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Investigating The Importance of Cultural Awareness in EFL Classes

**A case study of third year students of English at Mohamed
Kheider university of Biskra**

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Dedication

With a deep affection I would like to dedicate this humble work to my family, my source of success and happiness.

To the one who enlighten my darkness.

My mother " Razika"

To the one who gave me strength and hope

My father " Azzedin"

My Brother Ossama and my sisters.

My Dearest friends Hadji Ilyes, Leghouil Mourad, Sellama Taqiyyeddine, , Abdelali Mohammed, Salah Farouk, and Gadban

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To all those who believe in me.

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Abstract

The current dissertation investigates the importance of cultural awareness in EFL classes at the English Department, University of Biskra. It attempts to highlight the need for cultural awareness of the target language in order to facilitate the process of EFL learning teaching. In this study, we hypothesize that if EFL learners' cultural awareness is raised, and taught the target language along with its cultural dimension the process of teaching will be more effective, To carry out our research, a qualitative approach was adopted, and in order to collect and gather data we opt for an online semi-structured questionnaire which was addressed to Third year students at the university of Biskra, in addition to an interview which we conducted with (5) teachers of English at the same university. After analysing the questionnaires and the interview the findings revealed that students had positive attitudes towards integrating cultural content in EFL classes and considered it significant in the process of teaching. Also, the majority of students receive their cultural knowledge through: movies films, documentary, videos. It is also worth to mention that teachers of English at the English Department of the University of Biskra. confirmed that students who are aware of the target culture tend to succeed in the process of teaching, the more they are exposed the target culture the more they acquire the target language effectively. Consequently, based on the obtained results it can be concluded that the previous hypothesis was confirmed. Therefore, both teachers and students should give more importance the cultural content in order to facilitate both the process of teaching and learning the target language.

Key words: Cultural awareness, EFL classes, process of teaching

List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

FL: Foreign Language

EFL: English Foreign Language

N: Number

TC: Target culture

MC: Mother Culture

ESL: English as a second language

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

FCA: Foreign Cultural Approach

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Introduction

It is unavoidable for today's people to interact or engage in a communication with other speakers from different cultures; so, to build a successful communication. We should cover both linguistic and cultural background of the participants, it is the same with foreign language teaching because it comprises not only the linguistic level of language or only aims at achieving the learners' linguistic proficiency on the short term, but also, seeks to include the cultural dimension of the language in the classroom and to inform the students about it in order to be culturally competent on the long term, especially in this era of globalization, scientific advancement, and technology explosion where cultural awareness is of paramount importance for the communication to be effective and to avoid the risk of misunderstandings, breakdowns or even appearing uncultured or rude.

Statement of the Problem

It is no longer sufficient to be aware only with the linguistic part of the target language this can easily be noticed with Algerian learners of English who experience problems in real communication; mastering the target language must go in hand with mastering its culture. Learners of foreign languages are supposed to be aware of the cross-cultural differences in order to develop a sense of acceptance and appreciation of the foreign culture. This research investigates the effectiveness of cultural awareness in EFL Classes.

Research Questions

In the current study, the following questions are addressed:

- What is the effectiveness of cultural awareness in English Foreign Language (EFL) Classes ?
- What are learners' attitudes and teachers practices towards including cultural insights during EFL classes?

Sub Question :

- : Is cultural awareness essential in the learning process ?

Hypothesis

- If EFL learners' cultural awareness is raised, and taught the target language in its cultural dimension the process of teaching will be more effective

Aims of The Study

The current study aim to investigate the importance of cultural awareness in EFL classes . It aims to :

- 1- Raising teachers' and students' awareness towards the effectiveness of culture in EFL classes.
- 2- Attempt to help teachers by suggesting different methods to apply them in EFL Classroom.

Significance of the Study

This study aims to bring to the light a considerable contribution to FL teaching and learning field. We attempts to demonstrate that if teachers apply teaching strategies that make connections with cultural dimension, this can facilitate the teaching process. On the other hand, this study makes a useful contribution to students' understanding of culture within the context of learning English as a foreign language.

Methodology

Research Design

In this research we will investigate the importance of cultural awareness in EFL classes. So in order to collect and gather data, the most appropriate approach we need to adapt

for this study is the qualitative approach by using the descriptive method in order to finish the work in the given time.

Population

The population will be limited to EFL students of third years at English field at the university of Mohamed Khieder of Biskra, Based on the administrations' statistics, this population is composed of 389 students.

Sample of the study

Taking into consideration the large number of third year students from the department of English at the University of Mohamed Khieder of Biskra, this research deals with one group from the whole of population. This sample consists of (N=40) students who will be selected randomly, and a limited number of teachers who selectively interviewed.(N=5).

Research tools

To conduct such investigation we will select online semi-structured questionnaire and the interview as research tools. The different opinions and the valuable information which are derives from the students' questionnaire and face-to-face interviews with teachers are so substantial for our investigation.

Structure of the study

This research will be divided into two main parts; a descriptive part which will include two chapters, and an empirical part that will include one chapter. Chapter one is going to deal with the concept of culture with its different dimensions starting from cultural shock. It also suggests some techniques for teaching culture. The second chapter will deal with the techniques that develop students' cultural awareness and suggests approaches to be applied in order to facilitate the process of teaching. The third chapter, as a field work will analyse and interpret the data collected from the utilized tools. Moreover, it will show the results and the suggestions of the research study.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Since the cultural background of each one of us deeply influences one's way of life, beginning with what we say, how we think, how we behave, and what we believe, the way we see the world is different because of the many perspectives that everyone sees the world from, the value of culture is also transmitted to the field of education, starting from the ninetieth century when the need for communication and using the language appropriately have urged the applied linguists and language teachers to shift of focus from teaching just grammar rules and vocabulary to teaching language functions and integrating culture for better communication.

This chapter seeks to put a finger on the concept of culture, cultural and intercultural awareness, then we explain the notion of education before we shift to defining the meanings of acculturation and cultural chock, next we attempt to describe how important it is to integrate culture in the four skills, besides making a distinction between culture, communication, the big C and the small c, we also shed light on the reasons for teaching culture, and last we suggest techniques that help in teaching culture.

The concept of culture

The word culture is one of the concepts which cannot be easily defined due to its vague nature. It is a tricky, twisted, trap notion that puzzled practitioners and scholars. Culture is neither a scientific hard object that is concrete and measurable, nor a mathematic equation that could be either proved or denied, it is rather, an abstract intellectual concept in the mind that could not be seen or touched. That is why it has become an area of interest and study for a wide range of disciplines such as: anthropology, sociology and ethnography of communication (Geertz, 1973).

The origin of the word culture is from the Latin term ‘cultura’ or ‘cultus’ from the verb colere; which means to cultivate. Generally speaking culture is usually divided into two major categories culture with capital ‘C’; which includes literature and arts and culture with small ‘c ‘ and this involves attitudes, values, beliefs, and everyday life styles, (Richard and Schmidt, 2002:138). Another definition says that culture is. “A historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.” (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). From the last definition we can say that culture is inherited from one generation to another, and that what allows people to act and interact as vital members of their society. Brooks (1975, p. 20) refers to culture as "everything in human life and the best of everything in human life".

Anthropologists define culture as the whole way of life of a people or group. From this notion. the English anthropologist Tylor (1871) In his book *Primitive Culture*, he defines 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 Spencer-Oatey, 2012). According to this definition, we can deduce that culture is the habit and the abilities that the person acquires from the society which he lives in. Another definition suggests that culture is what people “must know in order to *act* as they do, *make* the things they make, and interpret their experience in the distinctive way they do” (Holland and Quinn, 1987, p. 4).

Zimmermann stated” Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts”. In addition, it is sensed in every day details from greeting at morning to meeting friends in the class to dealing with teachers and headmasters. Generally speaking culture

shapes the society, so the answer to a question such as “what is culture?” is not likely to be brief or concise, because of the large topic and the several ideas that come to mind. The Centre for Advance Research on Language Acquisition goes a step further in defining culture as “shared patterns of behaviours and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialization, thus, it can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group (Stephanie and Giovanna, 2005).

We can clarify the concept of culture by saying culture is what jumps into one's mind once hearing about a certain community or social group. For example, when someone says "Japan", one immediately thinks of these terms: Kimono, technology, sushi, samurai, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, commitment, organization, politeness, respect of time ... etc. This is probably the reason why Tang (1999) describes it as the 'soul' of the country and people who speak it.

Cultural Awareness

Generally speaking, cultural awareness refers to the knowledge of one's own culture while exploring the target language culture. To put it in other words, being culturally aware involves the ability to understand one's own culture and grasp it deeply, and then moving toward accepting other cultures. It is the pillar of communication (Stephanie & Giovanna, 2005) and that what makes it essential in the process of foreign language teaching/learning. According to Tavares and Cavalcanti, the aim of teaching culture is to heighten students' awareness and to develop their curiosity towards both the target and home culture (2005). Hence; the way learners communicate, interpret, and perceive appropriately during various contexts is because of their understanding and to what extent they are aware of the differences and similarities between the different cultures.

According to Widdowson, H. G, (1978). awareness of cultural differences and their impact on behaviour is the beginning of intercultural effectiveness. He states that “cultural self-awareness includes recognition of one’s own cultural influences upon values, beliefs, and judgments, as well as the influences derived from the professional’s work culture” (P.9). Another definition suggested by Byram (1997), culture learning is seen as a comparative process in the sense that learners start raising awareness of their own culture and compare it and contrast it with the target culture, Cultural awareness means that a EFL learner should be conscious of similarities and contrasts between cultural groups. Collins dictionary defines culture awareness as “Someone's understanding of the differences between themselves and people from other countries or other backgrounds, especially differences in attitudes and values.

Some scholars further divided this concept into categories. According to Tomalin and Stempleski (1993), cultural awareness comprises three qualities which are:

- awareness of one's own culturally-induced behavior,
- awareness of the culturally-induced behavior of others and
- ability to explain one’s own cultural standpoint.

Cultural awareness will also lead learners to realize how the multiple cultures that existed and still exist around the globe including their own culture and the target language culture have shaped the world as we know today. Geertz, G. (1973). asserts that "the turning inward of cultural information through self-reflection leading to enhanced understanding of the role of culture/language in the construct of worldviews."

Intercultural Awareness

Since successful communication is achieved when both the sender and the receiver of the message share the same interpretations of what has been said or written.

Vanessa (1969, p.3) states that communication is: “the sharing of information between people on different levels of awareness and control”. Hence; to realize the necessity of knowing that is not enough to know only about your own culture is what shaped the concept of intercultural awareness. Another definition proposed by Shaules, J. (2007) who claims that intercultural awareness is the development of awareness and understanding of one’s own and other cultures, intercultural awareness occurs when people no longer assume that their culture’s way of looking at things is the best way or the only way, and when people therefore begin to evaluate other perspectives.

Mastering the grammatical rules of the language or knowing how to write does not necessarily mean that you are competent in interacting in intercultural situations. “According to Byram (1998), “the intercultural speaker is someone with knowledge of one or more cultures and social identities, and who enjoys discovering and maintaining relationships with people from other cultural backgrounds, although [they have] not been formally trained for that purpose.”

The Concept of Education

The word Education originated from the Latin word ‘Educare’ which means ‘to bring up’ or ‘to nourish, this concept is not like any concept, for instance “ black “ which means a kind of colour, or “ horse” which is an animal. Education is an excellent invention of the human race. It is more important than all invention he made like tools, machines, space craft, medicines, weapons and even language, because language too was the product of his education. Man without education is just like an animal. It is education, which transforms man from a mere ‘two-legged animal’ into perfect human being. According to the famous philosopher Plato who consider education as “any process by which an individual gains knowledge or insight, or develops attitudes or skill”. Kitao (2000).

According to Byram, M., and Morgan, C. (1994), education means "to lead forth" or "to come out". In other words, it is to supervise and guide a group of people seeking to lead them in a long path full of obstacles to save them from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. Education to the man does not begin at school, it begins at birth. It ends, not when he graduates from any Educational institutions like Colleges and Universities, but at his death. Hence Education is a lifelong process. As W.H. Kalpatrick (1918: P10) in his article *The Project Method* says "Any modification brought about in the behaviour of an individual as a result of his interaction with the environment constitutes learning."

Acculturation

The concept of Acculturation has been scientifically studied since 1918. It simply comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. It also refers to "changes that take place as a result of contact with culturally dissimilar people, groups, and social influences" Atkinson, D. (1999) Another definition that says: "The change in individuals whose primary learning has been in one culture and who take over traits from another culture" Edmond (1976)

In other words "acculturation is the transition and shift of individuals or groups of people from living a lifestyle of their own culture, to a lifestyle of another culture, i.e it is when they adapt the new culture's behaviours, values, customs, language, and forms of dress that are characteristic of each group, these cultural changes affect many levels such as psychological, social, groups and individuals as well" Vanessa (2003 P:13).

Brown (1980, p.129) explained the concept of acculturation as ‘the process of becoming adapting the new culture’. Hence; acculturation is the process whereby the attitudes and/or behaviours of people from one culture are modified as a result of contact with different cultures.

Cultural Shock

The most common definition for cultural shock is the feeling of disorientation experienced by someone when they are suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes. Shaules (2007, p.106) states that culture shock: “looks at how people do react to intercultural environments” He defines culture shock as the way individuals feel and act when they face a new culture. In the same vein (Rogers and Sterinfatt, 1999:112) define cultural shock as “the traumatic experience that an individual may encounter when entering a different culture”

The concept of Cultural Shock has also a medical definition which says that it is a sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people who were exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation, it has been asserted previously that in the different types of unfamiliar situations individuals become subjects of stress if one is unable to manage and decrease his stress in other words does not know how to adapt to new and unfamiliar situation. The outcome feeling from this increased stress is what is called shock, or cultural shock. Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012).

Integrating of Culture in the four skills

It is proved that language and culture are bounded together and inseparable. Consequently, language learning and culture learning are interrelated. The recent education scholars had no choice but to consider culture as important as the four skills (writing, listening, speaking, and reading) due to its significance in the field of education. Thus; the

involvement of culture in foreign language teaching has become an undisputed need and an inevitable solution for the EFL learners to develop their level and improve their exposure to the foreign language and to the culture that is being learned.

According to Tomalin (2008), culture should be thought as a fifth language skill in addition to listening, speaking, reading and writing, because of the international role of the English language and globalization. We can say that it is important to start teaching culture early in order to open students' minds and get them to realize that they are not living alone in this world. It is because, as young learners, they see every aspect of life from their own cultural perspective. In other words, they view the world through their mother culture. In many cases, this may cause problems to them when facing other cultures and when they have to be in a situation where they deal with a person from a completely different cultural background. The early learning of the target language culture can provide learners with a better understanding not only of the foreign culture, but also their own culture. Moreover, they will develop a sense of tolerance when interacting with differences.

Certainly, it is not an easy task to teach culture. Teachers can show the way rather than regulate a specific way of seeing things. Wang (2008) claims that making students aware of the important traits in the target culture helps them to realize that there are no such things as superior and inferior, and there are differences among people of distinctive cultures, as well. Kramersch (1993) argues that a foreign culture and one's own culture should be placed together in order for learners to understand a foreign culture.

Culture and communication

Culture and communication are inseparable concepts, we express our attitudes, beliefs and thoughts through communication with others, and communication defines each one's culture. 'The relationship between culture and communication nevertheless, is very complex and interrelated since they are joined together in a partnership relation. First, cultures are created through communication; that is, communication is the means of human interaction, second cultures are the results of social communication and they give it an understanding and without it, it would be impossible to preserve and pass along cultures from one generation to another' C. Kramsch (1993. P: 9). will successfully fulfil the conditions of a good communication, participants must share a number of conventional beliefs, thoughts or attitudes, if not, communication will be broken down.

Communication is what shaped cultures and vice versa, culture transmitted through communication. Hence; communication is the bridge between cultures. '....the world nowadays has developed and transformed into a global village where people from different parts of the glob are all the time travelling and moving for different purposes and different needs, and "the communication is no longer limited or exclusive to the same society or the same culture. International communication is influenced by cultural differences" Leach Edmund (1976.P:17).

Big "C" Culture and small "c" culture

Big C refers to formal culture - arts, literature, music, history, and Small c refers to: daily life culture - anthropological and sociological aspects, for instance: social behavior, beliefs, housing, food, and transportation. Brooks (1975). We also find Peterson (2004) who categorized culture into two general types: Big "C" culture and little "c" culture. Kang-Young

(2009), refers to Big "C" culture as "the culture which represents a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society." For Peterson (2004), the culture relating to grand themes, is classified under Big "C" culture which includes the following themes such as geography, architecture, classical music, literature, political issues, society's norms, legal foundation, core values, history, and cognitive processes. The little "c" culture includes the little details of one community's everyday life.

Big "C" culture and small "c" culture can be both abstract and concrete , they are about all what could a society achieve in the fields of literature, art, sports, social events, architecture and so on, as well as the minor details of everyday life. Big "C" culture may be easily recognized. For instance, when hearing a certain kind of music, or seeing a building with a certain kind of architecture and decoration or eating a certain kind of food, one can easily guess whether this music or food belongs to the Far East or the Middle East cultures or it is simply a western food or music; the same goes for how houses, institutions and worship places are built. However, it does require a large amount of knowledge and access to a certain society to be able to know how they behave, how they interpret what they see and hear, what confuses them and what makes them comfortable and how sociocultural variables such as age, gender, social status and social power are determined and dealt with. It is for this reason that the inclusion of both big "C" culture and small "c" culture is very important in foreign language teaching. For example: In the Arabic culture, when someone has a certain health issue, regardless of its seriousness, they generally speak about it to their families, friends or even to strangers in certain contexts. However, this is absolutely not acceptable in USA, UK or any other Western country. In these societies, people do not discuss their health problems with others unless they are doctors because it is considered to be confusing and even rude.

Ignorance of such information can cause endless problems to the speakers of the foreign language; that is why it is vital to integrate the cultural insights of the target language in the process of teaching any foreign language, Kang-Young (2009)

Reasons for Teaching Culture

The idea of teaching culture began to attract scholars working in the field of foreign language teaching only during the sixties and won considerable attention during the eighties and the nineties. Since then it still agreed that a proper learning demands a proper and well understanding about all the aspects of language, especially the cultural one, as Widdowson (1978, p. 1) said “someone knowing a language knows more than how to understand, speak, read and write sentences”. From the above saying we can deduce that the knowledge of the four skills is far to be sufficient and remains poor to meet all learners’ needs. Thus, it is no longer enough to focus only on teaching the form of sentences or the grammar, the recent studies shows how sufficient including cultural content could be. In this idea we find in Risager (2007). who claims that ‘the teaching of culture would introduce the learner to real life practices and behavioral patterns of the target culture .It would also help them develop sensivity about what lies behind target culture people’s behaviour .learning about rules governing target culture people’s behaviour would enable learners to view the target culture from native stand. Finally, drawing on insights from native culture would make it possible for learners to give meanings to new experiences in the target culture’

Teaching culture is the easiest way to deliver as much as possible of knowledge content about the target language. According to Allwright and Bailey (1991, p. 99), “One of our goals as foreign language teachers is to help our learners getting closer and closer to the target language norms”. Therefore, a foreign language learner is asked to look deeper and

adequately handle it for best communicative effect. In this context Hymes states “Being competent in communication involves more than just an understanding of the syntax and range of expression within a language”. (1972, cited in Baker, 2003, p. 45). Teaching culture along with the usual structure of language (syntax...etc) will facilitate the process of teaching a foreign language, this idea goes in hand with what Damen (1987) Stated “without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete, for foreign language students, language study seems senseless if they know nothing about the people who speak it or the country in which it is spoken.” This means that teaching foreign language should naturally contain culture and the content of what we teach will always be in a way or another linked to culture ”.

We can also notice how vital to consider cultural aspects in FL teaching in what Hedge, T. (2000). stated “culture is a crucial element in understanding societies, analyzing differences among them, and explaining their economic and political development”

We conclude from what has been mentioned so far that integrating cultural content during the process of teaching foreign language will develop a good deal of awareness of the target language, it will also enable the students to easily distinguish between their culture and the target one, besides enriching their vocabulary and knowledge of the target culture, and most importantly, it will create an atmosphere where the course will run smoothly.

Techniques for Teaching Culture

Culture Capsules

For many years, FL teachers have tried to come up into their classroom a ‘feeling’ for the people whose language they teach, it was first developed by H. Darell Taylor and John L. Sorenson (1961) ”The culture capsule technique tries to pick out those key cultural

differences which are especially difficult to the outsider to understand on the basis of his own life experiences”(P: 350). And they are considered to be best-known methods for teaching culture. A culture capsules is simply what shapes the characteristics of the target language, for instance: what is customarily eaten for meals and when those meals are eaten, marriage customs...etc. We can define this concept by saying that culture capsule is a brief presentation of a target culture element which differentiates the source culture and the target culture, followed by a discussion leading to the explanation of the cultural element concerned.

It is best prepared by students outside the class and presented during the lesson, it takes from 5 to 10 minutes, the culture capsule technique tries to pick out the main key cultural differences which are especially so hard for the outsider to grasp, it is best to be presented orally, a teacher give a concise and precise presentation about the main differences between the target culture and the native one, this will provide the students with insights towards the world’s cultures, it will enrich and develop the way they think through this contact with other cultures. the purpose of this activity is to enlighten students about certain cultural elements including festivals, fast food, and the family construction. Fantini, A. (1995)

Culture Clusters

Culture Cluster is somehow linked to culture capsules; we can say that a cultural cluster consists of 2-3 capsules. After the study of each capsule these are integrated into a single sequence through activities like drama. It is simply a combination of two or three capsules in one single related theme, as it was described by the scholar Prodromou, L. (1992). who was first set a light on this concept when he declare ‘The culture cluster is a series of culture capsules each of which introduces a different aspect of a central theme. Presented as brief lessons, they lead to a summarizing activity which takes the form of a dramatic

simulation. In this manner, the cluster not only provides factual information but also gives the student the opportunity to become personally involved through dramatic participation in a cultural situation". So, the teacher play different role here which is a narrator, his main purpose is only to guide students.

Culture Assimilator

This concept described by Piaget (2004) who stated that "The reasoning behind the culture assimilator is that through the critical incident, the trainee i.e., the student in this case, will learn to make attributions similar to those made by members of the culture involved" . It is programmed learning techniques designed to expose members of one culture to some of the basic concepts, attitudes, role perceptions, and values of another culture. It provides students with the needed understanding about cultural information and inter-cultural communication. Students in such techniques are supposed to read a description of an incident where one person from the target culture interacts with people from the home culture. Then, four possible interpretations of the meaning of the behaviours or words of the target culture are given. Every student should choose one of the four options they think is the most appropriate.

Conclusion

In the previous chapter, we tried to set a light on the notion of culture from different perspectives, and then we attempt to clarify what is education and what its relationship with culture, we also briefly distinguished between the various notions of culture, starting from intercultural awareness, cultural shock, and acculturation, this chapter also explained the importance of integrating culture in ELT and provide techniques that help to facilitate language teaching process.

CHAPTER TWO

CULTURE IN EFL CLASSES

Introduction

Chapter two provides an extensive review on culture and its relation with EFL classes, we set light on many perspectives concerning this angle, starting from defining culture from EFL perspective to suggesting techniques that helps teaching cultural awareness in EFL classes before showing the importance of culture in language learning. Next we provide kind of instructions to raise cultural awareness. Then; we deal with culture as a fifth Skill to EFL Learners. At the end of the chapter we will deal with the students' attitudes towards cultural differences from its different stages.

Culture from the EFL Perspective

Since the 1980's, the idea of the equivalence between culture and EFL teaching and learning and the bridge that relates these notions start to shape. It was appeared in what Atamna, k, (2008) . says, which is an example we can consider when it comes to explore the different aspects of culture that can be invested in EFL programmes These include four aspects: the behavioural, the functional, the cognitive and the symbolic. To begin with the behavioural aspect which focuses on the observable human behaviours including real life practices and behavioural patterns of the target culture people. Second the functional aspect takes into account the regularity of behavioural patterns in the target culture. Third, the cognitive aspect considers how cultural data are mentally processed and internalised by a foreigner. Finally, the symbolic pattern pertains to the dynamic system of cultural symbols which shapes an individuals' perception of the world (as cited in Atamna, 2008, p. 19).

When applying these aspects in EFL teaching programmes, it would make the learners easily go in hand with the process of acquiring the target culture, in the same vein Kuang (2007) mentioned that the teaching of culture would introduce the learner to real life practices

and behavioural patterns of the target culture. It would also help them develop sensitivity about what lies behind target culture people's behaviour, learning about rules governing target culture people's behaviour would enable learners to view the target culture from native stand. Finally, drawing on insights from native culture would make it possible for learners to give meanings to new experiences in the target culture (ibid). In short, culture from an EFL perspective can be defined as the learnable dynamic set of behavioural patterns, rules governing these behaviours and the interpretive skills and attitudes needed for encoding and decoding culture specific meanings.

Techniques for Developing Cultural Awareness

There are many studies and opinions made by different researchers and scholars about the possible techniques which we can apply in the classroom in order to rise cultural awareness for learners since both learners and teachers of a second language need to understand cultural differences, to recognize openly that everyone in the world is not "just like me", that people are not all the same beneath the skin. There are real differences between groups and cultures Therefore, language teachers cannot avoid conveying impressions of another culture whether they realize it or not. The primary task of teachers is using various methods to improve students' sensitivity to culture and cultivate cultural awareness and teach culture, so that they can initiatively and willingly absorb it and involve in the new cultural environments.

Exploring existing materials' enlightening points about the cultural knowledge.

which concern with keeping an eye on the implicit cultural phenomenon of materials, consider these enlightening points of cultural knowledge as the premise to expand appropriately, and try our best to express what their cultural values should be. In other words, we should not only introduce students to the relevant cultural background knowledge, but also actively guide

them to analyze, identify, develop what is useful or healthy and discard what is not for all kinds of social ideology and cultural ideas and concepts. Accumulating these enlightening points about the cultural knowledge will make students benefit. It has stressed the attention because in many educational materials, a lot of cultural knowledge is potential, and it is not easy to grasp. It is requiring teachers to have a certain level of cultural understanding and cultural sensitivity. And to achieve this, teachers should do much more work in lesson preparation. In order to continuously improve their own ideological and theoretical level and integrated cultural accomplishments, teachers should make “exploring cultural knowledge enlightening points as a necessary teaching basic skill.

Designing the introductory point of cultural knowledge education

Teachers must be good at teaching cultural knowledge points which are discovered during lesson preparation, and combining teaching process timely by selecting appropriate methods and organic framework bridge to expand these enlightening points, so that the students can expand their cultural knowledge. As a teacher, one should strive to make English classes as a battlefield for teaching cultural knowledge. In practical teaching, the following methods are available to select:

Discussion and contrast

Because different languages reflects different cultures, so discussion and contrast can become one of the most commonly teaching methods when teachers want to introduce cultural knowledge. Teachers can grasp the phenomenon of Western culture in the textbooks so that students can make discussions related to the cultural phenomena in our country, and do some comparative analyses. Such discussions will make it possible to bring the initiative of students into full play, and at the same time, make the classroom atmosphere active and their study effective.

Plays and dramas in and out of class

It is proved that plays in and out of class are probably the most efficient ways of language teaching. The role of plays and dramas manifests themselves when learners perform by themselves. Mini-dramas acted by students expose them to a “process of self-confrontation” with the target cultural communications. The learners can act out mini-dramas written by them, which show misinterpretation of something that happens in the target cultural context. The cause of the problem is usually clarified in the final scene. Cultural similarities and differences will be analyzed by follow-up discussions

Song appreciation

The important function of the songs is to express one’s wishes. Many lyrics and melody of songs are also full of rich cultural content. Students generally are interested in songs. If time is enough, teachers can choose one or two representative English songs for students to appreciate or learn to sing. It is an effective method in the teaching of English cultural knowledge to analyze the content of the lyrics and music rhythm feelings. And then the students can accept the cultural baptism. For example, a song has a lyric like “Love is blue (blue love).” Then what is the representation of “blue” in English? It often expresses “frustration and anxiety”. Teachers cite examples to analyze, and then ask students to appreciate this song, try to see if there are any new experiences.

Inspiring students to maintain adequate cultural interest in learning

It is agreed that developing intercultural communication abilities in class is important, based on the students’ language skills. On the other hand, attention should also be paid to help learners gain an awareness of the need that they will have to continue learning the language and foreign culture on their own once they leave the classroom. And we must guide and train the students’ interests to study the social and cultural background, making the students spend the effort in extra-curricular and self-expanding cultural knowledge levels. After all, the time

in the classroom is limited, and therefore it is necessary for students to read English magazines, newspapers, and outstanding English original works or watch some foreign films, and take part in some cultural seminars by using after-school time. As the saying goes, “interest is the best teacher”, when students consider learning English as a hobby, cultural introduction has undoubtedly been the best in the realm of learning.

Galloway’s Categories of Cultural Understanding

In the course of foreign language teaching, the priority should always be given to increase international understanding by enabling the students to enter into the life, thought, and literature of people who speak another language. Cultural understanding has become a program, a vision, a chance of defining a new role for language teachers and the time has arrived when the social significance of this international cultural understanding is becoming more apparent. In this sense Galloway suggested that there are some categories of cultural understanding.

Convention

The main aim of this type is to give a hand for students to fully grasp and understand how people in a particular culture behave in a certain situations. Galloway in this matter identifies two types of conventions: (1) context determined conventions, which includes both extralinguistic behaviours that are characteristics in a given situation and (2) function-determined conventions related to sociolinguistic formulae or conventional utterances that are used to perform tasks in context. For example if one were teaching about foods, the teacher might focus on such context-determined factors as mealtimes, types of food, conventions of etiquette as well as on appropriate expressions associated with accepting and declining invitations, making reservations at a restaurant.

Connotation

Connotation concern with culturally significant meanings, which are associated with words. As students examine their own networks of association, they can begin to discover that the underlying meanings of words are determined by their cultural frame of reference. Galloway (1984) states certain words evoke a cluster of feeling and images. For example the word 'time' may make one nervous. At the symbolic level, it represents pressure, stress, deadlines, schedules, responsibility.

Conditioning

This category of cultural understanding has to do with the fact that people act in a manner consistent with their cultural frame of reference, and all people respond in culturally conditioned ways to basic human needs to learn how to interpret behaviour that are different from their own without making judgments based on their own standards. Students need to learn how to interpret behaviours. If the students begin to expect cultural differences as natural and inevitable and realize that there are indeed a variety of possible differences to the universal need for food, shelter, social contact, they may begin to view the other culture more emphatically.

Comprehension

This category includes skills as analysis, hypothesis formation, and tolerance of ambiguity. According to Galloway (1984), comprehension goals can best be achieved by paying attention to the source of one's information, examining one's stereotypes avoiding overgeneralization, and the ways to resolve conflicts. Ho (2009) claims still, the development of the cultural awareness in English language classes may be influenced by a number of constraints, namely the teacher's cultural knowledge, the availability of native English speakers, time allowance for culture teaching in each lesson or even the system of education itself. The teacher has been considered the expert knower of the language (Kramsch &

Sullivan, 1996) and his/her own cultural knowledge thus seems to be the main source for students to learn about. However, this role of the teacher has been diminished (ibid) With the booming of information technology and the effects of globalization that make many countries dependent on each other, students are now able to get access to many cultural resources and explore the target culture themselves. The availability of native English speakers as a rich cultural resource is also an important issue for consideration.

Approaches for Teaching Culture

'Except for language, learning, and teaching, there is perhaps no more important concept in the field of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) than culture. Implicitly or explicitly ESL (English as a second language) teachers face it in everything they do' (Atkinson 1999: 625). In this sense and in an attempt to facilitate the teaching of culture, researchers proposed a number of approaches. according to Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt in the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (2010), describes six different approaches to teaching culture.

The foreign cultural approach

This approach mainly focuses on the culture of the country or countries where the language is spoken, and it does not take into consideration neither the learners' own country. In other words the FCA (Foreign Cultural Approach) is shaped upon the concept of a single culture and focuses more on the target culture. It only focuses on the target culture and neither takes the learners' own culture into consideration nor does it compare the two cultures together. The target language is taught only as if it were the first language for the population. The teaching aim is to develop in the learners a native speaker communicative and cultural

competence, which mean a competence for that approaches as much as possible “native speaker”. This approach was dominant until the 1980's and is criticized nowadays because of the lack of comparison between cultures.

The intercultural approach

This approach draws upon the idea that culture is best learned through comparison of the target and the learners' own culture. Though the main focus is on the target culture, the IA deals with both the target culture and the learners' own culture. The aim is to develop an intercultural and communicative competence, a competence that enables the learner to function as a mediator between the two cultures. Since the 1980's, language teaching has become increasingly influenced by the intercultural perspective as it looks at the learners understanding of their own country.

Multicultural approach

This approach is based on the idea that several cultures may co-exist within the same society thus the multicultural approach includes a specific focus on the cultural and linguistic diversity of the target country or countries as well as learners own and the relation between the target countries and learners' own . As in the intercultural approach, comparison is included and the teaching reflects wishes for a balanced and anti-racist view of the cultures involved. The aim of the here is also to develop the mediator's competence: intercultural and communicative competence, but this time at a partly different level. It is a competence enabling learners to use the target language as a lingua franca, speaking with people who on

the one hand, belong to the society where the target language is spoken as France for example, but on the other hand belong to another culture, Moroccan culture for instance, and who may speak another language as their first language, e.g. Moroccan Arabic. (Risager, K. (2007). The MA is increasingly gaining popularity.

The Importance of Culture in Language Learning

As will become evident, the role of cultural learning in the foreign language classroom has been the concern of many teachers and scholars and has sparked considerable controversy. The idea of integrating cultural content in teaching EFL classes has become of paramount importance, because language without culture is not considered as communication, as Harumi (2002) declared “culture is a crucial element in understanding societies, analyzing differences among them, and explaining their economic and political development”. Despite its significance, we find that in the Algerian educational context, when providing cultural knowledge to the learners along with the process of learning English language does not seem to be regarded as necessity, not to mention the category of teachers and learners who refuse it for thinking that it is a kind of threat to their own values, beliefs and sociocultural identity as a whole. This may be the reason why culture is clearly absent in English language teaching curriculum. Thus, most of the students' cultural knowledge comes from media in the first place such as movies, TV shows and series. Such source of information is far from being reliable or helpful, simply they can be easily biased and they deliver, in many occasions, a wrong image of any society's culture by encouraging stereotypes and misconceptions about it.

It is crucial to start teaching culture early in order to open students' minds and enlighten them to realize that they are not living alone in this world. It is because, as young learners, they see every aspect of life from their own cultural perspective. In other words, they view the world through their mother culture which is a very limited perspective. Wang (2008)

claims that making students aware of the important traits in the target culture helps them to realize that there are no such things as superior and inferior, and there are differences among people of distinctive cultures, as well. Kramersch (1993) argues that a foreign culture and one's own culture should be placed together in order for learners to understand a foreign culture. We notice from what has been mentioned above that seeing other cultures from a narrow angle will cause a problem especially when it comes to deal with a person or a situation which is different from our mother culture.

it is beneficial for learners to early grasp and understand the differences, beside being know the target language better, it will also creates a sense of tolerance and flexibility to avoid undesirable situations.

Kitao (2000) claims that studying culture can help students like the people of that culture and avoid the stereotypes. We may also conclude from what has been mentioned above that foreign language learning and teaching is not only restricted to the linguistic dimension. But it includes also cultural one. by that we mean the knowledge of the attitudes, laws, beliefs, and the customs of target speech community. Des said (1990) language teaching is aimed “ To offer insights into the culture and civilisation of the country where the language is spoken” (cited in, Byram & Morgan, 1994, p. 15).

Raising Cultural Awareness

Raising cultural awareness means developing one's own culture while exploring the target language culture, we find a clear explanation for this idea in Tomlinsons' (2001) saying 'cultural awareness involves a gradually developing inner sense of the equality of cultures, an increased understanding of your own and other people's cultures, and a positive interest in how cultures both connect and differ (cited in Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004, p. 3). This mean the positive attitudes the students have acquired from their own and culture the target one.

It is significant to include cultural content in classroom especially in this era where the world has become not a small, but a tiny village where it is unavoidable for the different cultures to interact with each other. Now, if we speak from the perspective of learning a foreign language we may say that an integral part of grasping the target language requires some familiarity with the culture associated with it. For teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL), the question is, 'How can we incorporate cultural knowledge and understanding within the context of our English language classes?' Simply having an acquaintance with the grammar, syntax, phonetics, and some of the social conventions associated with English will not give learners real insights into the nuances of the daily lives of the people whose language they hope to speak. All people are members of at least one culture. Whether or not we realize it, the culture we belong to affects how we think, interact, communicate, and transmit knowledge from one generation to another. The ability to ask and answer questions based on our own culture facilitates the process of making connections across cultures. English teachers can help students activate their 'cultural antennas' by making them aware of important elements of their own culture and helping them understand how their culture has shaped them. To successfully make the students have the whole picture about the target culture. Teachers need to be aware that the students may grasp the wrong idea about being culturally aware. Because some students when they think of culture, they often think of artifacts such as food, clothing, music, art, or literature. Others may associate culture with conventions such as social interaction patterns, values, ideas, and attitudes. Certainly many definitions of culture exist, and teachers need to define what culture is before students can engage in interactive cultural discussions. Starting from the basic definition of culture as the Anthropologist John H. Bodley (1994, 22) described it simply as 'what people think, make, and do.'

When developing cultural awareness in the classroom it is important that we help our students distinguish between the cultural norms, beliefs, or habits of the majority within the speech community and the individual or group deviations from some of these norms. Students should be enabled to discuss their native culture with their foreign-speaking friends at the same time that they are provided with a real experiential content. They can make use of their knowledge of the foreign language. There should also be presented, discussed, or merely alluded to in two parallel streams. It should also be kept in mind that language teaching, as mentioned above, is a long process in which performance is not absolute and therefore we cannot expect all learners ever to acquire perfect native like behaviour.

From what has mentioned above we may come to conclude that teaching students that there are many different cultures and various ways of thinking and acting in the world, and bringing students into contact with the similarities and differences in language classes will assist the students in realizing that they should not stick only to their own norms when they communicate with foreigners in a new language. Acknowledging that there are cultural differences helps students understand that not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural information is helpful for successful communication. A language teacher can play a very significant role in teaching culture in a language class: making the learners aware of different cultures without compromising their own identity. Byram, M. (1997)

Culture as a fifth skill to EFL Learners

In recent years, English foreign language (EFL) teachers have recognized the importance of the underlying dynamics of culture in second language communication. In fact, second language learning exceeds the limits of memorizing vocabulary items and grammar rules; other areas of knowledge such as social, cultural and discourse conventions are

definitely to be included in the classroom input. It is agreed that the four traditional language skills are essential components of integral EFL classes, but are they enough to help the students become communicatively competent? In other words, are the skills enough to enable students to use the language system appropriately in any circumstance?. Absolutely not enough, because only integrating culture into the language teaching programs has a motivating effect on the language learner and the learning process. The students will be able to see similarities and differences among various cultural groups. With the globalization of life and learning, it is sometimes dangerous to be caged in a monocultural environment without any sound information about other cultures. Familiarization with other cultures leads learners to come to terms with others with a perspective of learning rather than rejecting others.

One of the main reasons for integrating culture into the language teaching program is to raise awareness about the target language culture. As Thanasoulas (2001) points out 'language teaching is culture teaching, and someone involved in teaching language is involved in teaching culture at the same time'. The effect of culture on language and their exchangeable relationship cannot be denied as McKay (2003) believes that culture influences language teaching linguistically and pedagogically. Linguistically, it affects the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language. Pedagogically, it influences the choice of the language materials because cultural content of the language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology are to be taken into consideration while deciding upon the language materials. Tomalin, B. (2008).

Students' attitudes towards Cultural Differences

Cultural differences is absolutely not an easy and direct topic to talk about since the students' attitudes towards cultural differences are not predictable and may differ from one to another. We categorise those attitudes into two different stages.

Stage one

Denial of difference

Learners and people in general in this stage do not tend to believe or accept the idea of cultural differences, and they are unable to experience those differences; they think people who are behaving differently are ignorant and do not know what they are doing. These people tend to impose their own perspective and ideas which they believe is right on others, and these other people are "confused". They believe the way they behave is natural and normal and the way other people behave, if it is different, is wrong and misguided. These people are not threatened by cultural differences because they simply do not accept them, so, they create a state of disinterest and complete avoidance towards the foreign culture. Generally, people in this stage have had limited contact or no contact at all with people different from themselves, and thus have no experiential basis for believing in other cultures. Geertz, G. (1973)

Defense against difference

These students have had an indication that their value system may not be absolute-and they are not happy about it. In the denial stage, students in the defence stage do believe in cultural difference and have accepted the reality of its existence, but they feel like are deeply threatened by it and believe that other cultures are decidedly inferior. This may be how things are, but it is not the way things should be. They are wiser than trying to impose their values on others, but they view other cultures negatively and prefer to have little or no contact with those who are different. they consider these differences as a dangerous which threat the way they tend to see things. Geertz, G. (1973)

Minimizing the difference

Students at this stage are still threatened by difference, the reason why they try to minimize it, however, they do not think that those who are different are inferior, misguided, or otherwise unfortunate, rather, they believe that the differences are real but not especially deep or significant, that as different as people are, they are still more similar than dissimilar. In other words, we are different on the surface, but underneath, we share many of the same values and beliefs. If students in the denial stage deny difference and students in the defence stage accept but they are careful, then, people in the minimization stage try to trivialize the difference and make it easier or unimportant. Byram, M., & Morgan, C. (1994)

Stage Two

Acceptance of difference

Students at this stage accept differences as being deep and legitimate. They know that other people are genuinely different from them and accept the inevitability of other value systems and behavioural norms. They still find some of these behaviours hard to deal with or accept, nevertheless, they are not threatened by them nor do they judge them as being wrong or bad or inferior. They do not normally adopt many of these behaviours for themselves, nor necessarily adjust their own behaviours to be more culturally sensitive, but, they have a more tolerant and sympathetic attitude. They are neutral, neither positive about differences nor negative. In short, they accept and admit that difference is a fact of life. Byram, M., & Morgan, C. (1994)

adaptation and Integration

In these two stages, both behaviours as well as attitudes change. These people have gone from being neutral about difference to being positive. They not only accept cultural differences, but are willing and able to adjust their own behaviour to conform to different norms, intent to explore more about other cultures and also, they are able to empathize with

people from different cultures. In many ways, they become as what is known as bi-cultural or multi-cultural; effortlessly adjusting their behaviour to suit the culture of the people they are with; "style switching". In other words, they do not give up their own or birth culture's values and beliefs, however, they do integrate aspects of other cultures into it. In the integration stage, certain aspects of the other culture or cultures become a part of their identity. Geertz, G. (1973).

Conclusion

In this previous chapter, we introduced culture from the EFL perspective, and then we suggest some techniques which help to develop students' cultural awareness starting from Exploring existing materials' enlightening points about the cultural knowledge and designing the introductory point of cultural knowledge education before speaking about Galloway's categories of cultural understanding, then in order to facilitate the process of teaching we introduced some approaches for teaching culture starting from the foreign cultural approach the intercultural approach, and the multicultural approach. Coming up next was the importance of culture in language learning, we further talk about raising cultural awareness, then we explained culture as a fifth skill to EFL Learners. Finally we spoke about students' attitudes towards cultural differences with its two main stages. Thus, in order to create the environment where students in the class will have a successful lesson it is crucial to include cultural content, the more they were culturally aware, the more they grasp the language more effectively.

CHAPTER THREE

FIELD WORK

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the students' questionnaire and teacher's interview. It aims at investigating the importance of cultural awareness in EFL classes. Thus, the results obtained in this research would enable us to answer the research questions and help us to reach validity. This chapter includes first the analysis of each question and then summary of results and findings from the students' questionnaire and teacher's interview and it ends up with a general conclusion which includes concluding remarks, pedagogical implications.

Research Design and Methodology

Choice of method

In order to demonstrate the importance of cultural awareness in EFL classes, this research has been conducted through the qualitative research method as an appropriate way for exploring our hypotheses and to analyze the phenomenon by using necessary instruments and information to collect data about the issue studied. We have chosen this method to understand the problem we are going to study; we need to examine the significant of cultural awareness of the target language to improve EFL learners' level.

The study's questionnaire's and interview's analysis include precise and concise summary of each question mentioned in both questionnaires. In addition, the statistical data of the study is introduced and illustrated in the form of tables and graphs to quantify all proceedings regarding the current study.

Population and sample of the study

To carry out our research, a sample of 40 third year students of English are chosen randomly from a whole population of 389 students at the Department of Foreign Languages at Mohamed Kheider University during the academic year 2018/2019

We choose to work with third year students because they have already a considerable experience about the culture of the target language. On one hand, we have opted for the third year students for the fact that they may have better experience with the English language and culture. On the other hand, since they have already learned the rules of grammar and structures of the language in the first year. Second, third year students have sufficient background knowledge and experience in the target language culture that allow them to properly participate in answering the questionnaire.

Data gathering tools

We have adopt two data gathering tools: an online questionnaire given for students and an interview done with teachers, to show their different opinions towards the significance of cultural awareness in EFL classes.

Students' Questionnaire**Aims of the questionnaire**

In order to carry out this study we have designed a questionnaire for third students of English to investigate the value of cultural awareness in EFL classes.

Description of the questionnaire

Students' questionnaire has been given to forty students of third year. It consists of 17 questions divided to four major sections. The majority of questions included in this questionnaire are 'closed questions' whose expected answers are 'yes, or no', it also contains 'closed-ended' questions, in which the informants are asked to choose the appropriate answer from the list of options already determined. Moreover, the other type of questions used in this questionnaire seeks for clarification such as 'please, specify', or 'justify your answer'. This type helps in getting more clear responses in order to avoid ambiguity.

The first section "General Information" (Q1) is composed of one question aiming at obtaining background information about the informants. Section two "Cultural Background" (Q2 to Q6) consists of five questions. Section three "Cultural Awareness in EFL classes" (Q7 to Q14) consists of seven questions. Section four which is the last section 'Cultural test' (Q15) consists of 1 question.

Piloting Stage

After developing the main questions which serve our study, an online piloting phase was required; therefore, the first questionnaire was addressed randomly to seven (7) students from the third-year in the Field of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, in order to make sure of its validity, and reliability and to check if there was any possible ambiguity, vagueness or difficulty in questions, besides knowing the amount of time needed to finish answering it. Consequently, the questionnaire was almost clear for the majority of the students only a few changes were made.

Analysis of the questionnaire

Section One

Question 1: Gender

Table 1: gender

Gender	Male	Female	Total
Number	14	26	40
Percentage %	35%	65%	100%

It is noticed in table 1 that the number of female students outnumbers the male ones. As we can see in table one, 65% of the sample is female, the rest 35% is male. It may be a sign that girls are expected to be more interested in collaborating. However, the number of participant is quite homogeneous which reflect the viewpoint of two gender.

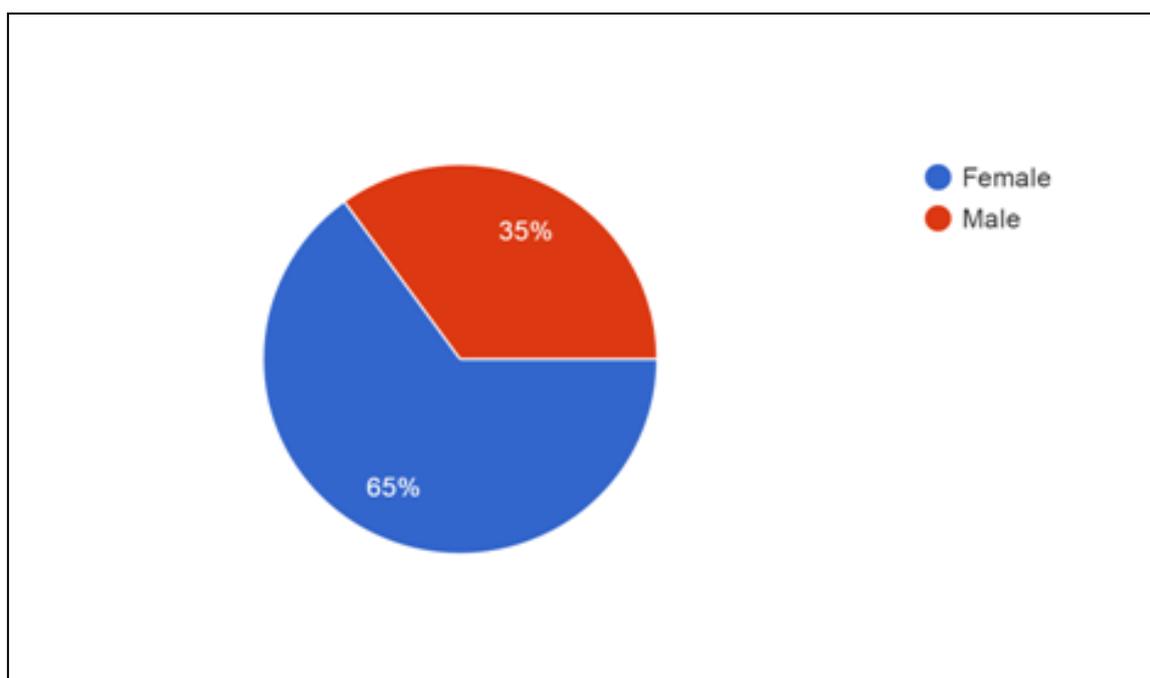


Figure n°1 : Students' gender

Question 02

How would you define cultural awareness?

a: Knowing the characteristics of other people's cultures

b: Knowing the characteristics of one's own and other people's cultures

c: Knowing and understanding cultural differences & similarities between one's culture and the target culture

Table 2: Students' definition of cultural awareness

Option	A	B	c	total
Number	6	8	26	40
Percentage	15%	20%	65%	100%

As we can see in table 2 that the majority of students defined cultural awareness as knowing and understanding cultural differences & similarities between one's culture and the target culture which usually mean that most of them are aware of their MC and the TC.

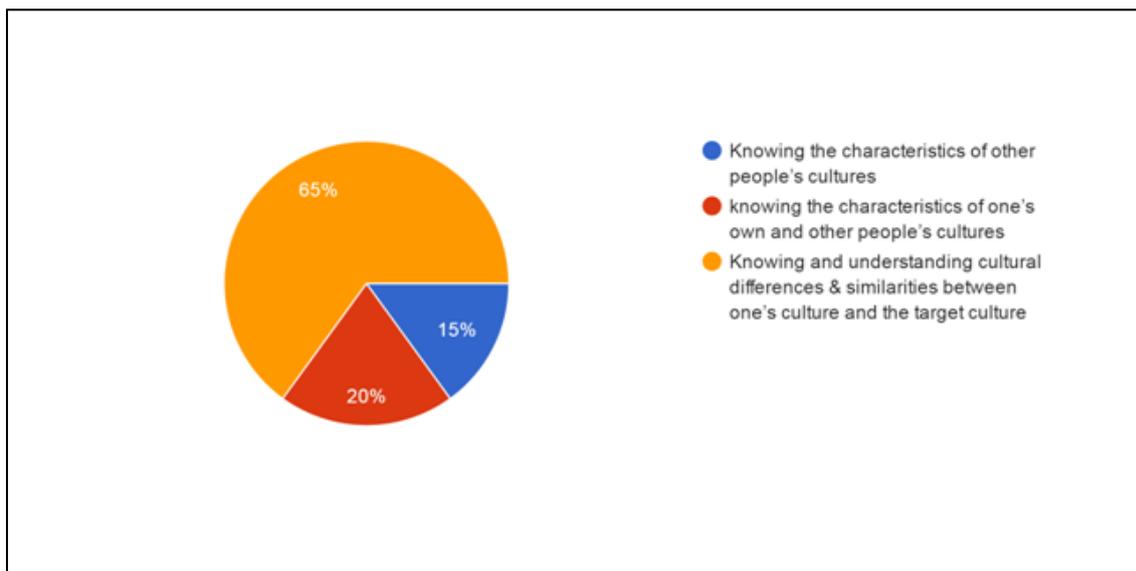


Figure n °2 Students' definition of cultural awareness

Question 03

How do you find learning about other people's culture?

a: Interesting

b: not interesting

Table 3: Students' opinion about learning other culture

Option	A	b	Total
Number	39	1	40
Percentage %	97.5%	2.5%	100%

We notice in table 3 that almost all the students are interested in learning other culture. Thus, learning other culture is very welcomed among students.

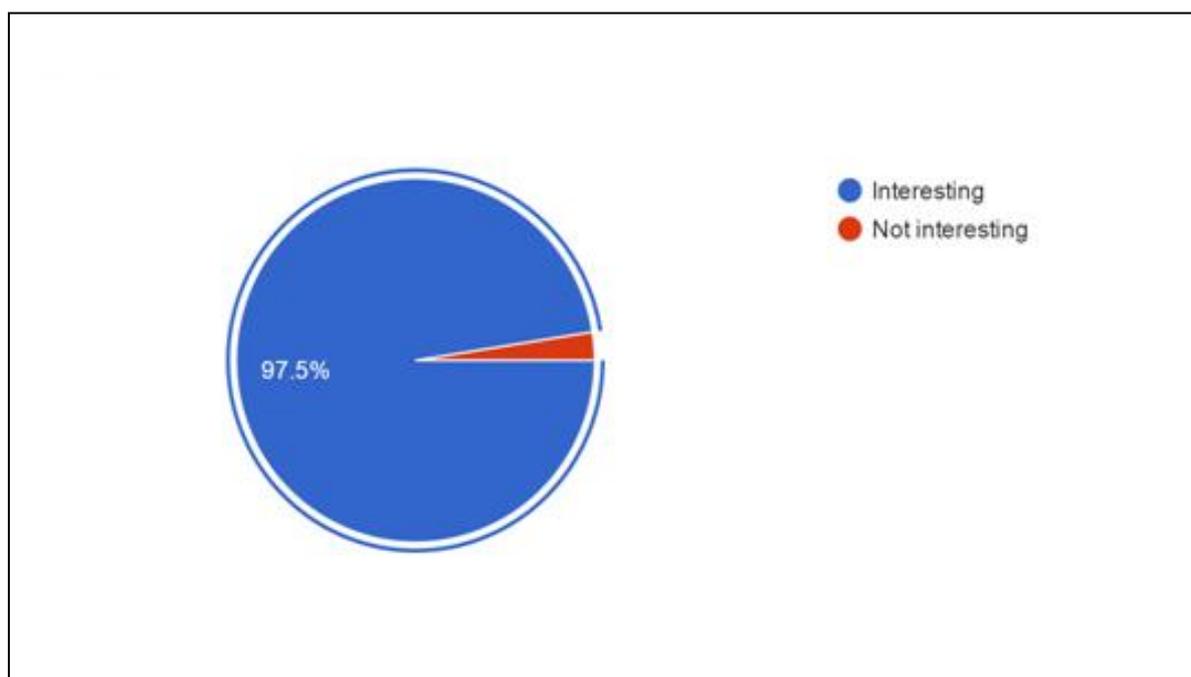


Figure n°3: Students' opinion about learning other culture

Question 04

What do you think of the amount of the target language culture you have learned up to now?

a: Satisfactory

b: Unsatisfactory

Table 4: Students' opinion about their cultural knowledge

Option	a	b	Total
Number	18	22	40
Percentage %	45%	55%	100%

We observe from the results attained from table 4 that 55% are unsatisfactory while less than the half 45% are satisfactory about their cultural knowledge, views are convergent, and the common idea is both have the interest of being culturally aware.

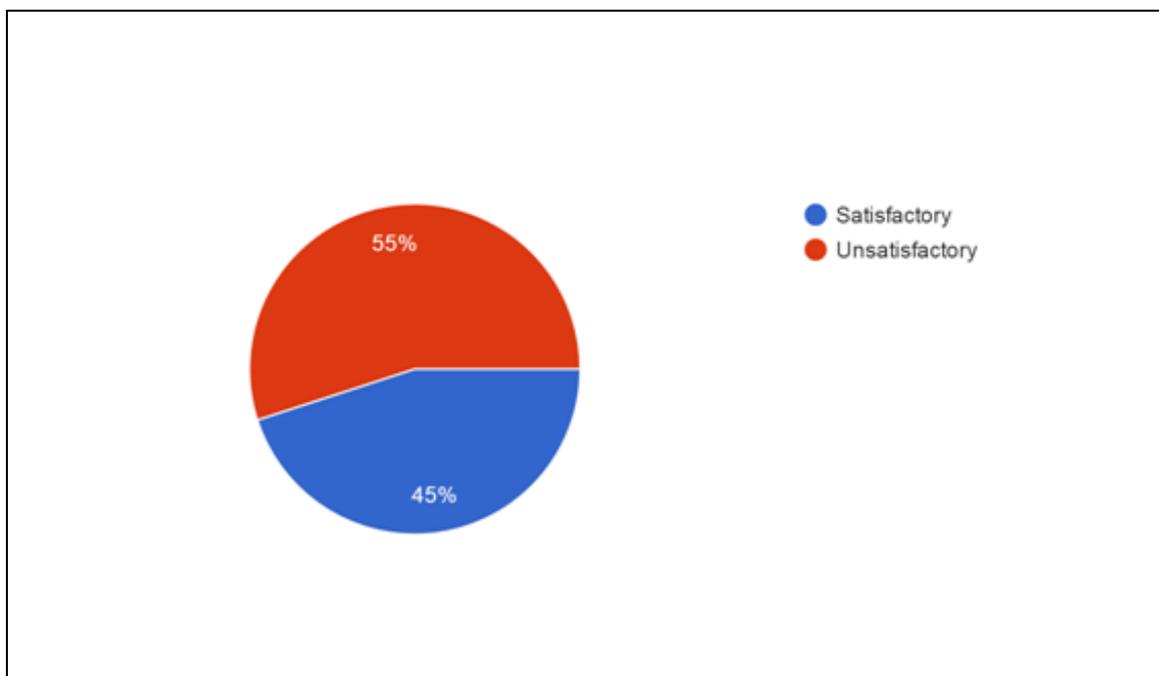


Figure n°4: Students' opinion about their cultural knowledge

Question 05

To what extent are you aware of the social and cultural differences between one's own culture and the target culture?

- a. not at all b. very little c. to some extent d. very much

Table 5: Students' awareness of cultural differences between MC and TC

Option	A	b	c	d	Total
Number	0	12	24	4	40
Percentage %	0%	30%	60%	10%	100%

It noticed in table 5 that the majority of the students (60%) are conscious about the differences between MC and TC. And a minority (10%) respond with 'very much', and no student (0%) response with 'not at all'. And the rest (30%) response with 'very little'.

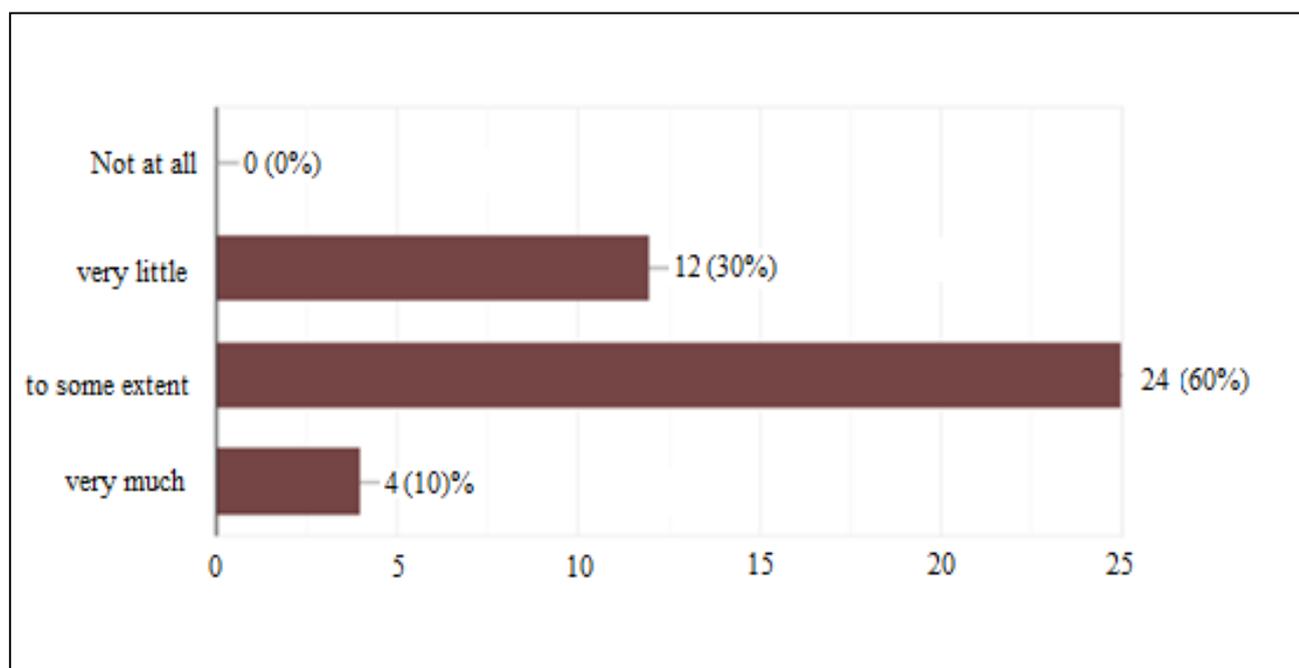


Figure °5: Students' awareness of cultural differences between MC and TC

Question 06

What do you do to acquire cultural knowledge?

- a -Benefit from the tools used in the classroom
- b -Watch foreign language TV (films, documentary, videos)
- c -Read literary books and works of art of English language
- d -Chat directly with the native speakers through means of online communication

Table 6: How students acquire cultural knowledge

Option	A	B	C	d	Total
Number	3	30	5	2	40
Percentage%	7.5%	75%	12.5%	5%	100%

As is it clear in the results from table 6. (75%) of students prefer to watch foreign language TV (films, documentary, videos) as a tool to acquire cultural knowledge , and (7.5%) benefit from the provided tools in class, the rest (12.5%) choose to read books and only (5%) chat with natives.

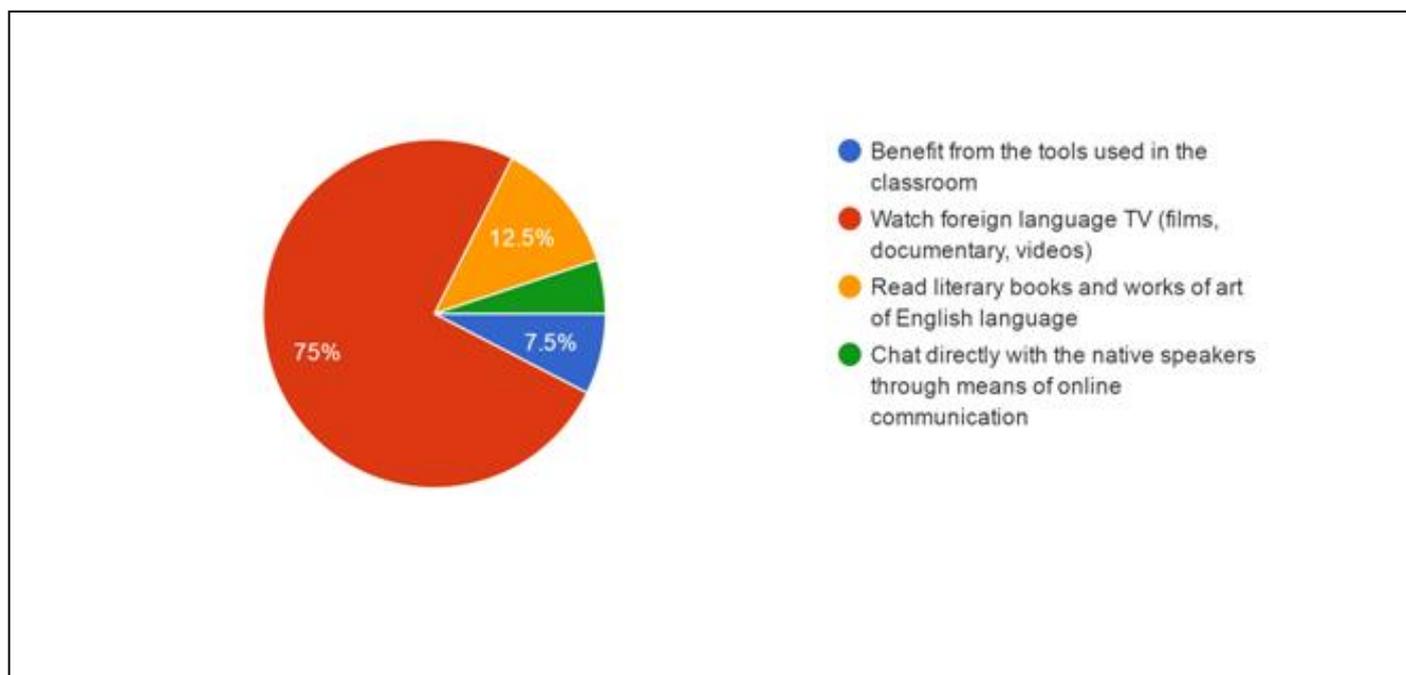


Figure n° 6: How students acquire cultural knowledge

Question 07

What do you think about including cultural content in the classroom?

a: Significant

b: Normal

c: Unnecessary

Table 7: students opinion about including cultural content in the classroom

Option	A	B	c	Total
Number	31	9	0	40
Percentage%	77.5%	22.5%	0%	100%

The most striking point in table 7 is that the majority (77.5%) of the sample are considering including cultural content in the classroom is significant ,and (22.5%) of the sample consider it normal, with no (0%) responds of considering it unnecessary, it can be explained as most of the students have a positive attitude towards integrating cultural content in class.

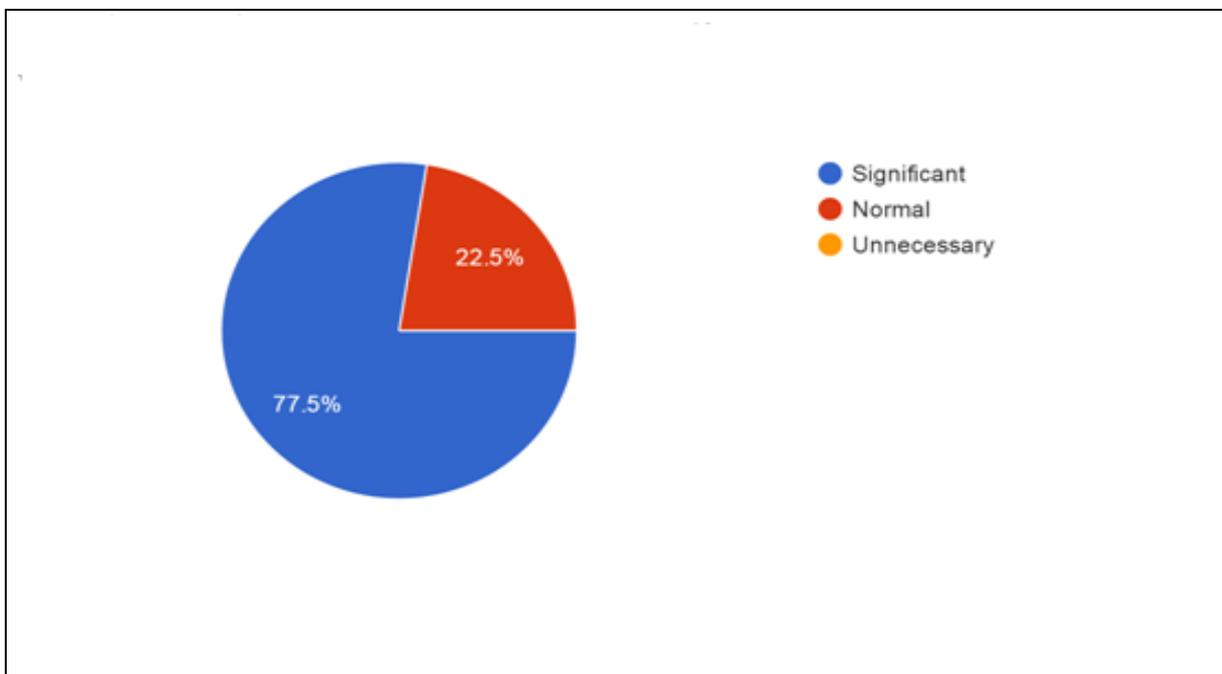


Figure n° 7: students opinion about including cultural content in the classroom

Question 08

In your opinion, having cultural background influences the process of learning the language?

a: Yes

b: No

Table 8: Students opinion about the influence of cultural background in the process of learning

Option	Yes	No	Total
Number	37	3	40
Percentage%	92.5	7.5%	100%

The results of table 8 show that (92.5%) of students agree that the cultural background have an impact on the process of learning, and the rest (7.5%) answered with 'no'. So, having a cultural background will facilitate the process of learning

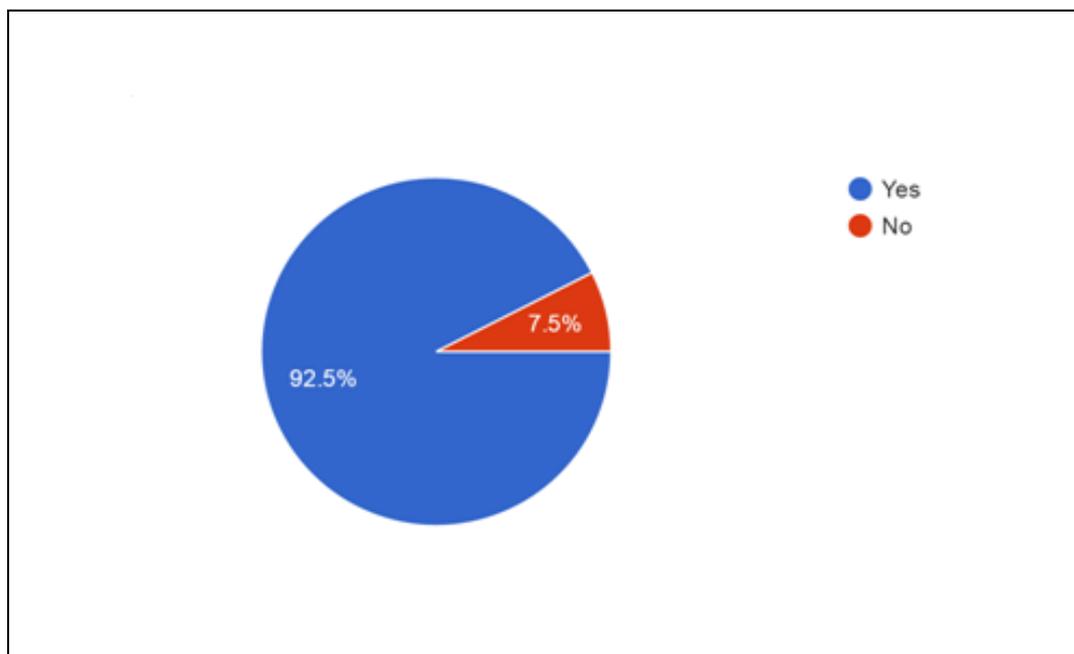


Figure n° 8: Students opinion about the influence of cultural background in the process of learning

Question 09

Do you think that teaching English as a foreign language requires teaching its culture?

a: Yes

b: No

Table 9: Students' opinion about the necessity of teaching culture in EFL

Option	Yes	No	Total
Number	34	6	40
Percentage%	84.6%	15.4%	100%

It noticed in table 9 that the majority of the students (84.6%) see the necessity of teaching culture in EFL . Only (15.5%) of student response with “no”. Which mean the crucial role of teaching culture in EFL classes is undeniable

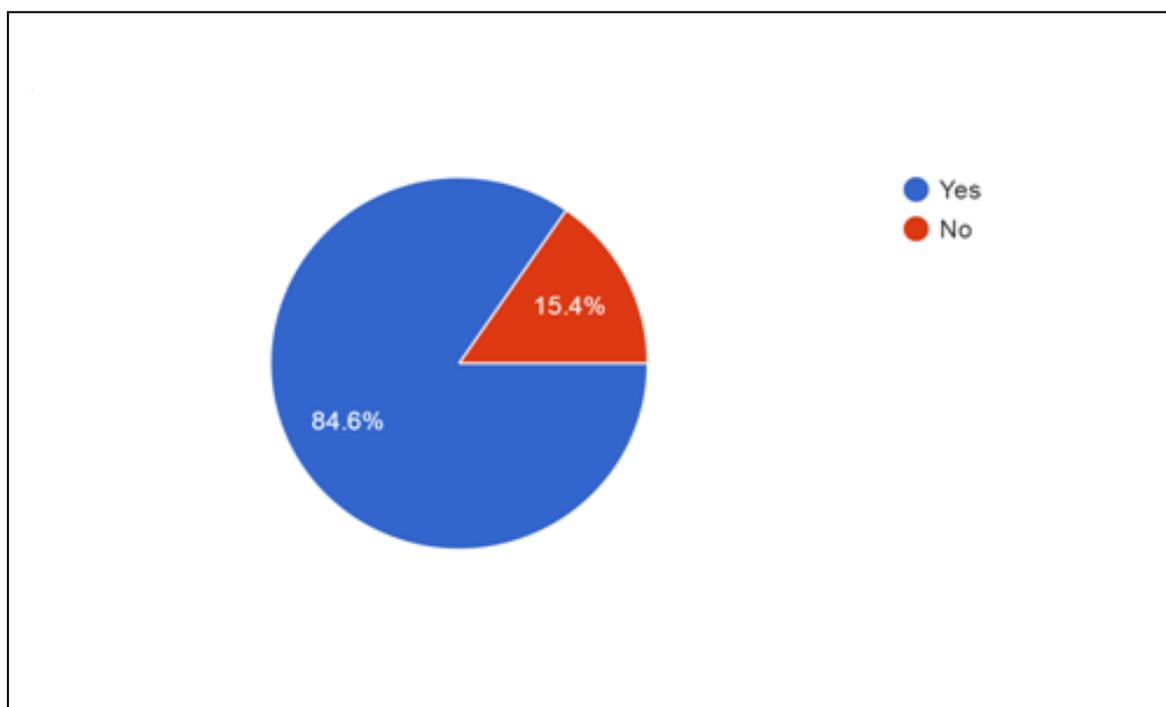


Figure n° 9: Students' opinion about the necessity of teaching culture in EFL

Question 10

How do you usually react towards a different culture?

a: Accept and be welcomed

b: Reject

Table 10: Students' reaction towards a different culture

Option	a	B	Total
Number	40	0	40
Percentage%	100%	0%	100%

The most remarkable note in table 10 is all the sample (100%) accepted the different cultures which mean EFL students understand the significance of being exposure to the TC especially as a language student.

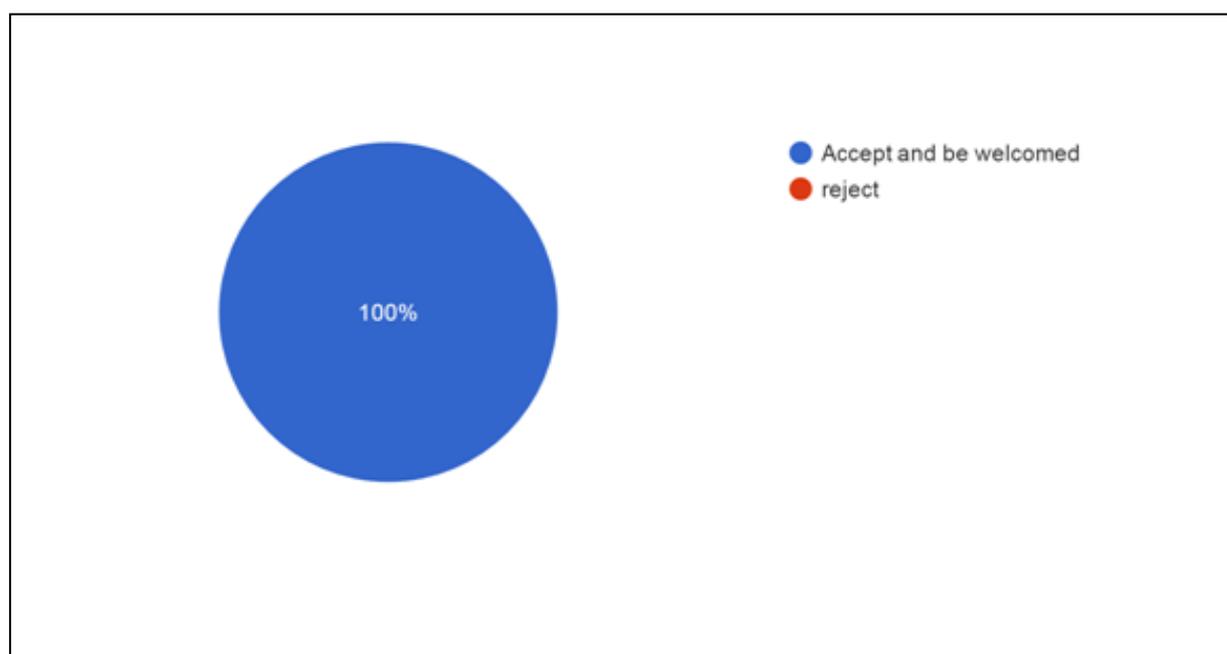


Figure n° 10: Students' reaction towards a different culture

Question 11

Do you think that you are able to run a conversation with a native speaker?

a: Yes

b: No

Table 11: Students' ability of running a conversation with a native speaker

Option	A	B	Total
Number	23	17	40
Percentage%	57.5%	42.5%	100%

We observe from the results which appear in table 11 that (57.5%) of the population have the ability to run a conversation with natives. While (42.5%) response with “no”. the majority of the justifications they gave represents in the table below

Table 12: Reasons for students' inability of running a conversation with a native speaker

Justifications	Lack of linguistic knowledge (grammar, vocabulary...etc)	Lack of cultural knowledge	Inability to use language appropriately	Other factors (psychological and social factors)	Total
Number	8	8	9	12	37
Percentage%	21.6%	21.6%	24.3	32.4%	100%

We see in table 12 that (32.4%) have psychological and social reasons which enable them to run a conversation with a native speaker, and (21.6%) have Lack of linguistic knowledge (grammar, vocabulary, and the same percentage (21.6) have a lack of cultural knowledge , the rest (24.3%) are enable to use language appropriately. Thus, the less exposure to the TC the more students face a poor communication when interacting with native speaker.

Question 12

Learning the target language without its culture is enough

- a: Neutral
- b: Strongly disagree
- c: Disagree
- d: Strongly agree
- e: Agree

Table 13: Students' opinion about learning the target language without its culture

Option	A	b	C	d	e	Total
Number	17	10	7	1	5	40
Percentage%	42.5%	25%	17.5%	2.5%	12.5%	100%

As is it summarized in the obtained results from table 13 . (42.5%) of students respond with 'neutral', and (25%) 'strongly disagreed' also (17.5%) respond with 'disagree'. The rest two minorities (2.5%) and (12.5%) considered it as an acceptable idea.

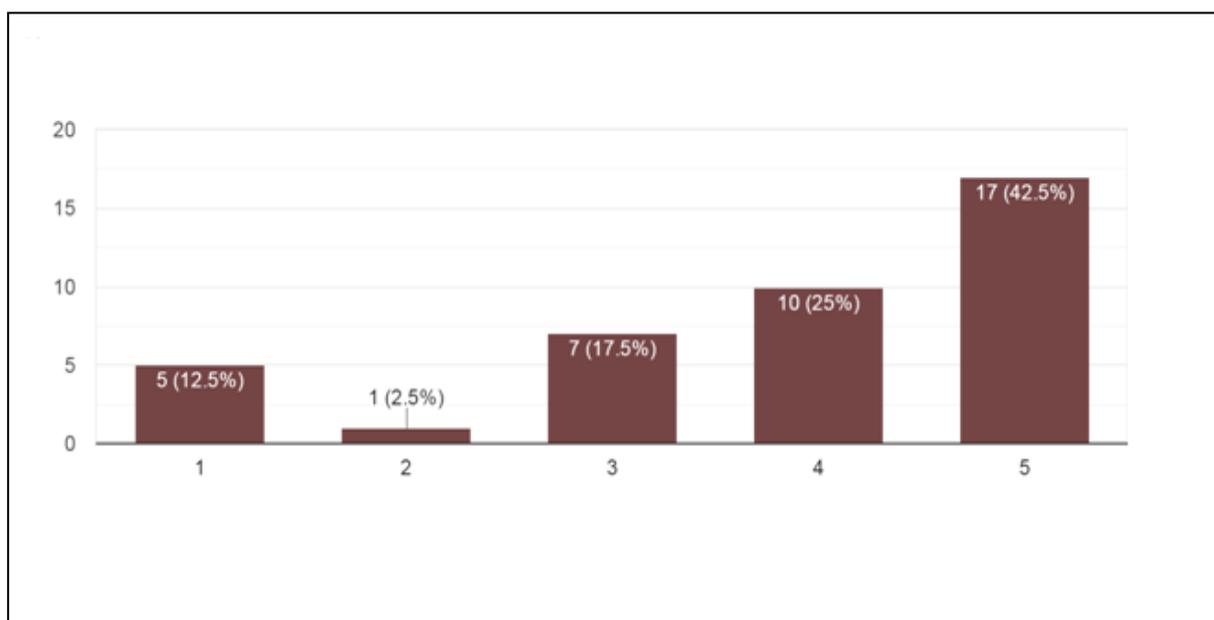


Figure n°11: Students' opinion about learning the target language without its culture

Question 13

Which culture do you prefer to address?

a-Local culture

b- Foreign culture (UK.USA)

c- International culture

Table 14: Students' opinion about which culture they prefer

Option	A	B	c	Total
Number	5	19	16	40
Percentage	12.5%	47.5%	40%	100%

The results show in table 14 that (12.5%) preferred the local culture, also we find (47.5%) prefer the foreign culture(UK.USA), and the rest (40%) choose the international culture

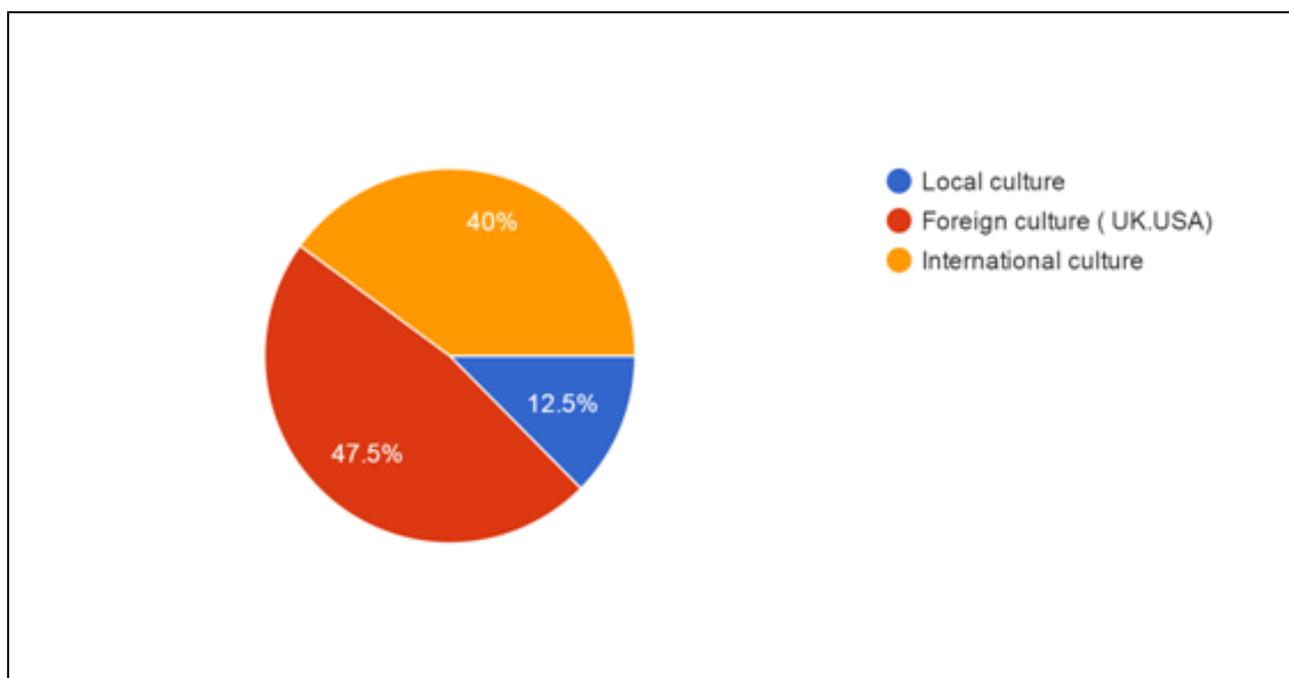


Figure n° 12: Students' opinion about which culture they prefer

Question 14

How much do you read about the target language's culture?

- a. very little b. little c. much d. very much

Table 15: Students' readings about the target culture

Option	A	b	C	d	Total
Number	5	19	13	3	40
Percentage%	12.5%	47.5%	32.5%	7.5%	100%

The table 15 show that (12.5) of students make readings about the TC, and (47.5%) respond with 'little' also a respected number of students (32.5%) respond with 'much', the last few minority (7.5%) of students respond with 'very much'.

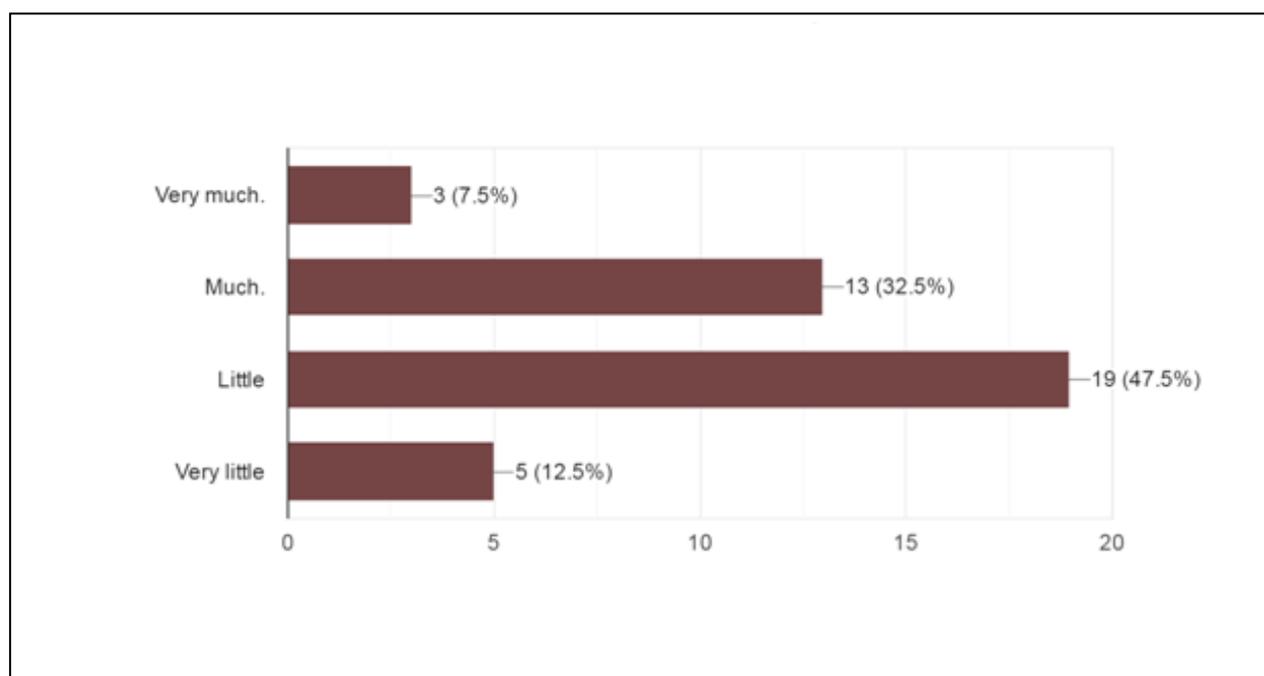


Figure n° 13: Students' readings about the target culture

Section two

Question 15

By Great Britain , we mean

a- England, Scotland and Northern Ireland

b- England, Scotland and Wales

c- I have no idea

Table 16: Students' test about Great Britain

Option	A	B	c	Total
Number	13	25	2	40
Percentage%	32.5%	62.5%	5%	100%

As is it appear in the table 16. (32.5%) of students chose answer 'a', and the majority (62.5%) choose the right answer, the rest (5%) of students respond of 'I have no idea'. But observing that the majority chose the right answer is a good sign which show the acceptable cultural level that the students have.

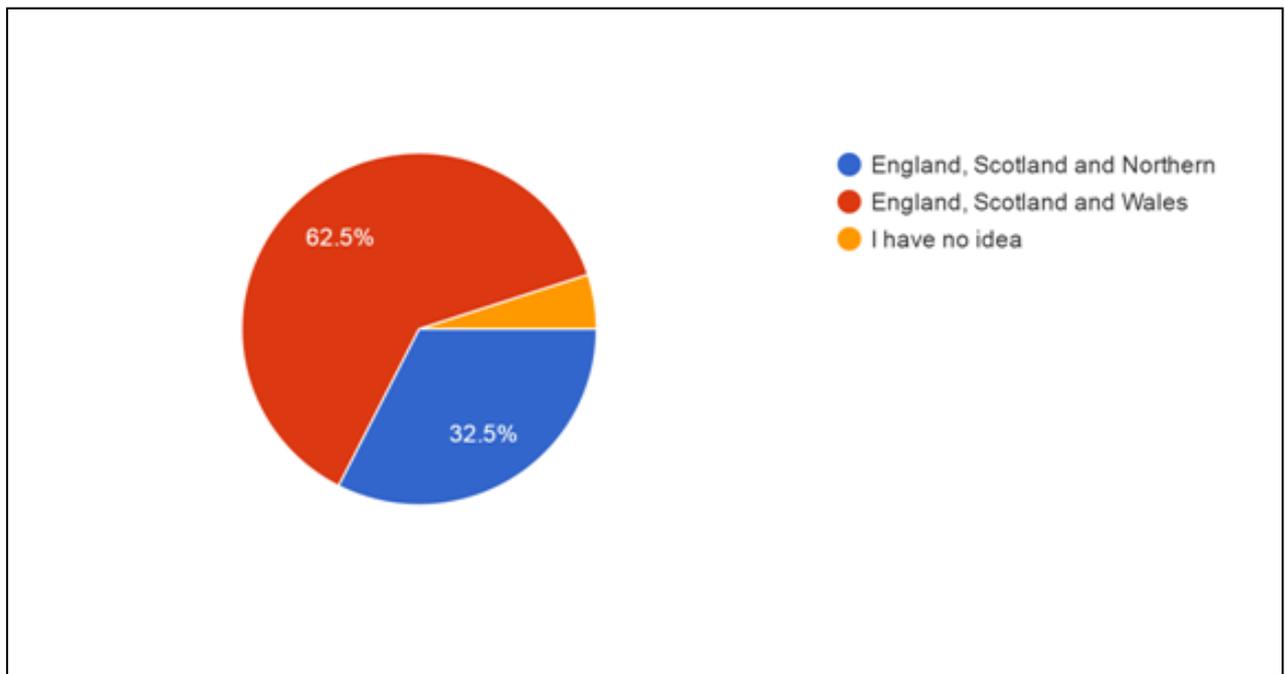


Figure n°14: Test students' about Great Britain

Teachers' interview

Description of the interview

Our target population consists of teachers of English at the department of English at the University of Biskra especially those who teach culture of the language, oral expression and literary text to third year students. The face to face interview was made with (5) of them. The questions for this study was composed of 2 sections. The first part consist of (3) questions aimed at gathering background information about the participants: teaching experience and their educational level. The second part ,which is the most important one, consists of (5) questions which meant to set light on first culture as a notion and then its relation to EFL teaching.

Aims of the questionnaire

This interview seek to get the possible benefit from the teachers views concerning the significant of cultural awareness in EFL classes. We also opt for raising the value of cultural awareness in EFL classes for both students and teachers in order to make the process of learning EFL run smoother.

Analysis of the interview

Section one: Personal information

Number of the interviewee	Educational degree	Teaching experience
Teacher 01	Doctoral Degree	Nearly 23 years
Teacher 02	Magister Degree	13years
Teacher 03	Magister Degree	12 years
Teacher 04	Magister Degree	11 years
Teacher 05	Doctoral Degree	13years

The teachers who are involved in the present work have different genders which are as follows: four males and one female. Moreover, most of our participants hold a magister degree while the other two hold doctoral degree.

When we come to their teaching experience, it starts from nearly (23) years to Thirteen years of teaching and the two remaining teachers have (12) and (11) years of teaching at the university. As a conclusion for this section, The diversity that our sample have from the different genders to the different degrees and experiences enable us to insure that our research will be provided with fruitful views and reliable data.

Section two

Question 01. What do think of 'culture' as a notion from Language learning perspective?

Concerning this question which was given to all teachers, the common idea which all teachers agreed that culture is an abstract notion and it is a crucial part of language since we are (teachers) teach the language. The teachers' answer are classified as follow:

Teacher 01: stated that 'culture is an abstract concept, it is about norms, values, but if we take it from language learning perspective, it is a part of language which we attempt to deliver to the students, and this part is what shaped the foreign language we are teaching'.

Teacher 02: declared that 'culture as a notion is the set of believes, customs, traditions, that a given community or a given country has. It is in a way social heredity, it transmitted from one generation to another and all these are deliver through one mean which is language, as a teacher of language I consider culture and language two faces of the same coin, because speaking the language appropriately requires an appropriate understanding of its culture'.

Teacher 03: claim that 'culture is relative, not stable. It is the noticed differences that we find among societies. In language learning we consider culture as the missing piece which enable us to deliver the whole picture of language'.

Teacher 04: stated that ' culture is set of essential elements which contribute to the formation and construction of identity. It is also an essential part of teaching language process because teaching the language without its culture is like building without a solid foundation. It is also enable us to erase the odd utterances that we face in language, such as idioms.

Teacher 05: said that 'Culture could be personal, it is somebody's everyday routine, the way he talk, the way he dresses accumulation of attitudes and behaviours that distinguish somebody from somebody else another. And we have the culture of the community. despite our differences we share a certain elements as members of the same society. There is also the global culture due to the huge enormous expansion and openness to the world. Thus a person could grasp many culture at the same time.' He also consider that 'language and culture reflect each other, as a teacher of language it is impossible to focus exclusively on the linguistic elements, because we are teaching the language for the sake of communication, and to communicate effectively you have to be culturally aware. Culture should go hand in hand with the teaching process.

As a conclusion, teachers agreed on the significance of integrating cultural insight during EFL classes and consider it a crucial and undeniable part in the teaching process.

Question two. How can you evaluate your students' cultural awareness about the target language?

The overall views from this question are nearly the same, most of the teachers are worried about the average level that students have about the target culture despite its significance

Teacher 01: I believe that most teachers not only students are not culturally competent, because you need to live in the host culture in order to be culturally competent, as someone said 'you have to have a wife and life' you need to marry a person from (UK, USA) or to live there.

Teacher 02: consider that “they have average awareness, they are well aware of the target culture because of the lack exposure, they are not exposed to the English culture, they have to surrounded by English all the time (reading, writing, listening). There is a minority who are well aware of the target language which appears in the ways they speak, and dress. ”

Teacher 03: stated that “the majority are not aware, because most of them think it is unnecessary to know culture, they think it's okay to learn the language without its culture, their focus is all about the linguistic part which is a misleading way of learning the language”

Teacher 04: agreed with the second teacher “ students are less aware and less exposure. The main reason for that in my own perspective is the new educational system which do not give an importance the cultural content, which is for me injustice and will negatively influence the student of language ” .

Teacher 05: see that “ there are different level of awareness, some are very protective when it comes to learn a foreign culture, because they consider it as the culture of the enemy and its threat which we need to avoid and neglect. There are other students who not only like the culture, but they live it ”.

Question 03: Do you think that the integration of cultural insights during an English language lesson could be beneficial for the learners? Why?

This is a crucial point in our work, most of the teachers agreed on the benefit of including cultural content in EFL learners.

Teacher 01: stated that “ the more cultural insights inside the class the more students understand the language in context, language learners need to involve in the language deeply, and cultural content is what enable them to do so”

Teacher 02: said that “ of course cultural content during any language lesson is so beneficial if it's not necessary, because there is some aspects in the language which we cannot appropriately deliver only through culture, for example idioms ”.

Teacher 03: stated that “it is necessary, otherwise the operation of teaching will fail ”

Teacher 04: declared that “ it is obligation, study the language requires knowing its culture. because if we avoid including cultural content we will have superficial communication”

Teacher 05: Said that “ it is necessary since we teach the language for the sake of communication, to communicate effectively you need to integrate culture because it is what makes the communication more fruitful. Students who have positive attitudes towards target language in most cases excel in English and express themselves better, they reflect the language they learn”.

Question 04: What do you think about the students' attitudes when integrating culture in the class?

Concerning this question, teachers views were varied, but most of the teachers noticed positive attitude when integrating culture in a lesson

Teacher 01: said that “nearly all the students were happy, and eager to know how English is used in the native speakers culture”.

Teacher 02: stated that “ they like to know how native speakers behave , they had positive attitude, of there is a minority who show rejection to the English culture because it's different from theirs and considered it as the enemy culture”

Teacher 03: declared that “some students show rejection, because they thought we are about to change their culture, others were very welcomed and top curious to know about culture”

Teacher 04: said that “students were more motivated , more excited to learn, more positive”

Teacher 05: see that “some students considered it as an enemy culture, they seem to be closed. Anything but their culture is harmful to their values and principals, others were excited about it and they want to know more and more about culture, how do natives think, behave , dress and speak”

Question 05: What are the most suitable tools or techniques that helped (you) to teach cultural content in your class?

Here the teachers' views were varied because each teacher prefer a different way to teach

Teacher 01: declared that “ the most workable tools to teach culture in my perspective are media, movies, making discussions about the target culture during class, and social media”.

Teacher 02: said that “ I prefer oral modules in this matter, and the tools that I like to include are: videos, some films, discuss specific scenes. how natives react to specific situation , readings texts, short stories, classroom discussion, and role plays”

Teacher 03: stated that “ I prefer using videos, proverbs, and language games”

Teacher 04: said that “ I usually prefer authentic materials , technology, and videos”

Teacher 05: pointed that“ the tools that I always choose in this matter are: videos, movies or part scene which focus on a certain behaviour or explaining a certain mindset to show students how natives act and react”.

Conclusion

In this chapter we, first, introduced our methodological procedure through which we carried out our study, where we have chosen the most suitable research method that fits our topic and goes along with the nature of the population and sample needed for this work. Second, The information was gathered through submitting questionnaire to third year English students at Biskra University Field of English. And the interview administered with teachers of culture of the language, literary text, and oral expression at the same university.

The analysis of teachers' interview shows the great significance of cultural awareness to promote the learning and teaching process; furthermore, students' questionnaire reveals that the majority of Third year students agree that cultural background knowledge would make teaching learning process more successful. And if the focus was shed more on the cultural backgrounds of the foreign language rather than its linguistic rules; then the learners would be also more motivated to learn the language.

General conclusion

The present study attempts to investigate the importance of cultural awareness in EFL classes in the department of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. It is mainly built upon a hypothesis which is “if EFL learners’ cultural awareness is raised, and taught the target language in its cultural dimension the process of teaching will be more effective ”

We divided it into two main parts theoretical and practical part. The first part is devised into two chapters. The first chapter proceeds by presenting the concept of culture, cultural and intercultural awareness. Next, we moved to describe the notion of education before explaining acculturation, and cultural chock, then we spoke about integrating culture in the four skills, and then we distinguished between culture and communication, the Big C culture and the small c culture. Moreover, we provided reasons for teaching culture. After that, we propose techniques for teaching culture. The second chapter was allocated to provided techniques to teach culture and its significance in EFL classes.

The third chapter was devoted for the field work in which we analyzed the data gathered from the questionnaires that were addressed to third year students of English at the Field of English at Biskra University. and the interview we designed with a limited number of teachers. We provided a brief description before moving to the analysis of the results.

The need for acquiring a second language seems to dramatically grow day by day, however, teaching a foreign language does not concern with the linguistic level of language for instance: structure, phonology, and syntax, but also requires teaching its culture because they are two faces for the same coin. Since the main goal is to teach language for the sake of communication. Hence, Including cultural insights inside the class create fruitful communication which enable students understand the language in context and communicate effectively.

Based on the obtained results from the administered questionnaire, and the interview we can confirm our hypotheses that if EFL learners' cultural awareness is raised, and taught the target language in its cultural dimension the process of teaching will be more effective. We conclude saying that, it has been found that both teachers and students agree about the significance of cultural awareness in EFL classes, since it is very beneficial for the teaching-learning process as it increases its effectiveness and success.

Pedagogical Recommendations

Finally, we end this research with some recommendations and pedagogical implications that form the essence of this study. The fact that some of our students could not even know what do we mean by Great Britain is really alerting.

- Any language teacher should have a rich and vivid cultural knowledge that can serve his/her teaching mission and be adequate enough to provide his/her pupils with the necessary cultural content, that eventually enrich pupils' curiosity and give them a push that motivates them to have the eager and willingness to know more about the English language; it is also recommended for educational ministries to encourage and organize study visits for teachers so as to provide pupils with an authentic and new sources of knowledge.
- Introducing culture to EFL learners has become an obligation rather than an option.
- It is a fact that the foreign language teacher is a culture teacher and the foreign language learner is a culture learner or they should be.
- teaching English language culture must be incorporated in the English language curriculum not for the sake of only the better perception and production of the language itself, but also to awake students' senses and open their minds
- Teachers are recommended to bring the cultural aspect of the language to the forefront of discussion with students whenever possible
- It is crucial for teachers to emphasize openness on the students' part, and show them that there is no shame in getting to know different cultures and different people with different orientations to raise their awareness as language learners.
- Make every lesson an adventure for your students to explore ethnic, art and culture and take them away with exiting ideas and revolutionary perspectives.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students, this questionnaire is a part of a research work investigating the importance of cultural awareness in EFL classes. Your contribution will be of a great help and the information you provide will be highly valued? so, I will be grateful if you could take time to share your experience by answering the questions below, by ticking the appropriate box or by making a full statement whenever needed.

Thank you for your time and corporation.

Section One: Personal Information:

1- Gender:

a- Male

b- Female

Section Two: Cultural Background:

2- How would you define cultural awareness?

a. Knowing the characteristics of other people's cultures

b. knowing the characteristics of one's own and other people's cultures

c. Knowing and understanding cultural differences & similarities between one's culture and the target culture

- other definition:.....

.....

2- How do you find learning about other people's culture?

a. Interesting

b. Not interesting

Please, explain why:

.....

4-What do you think of the amount of the target language culture you have learned up to now?

a) Satisfactory

b) Unsatisfactory

5-To what extent are you aware of the social and cultural differences between one's own culture and the target culture?

a. not at all

b. very little

c. to some extent

d. very much

6-What do you do to acquire cultural knowledge?

a -Benefit from the tools used in the classroom

b -Watch foreign language TV (films, documentary, videos)

c -Read literary books and works of art of English language

d -Chat directly with the native speakers through means of online communication

- Other ways

.....

Section Three: Cultural Awareness in EFL classes

07- What do you think about including cultural content in the classroom?

a- Significant

b- Normal

c- Unnecessary

please justify your answer:

.....

8- In your opinion, having cultural background will influence the process of learning the language?

a- Yes

b- No

explain why:

.....

9- Do you think that teaching English as a foreign language requires teaching its culture?

a- Yes

b- No

Please, justify.....

.....

10- How do you usually react towards a different culture?

a- Accept and be welcomed

b- reject

11- Do you think that you are able to run a conversation with a native speaker?

a- Yes

b- No

If no, it is because of:

- a. Lack of linguistic knowledge (grammar, vocabulary...etc)
- b. Lack of cultural knowledge
- c. Inability to use language appropriately
- d. Other factors (psychological and social factors)

Please specify:.....

12- Learning the target language without its culture is enough:

Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral

13- Which culture do you prefer to address?

- a-Local culture
- b- Foreign culture (UK.USA)
- c- International culture

Please, explain why.....

14- How much do you read about the target language's culture ?

- a- Very much.
- b- Much.
- c- Little.

d- Very little

15- Any further suggestions or notes are very welcomed:

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Section four: Cultural Test.

16- By Great Britain , we mean:

- a- England, Scotland and Northern Ireland
- b- England, Scotland and Wales
- c- I have no idea

17- Could you please name at least one famous place in London?

.....

APPENDIX B

Teachers' Interview

Teachers Questions:

Section One: Personal information

- 1- What is your academic degree?
- 2- How many years have you been teaching English?

Section Two: About culture

- 3- What do think of 'culture' as a notion from a language learning perspective.
- 4- How can you evaluate your students' cultural awareness about the target language?
- 5- Do you think that the integration of cultural insights during an English language lesson could be beneficial for the learners? Why?
- 6- What do you think about the students' attitudes when integrating culture in the class?
- 7- What are the most suitable tools or techniques that helped (you) to teach cultural content in your class? should
- 8- Concerning my research, could you please tell me anything that I add or omit?

Thank you for your collaboration.

ملخص البحث

هذا البحث يسلط الضوء على أهمية الوعي الثقافي في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة بسكرة, نظرًا للأهمية البالغة لها. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تبيان أهمية الوعي الثقافي في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تركزت هذه الدراسة على الفرضية التي مفادها أن الوعي الثقافي لدى طلبة اللغات الأجنبية سيزيد إذا تم اعتماد تدريس الثقافة بمختلف أطيافها وبالتالي عملية التعليم ستصبح أكثر فعالية . أجريت الدراسة على أربعين (40) طالب من طلاب السنة الثالثة تخصص إنجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة. بالإضافة إلى خمسة (05) أساتذة من نفس الجامعة. بالنسبة للطلبة فقد تم توزيع استبيان , أما الأساتذة فقد تم ترتيب مقابلة معهم. اعتمادا على النتائج المتحصل عليها تم تأكيد أهمية الثقافة الأجنبية وضرورة وعيها و فهمها لخلق الانسيابية والسهولة في عملية تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية. وعليه, وفقا للنتائج المقدمة فقد تم تأكيد الفرضيتين القائمتين. إذا تم توفير المناهج والطرق التي تعرف بالمحتوى الثقافي للغة داخل أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية هذا من شأنه أن يشجعهم أكثر على الإطلاع الصحيح والموثوق. لأن معظم معرفتهم الثقافية مكتسبة من الأفلام و وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي و هاته الأخيرة غالبا تنقل الصورة الغير كاملة أو الخاطئة عن الثقافة الأجنبية. ومنه الوعي الصحيح بالثقافة الأجنبية يحسن عملية التحصيل العلمي للغة الأجنبية.