Gender differences in perceiving FL culture teaching: The case of Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers

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Abstract

The current study examined the importance of teaching FL culture in the Egyptian FL context. It investigated whether gender is statistically a significant contributor to the Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' perception of FL culture instruction. It discussed how the Egyptian EFL male and female pre-service teachers might vary in their perception of teaching FL culture to the Egyptian EFL learners. As for the participants, one hundred Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers participated in the present study. They were enrolled at the faculty of Education at two Egyptian universities: Matrouh University and October 6 University. They were divided into two groups with 50 participants each based on gender. Data were collected through a 20-item questionnaire that was divided into four sections. Data were analyzed according to the descriptive statistics and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Findings indicated that gender significantly contributed to the perception of Egyptian EFL pre-service of FL culture instruction.

Key words: Egyptian FL context, Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers, perception, gender, FL culture instruction

الملخص

أختبرت الدراسة الحالية أهمية تدريس الثقافة الأجنبية فى السياق المصرى لتدريس اللغة الأجنبية، و بحثت الدراسة أن النوع يعد مساهما له دلالة إحصائية معنوية على إدراك الطلاب المعلمين المصريين الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لأهمية تدريس ثقافة اللغة الأجنبية، حيث ناقشت الدراسة الأختلاف المحتمل للطلاب المعلمين المصريين الذكور و الإناث فى إدراكهم لتدريس ثقافة اللغة الأجنبية للطلاب المصريين الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، و قد شارك فى الدراسة الحالية مائة من الطلاب المعلمين المصريين الدراسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حيث أنهم مقيدون بكليات التربية فى جامعة مطروح و جامعة 6 أكتوبر، و تم تقسيمهم طبقا للنوع إلى مجموعتين للذكور و الإناث بحيث ضمت كل مجموعة 50 مشاركا، و تم تجميع البيانات البحثية من خلال استبيان مكون من 20 بندا و مقسم إلى أربعة أقسام ، و تم تحليل البيانات البحثية بإستخدام الإحصاء الوصفى و تحليل التباين، و أشارت النتائج إلى أن النوع ذو دلالة إحصائية معنوية للمساهمة فى إدراك الطلاب المعلمين المصريين لتدريس ثقافة اللغة الأجنبية

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياق المصرى لتدريس اللغة الأجنبية، الطلاب المعلمين المصريين الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الإدراك، النوع، تدريس ثقافة اللغة الأجنبية

Background of the study

As Han and Zhang (2020) emphasized that FL culture is of a paramount importance to the FL teachers in general, it is undoubtedly important to the Egyptian FL teachers in particular. This is attributed to impact of FL culture on the FL instruction

which Egyptian FL teachers introduce to their students and how those Egyptian FL teachers teach English in the Egyptian context (i.e. teaching methods and strategies). In this concern, Alismail (2016) and Alsofi (2018) emphasized the need for having further research on how pre-service FL teaches intend to teach EFL learners whose cultures and social backgrounds differ from those of the target language community. In addition, the importance of teaching FL culture also stems from the increasingly growing process of teaching English as a foreign or second language all over the world.

Byrd, Hlas, Watzke, Montes Valencia (2011) and Michelson (2017) pointed out that the practice of FL culture instruction in the tertiary level of education is always viewed as an additional element rather than being an integrated element which should be effectively instructed. Aydin and Tonbuloglu (2014), Amerian and Tajabadi (2020), and Golibkizi and Shavkatugli (2020) asserted that the isolation of FL learning and teaching from its cultural norms impedes the socialization process which EFL learners involved in while communicating in the FL. Indeed, cultural norms are implicitly embedded as a hidden curriculum in FL instruction. The instruction of English as a foreign language should be viewed based on a culturally-oriented approach as all aspects of teaching

and learning English are considered as practices of the target community culture.

Furthermore, Byram (2009) explained that the integration of FL culture into FL curriculum should be associated with inclusion of the EFL learners' L1 as well. FL curriculum should be synthesized in a form which provides L1 and FL culturally based inputs. As such, FL education provides FL learners with an opportunity of reflecting on their L1 culture when experiencing FL language and culture. Thus, FL curriculum should be designed in accordance with the intercultural communicative competence approach. This approach motivates EFL learners to learn the FL and train them to become intercultural users of that FL. Byram (2014) clarified that FL education is based on four supportive components which FL curriculum and FL teaching methods should include. These components are namely, language learning, language awareness, culture awareness and culture experience.

Language learning means that FL learners should learn how to use the FL in different social and cultural contexts. As such the second component of language awareness entails that FL learners should have the ability to comprehend the interrelation between language and culture and should be pragmatically aware

of how to use FL in different social settings. Hence, the third component of cultural awareness means that FL learners are cognitively changed from having monoculture competence into intercultural competence. This explains why FL instructors should focus on FL instruction since the linguistic failure of FL learners might be attributed to their misunderstanding of the FL culture. The fourth component of culture experience means that FL learners should be directly involved with FL culture. This can be attained through travelling to an English native speaking country or by practicing English with native speakers through the means of advanced technology and social networks. Therefore, it was necessary to investigate how Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers perceive the teaching of FL culture to Egyptian EFL learners and how their perception might vary in terms of their gender.

Statement of the problem

The current study investigated the importance of FL culture teaching in the Egyptian FL context. It examined the statistically significant contribution that gender might have on the perception of Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers of FL culture instruction. It also discussed the variance among male and female Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers in perceiving the importance of teaching FL culture to the Egyptian EFL students. It also

described and explained the statistically significant differences among the male and female Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' perception of FL culture teaching. As such, the present study attempted to verify the null hypothesis that gender is not a significant contributor to the participants' perception of FL culture instruction and both male and female participants similarly perceive the teaching of FL culture.

Research Questions

The current study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the importance of teaching FL culture in the Egyptian FL context?

2. What is the impact of gender on the Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' perception of FL culture instruction?

3. How does perception of FL culture teaching statistically vary among the Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers according to their gender?

Aims

The present study aimed to:

1. Explain the importance of teaching FL culture in the Egyptian FL context.

2. Determine variance in the perception of Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers of FL culture teaching based on their gender.

3. Verify the statistically significant contribution that gender might have on the participants' perception of FL culture teaching.

Significance of the study

The study is significant because it asserts the role that FL culture plays in the process of teaching English at both October 6 University and Matruh University. The study is also significant as it highlights the potential differences in the pre-service teachers' perceptions of FL culture teaching according to their gender. The study also contributes to the literature of English language teaching in the Egyptian context. The study is significant since it sheds some lights on an important dimension of developing EFL curricula in the Egyptian context, i.e. FL culture. It is also significant because it provides guidelines that help develop training and preparation courses for the pre-services teachers in the Egyptian context. The significance of the current study also emanates from the fact that the analysis of Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' perception provides an insight into the

strategies and teaching methods that they will adopt in teaching English after graduation.

Delimitations

The study is delimited to the process of teaching English as a foreign language at the Department of English, Faculty of Education at both October 6 University and Matruh University.

Literature Review

This section reviewed studies pertinent to the perception of EFL teachers (in-service and pre-service) and learners of FL culture teaching (Al-Amir, 2017; Hermessi, 2017; Genc, 2018; Bahlai, Machynska, Matviiv-Lozynska, Senkovych, and Voloshyn, 2019; Khouni and Boudjelal, 2019; and Bal, 2020).

Al-Amir (2017) investigated how 25 Saudi female teachers perceive FL culture teaching at Jeddah University and the sort of FL culture competence they intended to expose their students to whether intercultural or multicultural competence. Participants were required to respond to a three-point Likert scale questionnaire. They indicated their agreement, disagreement or neutrality towards the questionnaire's items. The 17-item questionnaire mainly focused on describing the participants' perception of FL culture teaching and which type of FL culture competence they sought to promote among their students. The

current study differs from Al-Amir's in the sense that it is methodologically comparative between male and female FL teachers. It is also comparative as it compared the perception of participants enrolled at two different Egyptian universities instead of one university as in the case of Al-Amir' study. It also covers various items about the perception FL culture teaching on the contrary to that of Al-Amir. Al-Amir reported that the majority of Saudi female EFL teachers agreed on the essentiality of FL culture teaching. Al-Amir explained that participants believed that FL culture teaching increase the Saudi EFL leaners' motivation and attitudes towards learning English. Al-Amir also asserted that Saudi female EFL teachers were in favour of exposing their students to multicultural competence instead of only being restricted to the social values and cultural norms of on one native-speaking community.

Hermessi (2017) investigated the beliefs and attitudes of 70 Tunisian EFL teachers towards teaching FL culture. Data were collected based on a questionnaire that comprised three open ended questions. These questions focused on (1) the necessity of including the English culture in the FL curriculum in Tunisia; (2) how comfortable are the Tunisian EFL teachers with the FL culture dimension; and (3) whether the FL culture materials

should be censored. Although most Tunisian EFL teachers agreed that teaching FL culture is a must in the Tunisian EFL context, some cautiously dealt with FL culture dimension and opted for filtering that culture in order to avoid teaching its negative social aspects which are not compatible with the Tunisian society. These negative aspects include "taboo" topics about sex, freedom and other moral issues. Thus, they called for the separation between the FL culture and their own culture in terms of religious, social and political aspects. For them the reason behind teaching FL culture did not dwell on developing their students' intercultural competence as specified in the intercultural approach, but rather on developing the sociopragmatic and semantic competence of their students. The current study differs from that of Hermessi in the sense that it adopted a mixed research method of quantitative and qualitative techniques while that of Hermessi was only based on the qualitative research design. The setting of the current study also differs from that of Hermessi because English is classified as the first foreign language in the Egyptian EFL context while it is considered as the third foreign language in the Tunisian EFL context (Hermessi, 2017: 6). The current study is also

distinguished from that of Hermessi as it investigated variance of the participants' perception in terms of gender.

Genc (2018) discussed factors affecting the development of 145 Turkish EFL pre-service teachers' intercultural competence. The first of these factors is the participants' various levels of ambiguity tolerance of differences that may exist between their L1 language culture and English culture. The second and third factors are related to the participants' 'open-mindedness' and 'cultural empathy'. These factors were tested in terms of the participants' age, gender, years of study at the university, experience of study abroad, and preferences for L1 movies versus FL movies. Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of three sections to measure these three factors. On the contrary to the current study that used mixed research methods, Genc only relied on the quantitative approach for data analysis. In addition, Genc did not equally represent the male and female groups of participants as opposed to the current study; Genc had 23 males and 122 females. As for findings, gender was only influential in the participants' tolerance of ambiguity, but there were no statistical significant differences among participants' open-mindedness and culture empathy in terms of gender. Genc found that male participants were more tolerant than their female

counterparts of the L1 and FL cultural differences. Just like gender, 'years of study' and 'studying abroad experience' significantly contributed to the participants' ambiguity tolerance but not to the other two factors. Moreover, the participants' preferences for Turkish and English movies did not significantly affect any of the three tested factors.

Bahlai, Machynska, Matviiv-Lozynska, Senkovych, and Voloshyn (2019) examined methods of developing intercultural communicative competence of 37 ESP learners majoring in tourism. They were post-graduates at Lviv Polytechnic National University. The examined methods include flipped classrooms, role plays, discussion, an ESP cross-cultural communication course, and observation. Towards the end of the course, the students responded to a questionnaire describing the difficulties which they met in studying the ESP course. The results indicated the students' high appreciation of the ESP course because it gave them great opportunities for practicing English through the use of flipped classrooms and videos. It also increased their interest in the FL culture along with their L1 culture. It further developed their creativity in solving language related real life problems. Half of the students reported that they had no difficulties in studying the ESP course. However, the reported problems were not related

to the content of the ESP course. They include inadequate FL proficiency, technology problems in having access to the videos, time consuming activities, and self-discipline problems. Bahlai, et al. found that the tested methods and the ESP course helped developed the students' intercultural communicative competence since they developed their intercultural communication skills, and related FL learning to real-life situations.

Khouni and Boudjelal (2019) examined how the sociocultural competence of 18 secondary school Algerian students could be developed through the teaching of target language culture. They also investigated how the lack of exposure could affect the way EFL Algerian students understand and produce the target language. The participants' knowledge about FL culture was pretested. The participants' failure to answer questions about FL culture revealed inadequate knowledge of the cultural norms and social values that govern FL use. For instance, they were unable to distinguish English names on the basis of gender. The participants' failure also revealed that the Algerian secondary school FL curriculum does not incorporate sufficient cultural content. This was evident as the participants stated that they knew about FL cultural from other sources like the internet and media. Then, the participants were taught six lessons about FL

culture before sitting for the posttest. Khouni and Boudjelal found that the participants highly improved their understanding of English texts and FL sociocultural competence. They recommended that FL culture should be integrated into the secondary school FL curriculum in Algeria.

Bal (2020) examined the evaluation of 132 Turkish EFL postgraduates and 15 FL instructors of the English textbook "New Language Leader Pre-intermediate" in terms of enhancing intercultural competence. Data were collected based on an adapted questionnaire which consists of three main sections, namely aims of the textbook, cultural content, and presentation of content. The questionnaire third section was divided into four sub-sections, i.e. knowledge, attitudes, intercultural awareness, and culture and language. In terms of gender, environment, and social environment, both students and FL instructors had significantly different perceptions of how suitable the textbook contents to the students' needs. They also significantly differed in their evaluation of FL culture instruction. On the contrary to their FL instructors, students were of the opinion that FL culture was considerably represented in the textbook. Findings indicated that the evaluated textbook did not fully meet the needs of the students who had studied it for two months. Students indicated

that their L1 culture should be addressed in the textbook which also had inadequate materials of FL social, political, and religious topics, formal and informal language use and FL idioms. Students expressed their need for learning slang and informal FL to be used away from the classrooms. Teachers indicated that the evaluated textbook lacks reference to the social appropriateness of FL use. Thus, Bal recommended that FL instructors should use other activities and resources to compensate for the students' needs which the investigated textbook did not largely meet.

Method

Research Design

The current study relied on the mixed method of quantitative and qualitative analysis (Zarei & Khalessi, 2010; Borg, 2011; and Barrett, Byram, Lázár, Mompoint, Gaillard and Philippou, 2014; and Seiffedin and El-Sakka, 2017). The quantitative analysis provides frequency and percentage of the participants' responses to the questionnaire items. Frequency and percentage were typical as the number of participants was one hundred. The variance of both groups' responses to the four sections of the questionnaire is determined according to the descriptive statistics (i.e. mean scores, standard deviations, and lower and upper responses). One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) verifies

whether gender is a significant contributor to the participants' responses to the questionnaire items. In addition, the qualitative analysis described the participants' responses to the four sections of the questionnaire.

Participants

One hundred Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers participated in the current study. They comprise fifty-eight third and fourth year students enrolled at faculty of Education, Matrouh University and forty-two third and fourth year students registered at faculty of Education, October 6 University. The participants were divided into two groups (A) and (B) based on their gender. Group (A) represented fifty male participants, whereas group (B) comprised fifty female participants.

Procedure

Data were collected during the first term of the academic year 2020-2021. The questionnaire was administered separately at the face-to-face lectures at both universities. The participants were allowed an hour to respond to the questionnaire. In the gender space, the participants were asked to make a tick either for male or female. The participants were instructed to choose one of the five possible responses that best represent their perception of the FL culture instruction. Prior to data collection, a

pilot study was separately conducted at 30 students. The pilot study confirmed that participants need not an Arabic version of the questionnaire as all of them were majoring in English. The pilot study further indicated the clarity of all items and confirmed the questionnaire's face validity. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the pilot study was .90 suggesting high reliability of the questionnaire.

Data collection instrument

The 20-item five-Likert scale questionnaire was designed to include four sections with five items each (Arphattananon, 2018; Rahimi and Estaji, 2018; and Genc, 2018). The five responses are strongly disagree= SD, disagree= D, not sure= NS, strongly agree=SA, and agree=A. The questionnaire four sections are namely, (a) gains of FL culture instruction, (b) reasons behind the importance of FL culture instruction, (c) methods of FL culture instruction, and (d) assessment of FL culture materials in the Egyptian tertiary education curricula.

Data Analysis

Statistically, the current study carried out one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). It aimed to determine the significant contribution that gender might have on the participants' perception of the four sections of the questionnaire. Variance in

the male and female participants' responses to the four sections of the questionnaire is determined according to the descriptive statistics of mean scores, standard deviations, and lower and upper responses. Frequency and percentage of the participants' responses to the questionnaire items were computed as well.

A. Gains of FL culture instruction:

Table 1 introduces the frequency and percentage of the participants' responses to gains of FL culture instruction. Both groups of participants responded positively to the items of gains of FL culture instruction as none of them strongly disagreed or disagreed to these items. The total frequency of SA and A responses of the male participants (149) and (88) surpassed those of their female counterparts (127) and (83). That is, the male participants strongly perceived FL culture instruction as a way to improve their communication with the target language community; to gain further knowledge about the FL culture; to become more curious about learning the target language; and to improve their understanding of the cultural norms and social values that govern the use of English. Frequency of the NS response of the male participants (20) was less than that of the female participants (50). On the contrary to the male participants, the females expressed higher uncertainty that FL culture

instruction can facilitate communication with native speakers; increase awareness of FL culture; sustain curiosity of FL learning; develop the EFL learners' personality and develop their socio-pragmatic competence.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of the male and female pre-service teachers' perception of gains of FL culture instruction

A. Gains of FL Culture Instruction										
	SD		D		N S		SA		A	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1. It facilitates communication with native speakers					2	8	20	30	28	12
2. It increases Egyptian EFL learners' awareness of FL culture					10	14	24	18	26	18
3.It sustains Egyptian EFL learners' curiosity in FL learning					5	12	30	22	15	16

			2	6	35	24	13	20
4.It realizes the development of Egyptian EFL learners' personality								
5.It reinforces the Egyptian EFL learners' socio‒pragmatic competence			4	10	40	33	6	17
Total			23	50	149	127	88	83

Table 2 indicates that the responses of female participants had higher mean score (2.362) and standard deviation (14.395) compared to those of their male counterparts. The range of female participants' responses was higher than that of male participants. This indicates that there was higher variance in the female participants' responses compared to those of the male participants.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the participants' perception of gains of FL culture instruction

Groups	N	M	SD	lower	Upper

A	50	1.100	6.782	8.06710	13.93290
B	50	2.362	14.395	19.52895	27.71105

Table 3 indicates that gender is a significant contributor to the participants' perception of gains of FL culture instruction as the P value of ANOVA was < 0.05. That is, the present study rejects the null hypothesis that male and female EFL pre-service teachers similarly perceive the gains of FL culture instruction.

Table 3: ANOVA of the participants' perception of gains of FL culture instruction

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	Sig.
Within groups	246.782	22	281.840	50.631	.000
Between groups	28.958	78	2.311		
Total	275.740	100			

B. Importance of FL culture instruction

Table 4 shows positive perception of the two groups of participants of the importance of teaching FL culture in the

Egyptian context. Neither the Egyptian male nor female EFL pre-service teachers expressed strong disagreement or disagreement to the items of the importance of FL culture instruction. Table 4 indicates slightly higher frequency of the males' responses (SA) (169) and (A) (54) than those of the females (161) and (50). That is, the male participants had higher frequency in comparison to their female counterparts in realizing the importance of teaching FL culture in the Egyptian context. The male participants recognized that FL culture instruction can help Egyptian EFL learners to adhere to the FL cultural norms during communication in English; to distinguish between the cultural norms of Arabic and English; to overcome difficulties that impede their integration with the FL culture; and to accurately understand the communicated messages of their interlocutors. The female participants expressed higher frequency of uncertainty of the importance of FL culture instruction (39) compared to that expressed by male participants (27). The female participants were more uncertain about the important role that FL culture instruction can do in improving the ability of Egyptian EFL learners to communicate effectively in English.

Table 4: Frequency and percentage of the male and female pre-service teachers' perception of the importance of FL culture instruction

B. Reasons behind the importance of FL Culture instruction										
	SD		D		NS		SA		A	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
6.It helps Egyptian EFL learners to be culturally bound when communicating in FL					4	7	34	28	12	15
7. It motivates Egyptian EFL learners to adhere to FL cultural norms in communication					2	4	38	36	10	10
8. It help Egyptian EFL learners differentiate between FL and L1 cultural norms					12	14	32	34	6	2
9. It helps Egyptian EFL learners overcome difficulties of being integrated					5	8	29	30	16	12

with target language culture								
10. It helps Egyptian EFL learners avoid miscommunication				4	6	36	33	10	11
Total				27	39	169	161	54	50

Based on Table 5, the female participants had higher mean score (1.8153) and standard deviation (11.17690) in comparison to those of the male participants (1.3000) and (7.93725). In addition, the higher range of lower and upper responses (14.53071) and (21.77698) to the items of the importance of FL culture instruction was in favour for the female participants. Therefore, there was higher variance in the responses of group (B) participants compared to those of group (A).

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of the participants' perception of the importance of FL culture instruction

Groups	N	M	SD	lower	Upper
A	50	1.3000	7.93725	9.86013	16.13987
B	50	1.8153	11.17690	14.53071	21.77698

According to the results of ANOVA shown in Table 6, the present study rejects the null hypothesis that the importance of FL culture instruction is typically perceived among the Egyptian male and female EFL pre-service teachers. Therefore, the present study

confirms that gender significantly contribute to how the Egyptian male and female pre-service teachers at both Matrouh University and October 6 University perceived the FL culture instruction. This is attributed to the P value which was less than 0.05.

Table 6: ANOVA of the participants' perception of the importance of FL culture instruction

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	Sig.
Within groups	272.342	22	157.420	42.432	.000
Between groups	28.265	78	2.631		
Total	300.607	100			

C. Methods of FL culture instruction

In terms of teaching methodology and appropriate methods of teaching FL culture, Table 7 shows positive responses of both male and female participants. That is, they did not respond negatively to the items of methods of FL culture instruction by avoiding the (SD) and (D) responses. Table 7 indicates that the female participants had higher (SA) responses (191) to methods of FL culture instruction compared to those of their male counterparts (170). However, they had less frequency of (A)

responses (39) to the same items in comparison to those of the male participants (64). That is, both female and male participants strongly agreed to certain methods of FL culture instruction. These methods include audio-visual listening comprehension, authentic written materials, hands-on approach, and role plays activities. In addition, the higher ratio of uncertainty about methods of teaching FL culture was in favour for the female participants (24) compared to (15) for the males.

Table 7: Frequency and percentage of the male and female pre-service teachers' perception of methods of FL culture instruction

C. Methods of FL Culture Instruction										
	SD		D		NS		SA		A	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
11. Using audio-visual listening comprehensions					1	4	34	38	15	8
12. Using audio listening comprehensions					5	9	36	32	9	9
13. Adopting role-play activities					2	4	28	34	20	16
14. Using authentic written materials					1	3	40	43	9	4

15. Using hands−on approach			6	4	33 44	11	2
Total			15	24	170 191	64	39

Table 8 indicates the descriptive statistics of the participants' responses to the methods of teaching FL culture. The higher mean score and standard deviation of the female participants (7.0000) and (6.74537) compared to their male counterparts (1.0750) and (4.27214) suggested higher variance in their perception of such methods. This result was also confirmed according to the lower and upper responses of the females (7.90168) and (13.59832) compared to those of the male participants (4.52341) and (9.47659).

Table 8: Descriptive statistics of the participants' perception of methods of FL culture instruction

Groups	N	M	SD	lower	Upper
Group A	50	1.0750	4.27214	4.52341	9.47659
Group B	50	7.0000	6.74537	7.90168	13.59832

Table 9 shows gender as a statistically significant contributor to both groups' perception of methods of FL culture instruction. This was evident in the P value which was < 0.05. Thus, the current study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no difference between male and female EFL pre−service teacher in perceiving the methods of teaching FL culture in the Egyptian context.

Table 9: ANOVA of the participants' perception of methods of FL culture instruction

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	Sig.
Within groups	263.650	22	191.731	47.521	.000
Between groups	32.594	78	2.544		
Total	296.244	100			

D. Assessment of FL culture materials

On the contrary to their responses to the three previous sections of the questionnaire, the male and female participants had some negative responses of (SD) and (D) to some items. Table 10 shows higher frequency of (SD) (28) of the male participants compared to those of the females (18) concerning the sufficiency of FL culture material; the inclusion of different types of English cultures in such materials; and the development of Egyptian EFL learners' intercultural competence. However, the males had less frequency of disagreement to those items (13) compared to (22) for the female participants. The frequency of strong agreement responses of the male participants (133) was slightly lower than those of their female counterparts (136). Meanwhile, they had

slightly higher frequency of agreement responses (45) to the assessment of FL culture materials than the females (44). In addition, the male participants had less frequency (29) of expressing uncertainty about assessing the FL culture materials in comparison to their female counterparts (36). These results provide insight to the process of planning FL curricula at the tertiary level to include materials that enhance their FL effective communication and intercultural competence as well.

Table 10: Frequency and percentage of the male and female pre-service teachers' perception of assessment of FL culture materials

D. Assessment of FL culture materials in the Egyptian FL Tertiary Education curricula										
	SD		D		NS		SA		A	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
16. FL culture materials are sufficient	5	2	4	7	8	9	20	18	13	14
17. They are suitable to the learning needs of Egyptian EFL learners	8	10	2	7	4	6	25	26	11	7
18. They sustain the interest of Egyptian					2	5	33	30	15	15

EFL learners to learn English									
19. They include varieties about different types of FL cultures like British, American, Australian, etc. Cultures.	10	3	6	4	7	11	22	26	5	6
20. They help develop the participants' intercultural competence by referring to the L1 culture	5	3	3	4	8	5	33	36	1	2
Total	28	18	13	22	29	36	133	136	45	44

Table 11 shows the descriptive statistics of the participants' perception of the assessment of FL culture materials. The male participants had higher mean score (8.31579) and standard deviation (8.22598) in comparison to the females (1.3500) and (5.24990). Therefore, there was higher variance in the way male participants assessed the FL culture materials compared to their female counterparts. This was evident in the lower and upper

responses of the male participants (10.31030) and (16.68970) in comparison to those of the females (5.78542) and (10.84616).

Table 11: Descriptive statistics of the participants' perception of assessment of FL culture materials

Groups	N	M	SD	lower	Upper
Group A	50	8.31579	8.22598	10.31030	16.68970
Group B	50	1.3500	5.24990	5.78542	10.84616

Table 12 indicates that gender significantly contributed to the participants' perception of assessment of FL culture materials, where the P value was < 0.05. Thus, the current study rejects the null hypothesis that male and female participants equally perceived the assessment of FL culture materials.

Table 12: ANOVA of the participants' perception of assessment FL culture materials

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	Sig.
Within groups	244.781	22	128.842	45.610	.000
Between groups	30.578	78	2.577		
Total	275.359	100			

Discussion and conclusion

The Egyptian EFL pre−service teachers unanimously and positively perceived the importance and gains of the FL culture instruction in the Egyptian FL context. They did not strongly oppose the integration of FL culture instruction into the FL courses at the tertiary level because of its importance and gains. The finding confirmed those reported by Hermessi (2017), Khouni and Boudjelal (2019) and Han and Zhang (2020). However, male and female pre−service teachers slightly varied in their perception of the importance of FL culture instruction. The former had slightly higher frequency of the reasons behind the importance of teaching FL culture in the tertiary level. The males also had higher frequency of the gains of teaching FL culture. Notably, the latter showed uncertainty regarding the realization of effective communication due to the integration of FL culture into FL courses at the tertiary. Thus, the training courses designed for the EFL pre−service teachers can include activities that help Egyptian female EFL pre−service teachers understand how FL culture is of paramount importance in developing the effective communication of Egyptian EFL learners. This uncertainty can also be treated through the clarification of intricacy between FL learning and FL culture teaching which constitute a unified domain in FL

education. For instance, the appropriate usage of speech acts (e.g. apologizing, requesting, refusing, etc.) in English encompasses pragmalinguistic competence and socio-pragmatic competence. Pragmalinguistic competence include knowledge of language skills of how make a request, how to apologize, how to refuse. Meanwhile, sociopragmatic competence refers to the awareness of EFL learners of the cultural norms and social values of the target language community which govern the appropriateness of using that FL.

Although the Egyptian EFL male and female pre-service teachers also positively perceived the methods of FL culture teaching, the females had higher frequency of strong agreement compared to the males. The positive perception of methods of FL culture instruction in the Egyptian FL context is compatible with the findings reported by Bahlai, et al. (2019). Among the methods which the Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers strongly agreed on were audio-visual listening comprehension, authentic written materials, hands-on approach, and role plays activities. Remarkably, the implementation of these methods should not only focus of developing the language skills of Egyptian EFL learners, but also should pay attention to teach the cultural dimension included in such methods. In other words, implementing these

methods should not only teach the linguistic forms of using that language but should highlight the cultural content implicitly entwined in FL learning. This helps the Egyptian EFL learners understand the FL cultural norms leading to the appropriateness of using that language. Equally important in FL culture instruction, the Egyptian EFL learners should be also aware of the differences between their L1 culture and the target language culture. As such, the planning of FL curricula at the tertiary level should take into consideration the development of the Egyptian EFL learners' intercultural competence. That is, to create intercultural understanding that combines the cultural norms and social values of both L1 and FL. This will help treat the uncertainty of some Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers about the methods of FL culture instruction.

In addition, the assessment of FL culture materials included items on sufficiency of FL culture material; the inclusion of different types of English cultures in such materials; and the development of Egyptian EFL learners' intercultural competence. Some Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers negatively assessed the FL culture materials. In this regard, the male and female participants varied in their strong disagreement to the assessment of FL culture materials where the males had higher frequency

compared to the females. Furthermore, the females expressed higher frequency of strong agreement to these items compared to the males. In terms of uncertainty, the males were less uncertain about assessing FL culture materials compared to their female counterparts. Thus, the training courses of pre-service teachers should include sufficient materials that reinforce their perception of the gains which they can attain through the materials of FL instruction. These courses should also develop their intercultural competence and help them realize effective communication in the FL. The finding is compatible with those reported by Byram (2014) and Bahlai, et al. (2019).

The present study is distinguished due to its contribution to the modern literature of foreign language education because it mainly handled FL culture teaching from the perspective of potential influence which gender might have in that concern. The present study confirms that gender had statistically significant contribution to how the Egyptian EFL male and female pre-service teachers perceived the teaching of FL culture. This finding is consistent with that reported by Genc (2018) and Bal (2020). Indeed, the current study found that gender is a significant contributor to the participants' perception of the importance of FL culture teaching; gains of FL culture instruction; methods of FL culture teaching

and the way they assessed FL culture materials. Therefore, the present study rejects the null hypothesis that there are no differences among Egyptian EFL male and female pre-service teachers in perceiving FL culture teaching in the Egyptian context at the tertiary level.

Recommendations for further research

1. A replicable study is recommended to examine the impact of FL culture on designing training and preparation courses for the Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers.

2. A study can be carried out to investigate the impact of FL culture on the development of EFL curricula in the Egyptian context at various educational levels.

3. The Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' perception of FL culture can be examined in terms of other independent variables such as their socioeconomic status, motivations and attitudes towards the profession of FL teaching.

4. A tentative study can examine the influence of Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' perception of FL culture on their adopted teaching strategies and methods.

5. A suggested study can examine the suitability of FL culture curricula to the needs of Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers at the tertiary level.

6. A recommended study can analyze factors affecting the choice of FL culture teaching methods in the Egyptian context.

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