

## Assessing Cultural Awareness of Basic School Teachers of "Sunrise Program"

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### *Abstract*

This study focuses on the socio-cultural aspect of English language in Sunrise Program designed for Iraqi Kurdistan Region; it investigates basic school teachers' (Henceforth BSTS) awareness of this fundamental aspect in the course of teaching English as a foreign language. The study hypothesizes that most of the teachers are not fully aware of the socio-cultural dimension of the English language, and their awareness at the level of recognition is higher than that of production. To investigate the hypotheses, the researchers design a test of twenty items to examine the performance of thirty teachers in (7th, 8th, and 9th) grades in Sulaimani city schools. The study concludes that teachers' lack of socio-cultural knowledge makes them unable to adequately shape and guide their students' learning process, and consequently leads to students' first language interference.

**Keywords:** Cultural Awareness, TEFL, Sunrise Program

## پوختہ

ئەم توپزىنەودىھە جەخت دەكەتە سەر لايەنلىكەلتورىيى زمانى ئىنگلېزىي لە پەرۇگرامى سەنپايزدا كە لە لايەن ھەرىمى كوردستانى عىرراقە وە دانراواه. توپزىنەودىھە لە بەئاگابۇون و ھۆشىارىيى مامۆستايىانى قۇناغى بىنھەرتىي لەم رەھەنەدە بنچىنەيىيە و تەنەوەدى زمانى ئىنگلېزىي وە كە زمانى بىانىي دەكۆلەتىمە. ئەم لىكۆلەتىمە كە گەرمانەي ئەھە دەكەت كە زۇرىنەي مامۆستايىان بە تەواوەتىي ئاگادارىي لايەنلى كۆمەلەتىي - كەلتورىيى زمانى ئىنگلېزىي نىن و ھەروەھا ئاستى بەئاگابۇونىي كەلتورىيىان لە ناسىنەوەدا باشترە وەك لە بەرھەمھەيىنان بۇ لى توپزىنەوە لە گەرمانەكان، توپزىمەن تاقىكىردنەوەيەكى بىيىت بىرگەيىيان دانابە بۇ تاقىكىردنەوە توانانى سى مامۆستاي قۇناغەكانى حەوتەم، ھەشتەم، و نۇيىم لە شارى سلېمانىي. توپزىنەوەكە دەگات بەو دەرئەنچامەكە نەبۇونى زانىارىي كۆمەلەتىي و كەلتورىيى مامۆستايىان وادەكەت كە بە شىۋىدەكى پىيىست و باش خويندكارەكانىيان رېنۋىنى بىكەن و پىيىان بىگەيەن، ئەمەش دەبىتە ھۆى ئەھەدى كە خويندكارەكانىيان پاشت بە زمانى يەكەميان بىھەستىن.

وشه سه‌ردگی‌هکان: هوشیاری‌که‌لتوری، وتنه‌وهی زمانی‌ئینگلیزی وهکو زمانی‌بیانی، پرۆگرامی سه‌نرايز

## المستخلص

تتركز هذه الدراسة على الجوانب الاجتماعية والثقافية للغة الإنجليزية في برنامج سنرايز المصمم لتدريس اللغة الانكليزية في إقليم كوردستان العراق. وتبحث الدراسة مدى دراية المعلمين لهذا الجانب الأساسي خلال تدريس اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدارس الأساسية. تفترض الدراسة أن أغلب المعلمين ليسوا على دراية بالجانب الاجتماعي-الثقافي للغة الانكليزية، وإن أدائهم في الادراك أفضل منه في الانتاج. وللتحقق من الفرضيات، صمم الباحثان اختباراً من عشرين فقرة لدراسة أداء ثلاثين معلماً يدرّسون منهاج سنرايز في اللغة الإنجليزية للمراحل السابعة والثامنة والتاسعة في مدارس مدينة السليمانية. وخلصت الدراسة أن عدم معرفة المعلمين بالجانب الاجتماعي والثقافي يجعلهم غير قادرين على تشكيل وتوجيه عملية التعلم لدى الطلاب، وذلك يُفضي إلى تدخل اللغة الأم.

**كلمات أساسية:** الدراسة الثقافية، تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، برنامج سنرايز

## 1. Introduction

It is obvious that different nations have their own language and culture that can be viewed as identity for them. Language and culture go side by side in a way that learning language without its culture looks like a wedding without ring. They are simply inseparable. In other words, it is essential for foreign language learners not only to learn the language itself, but also to know how the native speakers interact and communicate in society, i.e., to familiarize with cultural dimensions. Brown (2007) provided a series of principles for teaching a foreign language, one of which pertains to integrating culture into language classroom. He suggests that the language-culture connections must be highlighted by teaching not only the language but cultural customs, values, ways of thinking and acting. Moreover, Brown (1994) states that “a language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language; except for specialized, instrumental acquisition; is also the acquisition of a second culture” (p. 165). Furthermore, Kramsch (1998, p. 10) believes that culture can be regarded as “membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings”; so, one may claim that culture covers a wide range of issues related to human life style such as values, conventions, perspectives, etc., and of course, this has a sort of complicity since one faces challenges while analyzing them.

## 2. The Concept of Culture

According to Bolaffi et al, (2003, p. 61), culture as a concept has a variety of definitions. Etymologically, culture is from the Latin verb ‘colere’(to cultivate) and the noun ‘cultura’, the term ‘culture’ is used today mainly with two meanings; the first and most ancient of these, taken up at the beginning of the seventeenth century by Francis Bacon, refers to the body of knowledge and manners acquired by an individual, while the second describes the shared customs, values and beliefs which characterize a given social group, and which are passed down from generation to generation. The Victorian anthropologist Tylor defined culture as ‘that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society’ (cited in Loewenthal, 2006, p.4).

Robinson (1985; cited in Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993: 7) believes that to explain what is meant by culture, one should think of three different categories which are interrelated: products, ideas, and behaviours, as it is shown in the following figure:

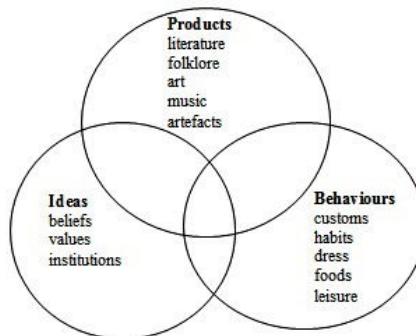


Figure (1) Elements of Culture (Robinson, 1985; cited in Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993: 7)

Moreover, for Brown (1994, p. 170), "culture is deeply ingrained part of the very fiber of our being, but language –the means for communication among members of a culture– is the most visible and available expression of that culture." In the Introduction of "*Culturally Speaking: Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory*", Spencer-Oatey (2008: p.3), explains the concept of culture and believes that it "is a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural conventions, and basic assumptions and values that is shared by a group of people, and that influences each member's behaviour and each member's interpretations of the meanings of other people's behaviour."

Finally, one should refer to the fact that the National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) gives a comprehensive definition to the term of culture as an "integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting and roles, relationships and expected behaviors of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group; and the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations" (Goode, Sockalingam, Brown, & Jones, 2000, p. 1)

## 2.1 English Culture: Its Language and Literature

It is undeniable fact that an often effective and appropriate way to expand cultural awareness and broad-based understanding is through literature. Students of different levels are enthusiastically interested in literary works for they broaden their analytical and critical points of view. Literature, as Cruz states, is a source of authentic material, which conveys the use of linguistics by those who have mastered it into a fashion intended for native speakers, and an aesthetic representation of the spoken language, which enriches students' language and culture (2010: p. 12).

A precious goal behind teaching English as a foreign language is not only making the students speak, it is primarily to make them visualize and estimate the target language (English) cultural habits. Thus, literature, regardless to its genres, provides a prolific contextual material for basic school students. Literature, in a sense, paves the way for the students to take a look at the target language culture. Rezaee and Farahian insist the same idea, claiming that "one of the best ways to teach L2 culture is

through using L2 literature... In fact ... using folktales can be a magic in teaching L2 culture and language" (1:2011, p.1757). Collie and Slater, also, aver that "language enrichment, whether it is through an aesthetic reading or an "efferent reading" of a literary work, provides a "rich context in which individual or lexical items are made more memorable" (1988, p. 5). Literary contents are often full with cultural information and evoke unforgettable reactions for readers. Texts that are carefully selected for given group of students and specific goals in mind can be very helpful in allowing students to acquire insight to the target culture (Herron, et al, 1999:4). In that regard, a reader [of literary works] can discover the way the characters in such literary works see the world outside (i.e. their thoughts, feelings, customs, traditions, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave in different settings (Hişmanoğlu, 1: 2005, p. 54).

Cultural enrichment through literary works methodically; a literary text presents a variety forms of language having different terminological, syntactic and semantic structures. Taking Sunrise as an example, it offers plenty of cultural contexts of the geographical locations and various historical eras. Some texts contain simple-structured fiction which draws the students' attention to the concept of multiculturalism. Pokrivičák et al. believe that "multicultural fiction is – without doubt – one of the most significant and dominant streams within contemporary literature for children and young adults, and also includes the cross-over literature phenomenon" (2010, p. 119). Syntactically, the literary texts supply many grammatical structures, ranging from colloquial language to the best formed written text. The students, accordingly, check the meaning of the vocabularies accompanied by their cultural references. Overall, this process enhances students' cultural knowledge and awareness.

## 2.2 Culture and Language Teaching

No one can deny that the role and effects of culture become very considered issues in the field of English language teaching. This consequently, makes researchers and experts conduct a number of studies in this regard.

According to Byram and Grundy (2003: p.1), 'culture' in language teaching and learning is usually defined pragmatically as a/the culture associated with a language being learnt." This opens a gate to a number of challenges in almost all educational and academic settings.

Teaching foreign language is a fascinating challenge for teachers all around the world, for they are inevitably in need of a wide range of knowledge, not only about the ABC of the language, but also about cultural dimensions of that specific language. The cultural dimensions and artifacts include religion, food, literature, clothes, traditions, idea and other societal aspects in any language worldwide. Taking each of the above mentioned in consideration improves the effectiveness of teaching a foreign language excessively, and it boosts the teacher's success immensely since it is globally accepted that culture plays a vital role in teaching any second language.



Thus, teaching a second language (English language is taken in this study) requires an intensive focus on the four skills of language, reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, these four are not enough; culture can be named as the fifth skill in teaching English as a second language because Kurdish learners should grasp the meaning of cultural context and visualize English culture which, without a doubt, is totally different from theirs. Hence, teachers confront an extra hurdle in teaching. Therefore, in order to teach successfully, teachers need to enrich their cultural background, choose the most appropriate methods of teaching (when culture is involved), and ensure that the students have imagined and digested the idea because sometimes cultural difference poses a shock for learners.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999, cited in McKay, 2004: 9) mention three different kinds of information of culture that experts, textbook designers, teacher, etc. might use. This includes materials of target culture which refer to the culture of an English speaking community and materials of source culture which are about the local culture. Moreover, this classification covers materials of international target culture which mainly are about cultures of both English and non-English speaking societies.

Tomalin (2008) believes that when one learns a language, he/she may learn only some cultural features and these might not helpful to be aware about his/her behaviour in certain situations. Moreover, culture can be considered as a fifth skill to be taught. Moreover, he claims that "what the fifth language skill teaches you is the mindset and technique to adapt your use of English to learn about, understand and appreciate the values, ways of doing things and unique qualities of other cultures. It involves understanding how to use language to accept differences, to be flexible and tolerant of ways of doing things which might be different to yours. It is an attitudinal change that is expressed through the use of language."

Finally, one should shed light on the fact that BSTS should take what has been mentioned by Mitchell and Myles (2004) into account that "language and culture are not separate, but are acquired together, with each providing support for the development of the other" (p. 235). This idea is also confirmed by Elyas and Picard (2010) that both teaching and learning process of a language could be morally and ethically affected by the culture of that society that this language is used. So, BSTS should be aware of the fact that English like any other language(s) could not be separated from its culture while teaching it since "foreign language teaching is foreign culture teaching, and foreign language teachers are foreign culture teachers" (Wang, 2008, p.4).

### **3. Sunrise as a New Program in Iraqi Kurdistan Region**

One decade ago, specifically before 2005, English language as an independent subject was first introduced to the elementary learners in fifth grade. English as a foreign language was taught through the traditional method of teaching. Kurdish students were hardly able to learn the language since communication skills were vastly ignored. In other words, students could be able to communicate well in English. Due to the incomprehensibility of the old program and paying very little attention to the development of communicative language teaching, in 2005 a drastic change was required in order to stick to the communicative language teaching. As a result, in early 2005, after the experts of Ministry of Education attempted to find a more successful alternative, Ministry of Education signed a long-term contract with the British Macmillan Company to apply and introduce a new program for

teaching English language in the Kurdistan Region; this new program is called "Sunrise Series" (Sultan & Sharif, 2013).

This program has three primary advantages: first, it commences from the first grade at the basic school till the twelfth grade at preparatory school (from first to ninth called basic school, from tenth to twelfth called preparatory school). Meanwhile English language was first taught at the fifth grade. It means students will be familiar with English language from first year of admission to school; this is beneficial for their studying process, accordingly. Second, 'Sunrise' is chiefly concentrating on the communicative approach; that is, through Sunrise, students have wider opportunities to be involved in class, and build up their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills as Sunrise books contain miscellaneous, embroidering, colorful exercises constructed to the mentioned skills. Third, unlike the old programs complied in Kurdistan previously, Sunrise books include many helpful units referring to all aspect of language. Among them, literature is not neglected. There are some pieces of well-known literary works, ranging from role-playing, short story to pieces of play, novel and biography of influential English writers. There is a better chance to students, although in brief, to get to know to English literature.

Further going deeply into the program, it can be assumed that via learning English language and a brief literature, Sunrise books encompass cultural aspects of English; they glue English language and literature to English culture. Therefore, this new program might be taken a motivating source of English culture. In addition, the books are lively and innovative materials for dozens of topic-based researches through which the researchers will be able to diagnose the shortcoming of the basic teachers, and to improve the teachers' performance by the results they will have concluded in the future.

This program consists of the following components and materials: a. Student's Book, b. Activity Book, c. Teacher's Book, and d. CDs for recorded units of Student and Activity Book.

#### **4. Sample and Instrument**

The test of the present study is designed to collect information about BSTS who teach English and assess their knowledge of English culture. This, of course, includes some important aspects of English culture: important figures such as poets and authors, historical places, national and social events, sport, traditions, TV Programs, some cities and famous places, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The participants of the current study are basic school teachers (BSTS) who teach English Sunrise Program at the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades in Sulaimani City. The number of participants is 30; 15 male-teachers and 15 female-teachers are randomly selected from different schools in different areas of the city.

<sup>1</sup> The researchers heavily depended on the following references in order to design the test of their study:

- Collins, A. (2001). *British Life*. Pearson Education Limited: England.
- Garton-Sprenger, J., Prowse, Ph., and McIver, N. (2006). *Sunrise 7: Student's Book*. Oxford: Macmillan Education.
- ..... (2007). *Sunrise 8: Student's Book*. Oxford: Macmillan Education.
- ..... (2008). *Sunrise 9: Student's Book*. Oxford: Macmillan Education.



To investigate the main hypotheses of the current study, a test of 20 items is designed to assess the teachers' awareness of English culture. The test consists of two parts: in part one some general information about the teachers is required meanwhile the second part is to assess their awareness of English culture. Part two includes two sets of questions: the first one is to assess the teacher's capability at the level of recognition while the second one measures their awareness at the level of production. Moreover, almost half of the test items are taken from Sunrise 7, 8, and 9. During the examination, each single item of the test is explained and the teachers are allowed to ask questions and/or extra information about each item.

Finally, one may mention the fact that the study tool is expected to be reliable since test-retest method is applied in which the same test is given to (10) BSTS and the researchers adapted Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to find the test reliability and the result shows that the study test reliability is (0.76) which is a highly coefficient reliability.

## 5. Data Analysis and Results

### 5.1 Part One: General Information

According to the data collected from the BSTS, the majority of the teachers did not study English literature and/or literary subject required to develop their knowledge of culture and literature. Statistically speaking, (60%) of them did not have a course of English literature in their curriculum; (23.33%) of the BSTS did study only poetry, and (10%) which means (3 teachers only) studied drama. Surprisingly, only 2 BSTS had courses in English literature. The data reveals the fact that BSTS did not have a sufficient course in order to make them able to be aware of English literature and culture and this affected their teaching performance negatively.

*Table (1) English Literature in BSTS Studied Curriculum*

Did not Have Literature Subjects	Poetry	Drama	English Literature
18	7	3	2

Regarding the BSTS' experience of teaching English (Sunrise and other previous programs), one can easily state that the majority of the teacher have enough experience in teaching English and this might positively influence their career. Meanwhile, when it comes to teaching Sunrise Program, the data shows that (56.66%) of BSTS are well experienced since they have been teaching English for 6 to 10 years. This means that (43.33%) have 1 to 5 years of experience. The tables below show the duration of their experience in English language teaching and teaching "Sunrise Program".

*Table (2) Duration of Teaching English*

Years of Experience	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30
No. of Teachers	4	11	8	6	1

*Table (3) Duration of Teaching Sunrise Program*

Years of Experience	1-5	6-10
No. of Teachers	13	17

No one can deny that being in an English speaking (Anglophone) community (especially UK or US) is useful for BSTS and other teachers of English language. The data shows that only 3 teachers have been in an English speaking society (1 month, 3 years, and 25 years successively). This indicates that (90%) of the BSTS do not face real challenges of using English and consequently have no idea about how people use English and/or behave in an English speaking community. This data shows the fact that the majority of BSTS do not have cultural awareness and this might affect Sunrise teaching methodology. Consider the following table.

*Table (4) Being in an English Speaking Community*

No. of Teachers	Yes	No
	3	27

Studying culture and/or participating in any training course of target culture is not useful for the BSTS themselves only, the learners get benefit since the learners and BSTS can understand their own culture and the target one as well. Moreover, Kitao (2000) does believe that studying culture can increase the learners' ability to study the target language and literature since this elaborates their understanding and gives meaning to what they study. Unfortunately, the data reveals that (96.66%) of the study sample did not participate in any training courses of English culture, and (3.33%, which means only 1 teacher) did participate in one training course. There is no doubt that most of EFL teachers are in need of having different training courses.

*Table (5) English Culture Training Course Participation*

No. of Teachers	Yes	No
	1	29

The respondents' answer to the last item of the first part shows that Sunrise Program is useful to raise the BSTS' awareness of English culture since they become more aware regarding some related issues to culture such as food, dress, history, British authors, cities, etc. This indicates that including the target culture in an EFL program appropriately could be useful for teachers and learners. According to the data collected among BSTS, (43.33%) of the teachers have gained information about food and dress from Sunrise Program, whereas (20%) have learnt about British writers and cities. Moreover, (16.66%) of the current study sample acquired historical knowledge from the same textbook, and the religious knowledge of (13.33%) of the BSTS is increased. Only (6.66%) of the teachers did confirm that they have got general information from Sunrise Program. To some extent, the result of the 20 items of the second part of the test confirms this claim. The following table shows what the BSTS learnt from the textbook.

*Table (6) Learning from "Sunrise" (about English Culture)*

Food and Dress	British Cities and Writers	History	Religion	General Information
13	6	5	4	2



## 5.2 Part Two: Section One

The second part of the test is divided into two sections: the former is to assess the BSTS' awareness at the level of recognition, while the latter focuses of the production level. Each section consists of 10 items; each item has 4 options and the BSTS are allowed to choose only one. The following table shows items and the percentage of BSTS answers in each option:

*Table (7) Items of Section One/ Part Two and The BSTS' Percentage Answer*

1. Notting Hill Carnival is one of the biggest carnivals in Europe. It takes place in .....	a. Manchester 20%	b. London 46.66%	c. New Castle 16.66%	d. Liverpool 16.66%
2. Which sport do British people most enjoy watching on TV?	a. Swimming 13.33%	b. Football 70%	c. Cricket 10%	d. Chess 3.33%
3. “Paradise Lost” is an epic poem written by .....	a. William Shakespeare 36.66%	b. Charles Dickens 20%	c. John Milton 36.66%	d. T. S. Eliot 6.66%
4. The capital of Scotland is .....	a. Edinburgh 50%	b. Cambridge 23.33%	c. Portsmouth 6.66%	d. Stratford 20%
5. In UK, one may see men wear red costume. They are called .....	a. Crossers 16.66%	b. Beefeaters 23.33%	c. Whispers 10%	d. Climbers 36.66%
6. The ..... is highest wheel in the world- it is 140 meters high.	a. Globe Theatre 3.33%	b. Millennium Bridge 26.66%	c. Monument 3.33%	d. London Eye 63.33%
7. What kind of animals runs in the Grand National?	a. Dogs 16.66%	b. Hamsters 10%	c. Horses 53.33%	d. Rabbits 20%
8. The first novel of Charles Dickens is .....	a. The Pickwick Papers 10%	b. Hard Times 10%	c. Great Expectation 6.66%	d. Oliver Twist 66.66%
9. It is better to start a conversation with a stranger by talking about ..... in England.	a. Weather 53.33%	b. Food 6.66%	c. British Royal Family 33.33%	d. Olympic Games 3.33%
10. ..... is a British soap opera. It is the best soap on TV and tens of millions of people in Britain watch it every week.	a. The Cut 6.66%	b. EastEnders 26.66%	c. Crown Court 23.33%	d. Jupiter Moon 30%

1. Notting Hill Carnival is one of the biggest carnivals in Europe. It takes place in .....

The answers of item no. 1 show that the majority of the BSTS are able to recognize the correct option. Statistically speaking, (53.34%) of the test takers are not able to choose the correct answer. Meanwhile (46.66%) which means the majority of the BSTS do know that Notting Hill Carnival is annual event takes place in London for two days and it is known as “The Greatest Show on Earth” and it is one of the biggest carnivals in Europe. The reason behind this could be attributed to the fact that this information has been mentioned in Sunrise 8, p. 21.

*2. Which sport do British people most enjoy watching on TV?*

The second item which is intentionally designed to focus on some certain types of sport shows that the majority of BSTS are able to find the correct answer. The data shows that (70%) of the respondents know that most of British people enjoy watching football on TV rather than other sports such swimming, chess, and crickets. The researchers believe that their similarities between the respondents' native and target culture in this regard and this positively affects their answer.

*3. “Paradise Lost” is an epic poem written by .....*

Generally speaking, the BSTS' literary knowledge is limited and their information of English lacks literature. The reason behind their insufficiency could be related with what has been highlighted in Table (1) that (60%) of them did not have a course of English literature in their curriculum; this, of course, affects their teaching and the use of the target language. The above item is specialized to one of the most famous epic poems of English literature, Paradise Lost, but only (36.66%) of the teachers can manage this item. This means that (63.34%) have no idea about this master piece of literature. So, the BSTS are in need of participating in an English literary course in order to familiarize them with basics of English literature.

*4. The capital of Scotland is .....*

Though the above item is one of the easiest items and it is just general information, half of the test sample still is not able to give a correct answer. (50%) if the BSTS face difficulties in selecting the capital of Scotland, meanwhile Scotland and Edinburgh have been mentioned in Sunrise 8 and 9 in different lessons, especially Sunrise 9, p. 7 in a fact file about Scotland and Edinburgh including a well-designed map.

*5. In UK, one may see men wear red costume. They are called .....*

The fifth item, is not mentioned in Sunrise Program, is intentionally designed to assess the BSTS' knowledge of Beefeaters (or Yeoman Warders); historically speaking, they were guards of the Tower of London since long ago. As one may expect it, (76.76%) of the BSTS have no idea about Beefeaters, the reason behind this might be attributed to the fact that the participants do not have historical knowledge about UK or current information about the capital of this country. So, only (4) of them left this item unanswered.



6. *The ..... is highest wheel in the world- it is 140 meters high.*

According to what has been explained in Sunrise 7 and 8, BSTS should be fully aware of the fact that London Eye is the highest wheel in the world (Sunrise 8, p. 36). The results show that only (1) teacher left this item unanswered and (63.33%) of BSTS chose the correct option. So, one may claim that exposure to the target culture or having a sort of training course (even an online one) could be useful to raise the teachers' cultural awareness and this positively affects their teaching methodology.

7. *What kind of animals runs in the Grand National?*

Collins (2001, p. 41) claims that every April at Aintree (near Liverpool) over 300 million people all over the world wat the Grand National race and the animal that runs in this big event is "horse". The majority of the participants (i.e., 53.33%) are successful in selecting the correct option. The reason behind their success could be attributed to the fact that most of them guess the answer and connect "run" with "horse".

8. *The first novel of Charles Dickens is .....*

In Sunrise 8 (p. 39), in a listening activity which includes a description about the life of English novelist, Charles Dickens, a number of aspects such as his date of birth and death, social life, first literary work, other works, etc. are explained. Though (2) participants left this item, surprisingly, (66.66%) of BSTS chose "Oliver Twist" as the first novel written by Dickens. Regarding this item, one may mention the fact that most of the teachers have taken "Oliver Twist" in the 5<sup>th</sup>grade of the high school, so they connote it with Dickens. Moreover, selecting the correct answer by only (10%) of the BSTS could prove this.

9. *It is better to start a conversation with a stranger by talking about ..... in England.*

Generally speaking, in British culture, talking about weather could be used a perfect way to start conversation (Leech, 1981, p. 41). In this item, the majority which means (53.33%) of the BSTS are aware of this fact and selected "weather" as a correct item option. Meanwhile the rest chose wrong option and only (1) participant left this item unanswered.

10. *..... is a British soap opera. It is the best soap on TV and tens of millions of people in Britain watch it every week.*

The last item of the first section of the second part was answered by only (26) BSTS and the rest left it unanswered. Statistically speaking, (73.34%) of the study sample were not able to select the right option, meanwhile (26.66%) of them were able to give a correct answer. This percentage shows that most of BSTS do not have enough cultural knowledge about England.

### 5.3 Part Two: Section Two

The second section of the test last part, as it has been mentioned previously, attempts to assess the participants' cultural awareness at the level of production. So, the participants are asked to write their own understanding about some cultural related terms. The current table demonstrates the items and the percentage of correct and incorrect answers:

*Table (8) Items of Section Two/ Part Two and The BSTS' Percentage Answer*

Items	Correct Answer	Incorrect Answer	Left Unanswered*
1.Boxing Day	6.66%	50%	43.33%
2.London Fire	36.66%	23.33%	40%
3.Holyrood Palace	16.66%	43.33%	40%
4.Bonfire Night (Guy Fawkes Night)	6.66%	40%	53.33%
5.Traditional English Dinner	26.66%	16.66%	56.66%
6.Goblin	0%	30%	70%
7.Covent Garden	16.66%	26.66%	56.66%
8.Globe Theatre	10%	36.66%	53.33%
9.The Independent Television Commission	0%	40%	60%
10. Victorian Era	3.33%	33.33%	63.33%

\*Items which are left unanswered are considered as incorrect ones.

Generally speaking, the concept of culture refers to many different aspects of life. The researchers expect that BSTS are aware of those aspects that have been mentioned in the textbook (i.e., Sunrise Program). Regarding the second section which is purely designed to assess the BSTS' awareness at the level of production is expected to be more challengeable.

Concerning the first item, one may state that in December people spend their time visiting friends and relatives and this public holiday is known as "Boxing Day". Regarding the BSTS' answer of this item, the results show that only (2) BSTS which means 6.66% of the study sample are able to give a clear and good answer, while (93.33%) either have no idea about this term and/or left it unanswered. This confirms the fact that a great amount of BSTS is not aware of existing such a term.

The second item is about "The Great fire of London" which is clearly explained in Sunrise 8 (p. 32), and a very nice story about this great historical event has been composed in which all aspects of the event have been taken into consideration for students. Expectedly, BSTS are supposed to read, understand the text and then teach it appropriately. According to the participants' answer, only (36.66%) of the BSTS have an idea about this item. Surprisingly, (40%) of them left this item unanswered and the rest gave a wrong answer.

In item no. (3), the BSTS are supposed to be familiar with what is required since it has been explained in Sunrise 9 (p. 24) that "The Holyrood Palace" was established in 1501 by James IV- the Scottish King. Unexpectedly, only (5) teachers were able to give a sensible answer to this item, meanwhile (43.33%) gave incorrect answer and (40%) left this item unanswered. The reason behind that might be related to the BSTS' lack of cultural awareness even about the content of the textbook they teach.

Bonfire Night (Guy Fawkes Night) is not mentioned in Sunrise Program. According to this event, every November English people from different cities, towns, and villages light fireworks and celebrate since the Parliament and James I were not blown the sky. The result of this item reveals that



only (6.66%) have an idea about this tradition and the rest (which means 93.33%) do not have a historical and/or cultural knowledge. So, the most of BSTS are not aware of the anniversary.

Although concepts like Traditional English Dinner or dinner in general is mentioned in different places of Sunrise (especially Sunrise 7 and 9), only (26.66%) of the BSTS were able to give a good description of typical British meal and (16.66%) gave irrelevant information and in unexpected manner (56.66%) left this item unanswered. This could be related to the BSTS' carelessness since the majority did not answer this item and a good answer can be found in Sunrise Program.

As it is known, in most European culture including British, goblin is referred to a monstrous creature mentioned in some stories and becomes a part of English folklore. The item results show that all the participants are not able to define and describe "goblin", i.e., the percentage of correct answer is (0%) and only (30%) of them answered this item incorrectly; (70%) left this item unanswered. The data tells the fact that almost all BSTS do not have enough knowledge of British folklore.

In Sunrise 8, p.19, Covent Garden is described as a place in which London visitors can see musicians playing music or someone shoots a film, etc. logically speaking, the BSTS should be fully aware of this famous place, but the results show the opposite. According to the statistics, (5) participants are able to produce a suitable description about this place, meanwhile (8) of them have no idea about the required item and unfortunately (17) BSTS do not write even a word in this regard. Their lack of knowledge might be considered as one of the reasons behind this result.

In fact file of Sunrise 8 (p. 34), Globe Theatre is explained as a copy of Shakespeare's original Globe theatre. According to this, BSTS are expected to be fully aware of this aspect of English culture, but their performance proves the opposite. Among the participants, only (10%) of them are familiar with the term of "Globe theatre" and (36.66%) have no idea since they have written irrelevant words. The researchers do not expect that (53.33%) of the BSTS will leave this simple item unanswered.

The ninth item which focuses on media in the UK is regarded as one of the most difficult items since none of BSTS are able to give a correct answer. Only (40%) attempted to answer this item which is about "The Independent Television Commission" which regulates commercial television service and all of their answers were incorrect since most of them mentioned BBC and similar incorrect ideas. Because of their lack of sufficient knowledge, (60%) of the BSTS left this item behind.

The last item of the second section in part two is presided to shed light on Victorian era, a period of Queen Victoria's reign. Depending on the results of this item, one can claim that the BSTS do not have enough literary background and of course this affects their cultural knowledge. The number of the BSTS who are successful in answering this item is only (1) and (29) of them have no idea about this era.

## **6. Conclusions**

1. Lack of cultural knowledge makes BSTS incompetent in English culture and this consequently makes them depending on their native culture rather than the target one while teaching Sunrise Program. In fact, this affects the basic students' use of English since they may heavily depend on grammatical structures rather than the socio-cultural aspects of the target language.
2. In order to teach Sunrise Program successfully, it is necessary to apply an integrated approach in which both culture and language can be obviously seen by the students in order to learn the target language appropriately.
3. BSTS who teach Sunrise Program may refer to only some socio-cultural dimensions of English language; this consequently gives an opportunity to them and their students to have better performance.
4. Language and culture are interrelated. No matter the BSTS have good language, since they do not have sufficient background about English society, history, beliefs, habits, literature, behavior, etc., i.e., they are not aware to famous aspects of British society.
5. Because of their lack of being in an English speaking community and/or having some cultural training courses, BSTS who teach Sunrise Program do not have enough cultural knowledge of the target language, i.e., they are not socio-culturally competent.
6. Finally, building on the data obtained from the study sample, one may confirm the idea that the BSTS' cultural performance at the level of recognition is higher than the production one. In other words, BSTS are able to recognize different aspects of English culture (especially the dimensions mentioned in Sunrise Program) rather than producing different related issues to English culture.

## **7. Recommendations**

1. The current study recommends BSTS to participate in some free online courses about English culture; this could be done at home during summer vacation and/or at any time.
2. It is recommended that Ministry of Education (or Sulaimani Directorate of Education) should work on conducting different training courses about English culture in order to develop and update the BSTS' cultural knowledge and teaching methodology as well. The training courses might be conducted by English native speakers.
3. Ministry of Education and Sulaimani Directorate of Education especially may send a number of BSTS to the UK to have a direct exposure to British culture; this could be done in a competitive selection process and during summer holiday.
4. More culture-based subjects should be inserted into Basic School syllabus alongside with the four skills of language in order to provide enough space for the learners and teachers to go deeper into the field of culture.
5. To get a better insight into English culture, it is recommended that all BSTS allocate the last five minutes of each lesson to a purely culture-related topic.



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