is inside the classroom and for them the concept of cultural learning is an unfamiliar concept. This will in turn allow them to perceive differences and similarities between the different cultures enabling the learners to progress more rapidly in their L2 learning and help them to adjust to a new culture far more expertly.

Moreover, the findings are in line with (Chow and Mok-Cheung, 2004) study by giving emphasis to the move from the traditional teaching method towards a student centered method in which instruction of pragmatic functions should be encouraged to replace traditional and common method of language teaching for the purpose of increasing EFL learners pragmatic knowledge and communicating more properly.

The findings suggested that pragmatics instruction can and must be a part of in the EFL classrooms. Therefore, to assist students to become pragmatically proficient, EFL teachers should provide sufficient pragmatic awareness and in their classroom teaching they must design tasks based on pragmatics. In fact, EFL teachers must implement language activities or teaching materials that focus on pragmatic

awareness raising so that language learners become aware of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic behavior (Kasper, 2001). That is EFL teachers should be aware that fluency in a language involves both a mastery of linguistic knowledge and pragmatic Knowledge and many times learners with a quite higher level of proficiency can face pragmatic failures. To help language learners accomplish best possible pragmatic success, teaching of pragmatic knowledge must be included in the classroom.

#### **4.1.2. Does Iranian male and female acculturation differ significantly as far as teachers' pragmatic knowledge is concerned?**

Regarding the second research question of the study the findings demonstrated that teachers there was no significant difference between Iranian male and female acculturation as far as teachers' pragmatic knowledge was concerned. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between Iranian male and female acculturation as far as teachers' pragmatic knowledge is concerned is not rejected.

The finding is in contrary with (Beiser et al. 1988) and Carballo (1994) studies that females may be more at psychological risk for acculturation than males. Actually, so far very few studies have investigated the acculturation phenomena among men and woman including (Hallowell, 1942) study that found significant differences between men and women with regard to acculturation but the researcher didn't find any difference between men and women in connection with acculturation. In fact, as (Tanaka-Matsumi et al. 1997) stated gender differences have been observed across cultures with regard to acculturation but the current research didn't find any such differences between both genders.

### **5. Conclusion**

The current study aimed to examine the relationship between teachers' pragmatic competence and Iranian EFL Learners' acculturation. Teachers' pragmatic knowledge was found to have a significant impact in this respect. It is suggested that EFL educators in Iran focus on pragmatic instruction. In fact, as said by (Thompson, 1993), knowledge of social values, norms of behavior and interaction and cultural discourse is a vital part of linguistic proficiency and in the transfer of cultural awareness, language functions as a prime agent. If one considers English language without bias, she/he will realize that there are many positive values, as well. Thus, the Iranian EFL learners can be encouraged to learn these positive such as perseverance, planning and problem solving, etc. and to those people who worry about the phenomenon of cultural attack this is very good news. Moreover, no significant difference was found between Iranian male and female acculturation as far as teachers' pragmatic knowledge was concerned. Future research may wish to replicate the present study to find out whether the findings of the current study would be the same or different in other contexts, and also to understand where and how gender differences originate.

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