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Mohamed KHIDER University, Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Foreign Languages

English Division



**The Effects of Algerian Culture on EFL Students' Speaking English  
outside Classroom**

**A Case Study:** Master one EFL Students at Mohamed KHIDER University of  
Biskra

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Sciences of Languages

**Submitted by:**

Imad Eddine BORNİ

**Supervised by:**

Mrs. Ahlem SALHI

**Broad of examiner:**

Dr. Hanane SAIHI

Mrs. Samira BINIDIR

Mrs. Ahlem SALHI

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## Dedication

*I dedicate my work, firstly, to my parents.*

*To all of my family members*

*To my closest friends and colleagues*

*To my teachers at all stages of study I underwent.*

*To everyone helped me to carry out this study.*

*To everyone knows me.*

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## **Abstract**

This descriptive study aimed to investigate the role of Algerian culture in determining the EFL students' speaking English outside classroom. It focused mainly on the most influential factors. In this context, we hypothesized that Algerian culture may have an effect on EFL students' oral performance, in addition to the attitude of our local community toward English in addition to the colonial and political factors may affect on EFL students speaking English outside classroom setting. In order to confirm these hypotheses, we addressed a questionnaire to the degree of first-year Master students at the department of English, University of Biskra hoping to obtain the appropriate data for our study. The results revealed that Algerian culture is not an appropriate environment for speaking English language, besides that the colonial, political in addition to economic factors stand as a barrier to English students' achievement.

## **List of acronyms**

**EFL:** English as foreign language

**EF:** Education first

**EPI:** English proficiency index

**FL:** Foreign language

**L1:** First language

**L2:** Second language

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## **General introduction**

### **Introduction**

Each society has certain cultural norms and factors that distinguish it from other societies, and its members share the same aspects of life such, as religion, beliefs, traditions, history, etc. These aspects contribute in governing the relationship between the individuals among a given society. Therefore, people often react differently towards elements, which seem strange to their culture.

Learning a foreign language is considered a new element in the social environment. Thus, students may feel themselves in conflict with certain cultural factors that stand as a barrier to their achievement in communicating the foreign language and reach a high level of fluency and accuracy.

### **1. Statement of the problem**

Mastering a language is always evaluated through the level of speaking fluency achieved. Therefore, the main purpose of the foreign language students is to improve their speaking proficiency. However, the nature of the foreign language is not always suitable to the students' cultural norms.

Algerian EFL students, for example, struggle to find an opportunity to speak English among their society as they do when they speak their native language. They realize that there are specific factors in their culture that control their participation in the target language, such as the attitudes of society towards that language, people's beliefs, even the historical and economic factors. Consequently, the Algerian culture can affect on the speaking achievement of English students, and causes many psychological problems that could be difficult to overcome.

### **3. Aims and objectives of the study**

The study aims at investigating the impact of Algerian EFL students' culture on speaking in English, and suggesting the effective strategies to overcome the obstacles that stand against speaking English outside the classroom setting.

### **4. Significance of the study**

This research study is very important because it will help us know to how extent the Algerian culture influences on participating English, and how students deal with cultural obstacles in order to improve their communication competence.

### **5. Research questions**

In this research, we tried to answer the following questions:

1. Do Algerian cultural factors hinder speaking English outside classroom?
2. What are the consequences of these factors on the English language students?

### **6. Research hypotheses**

To fulfill the aim of the research, the following hypotheses are elaborated:

1. Algerian culture may affect on EFL students' English oral performance outside classroom.
2. The attitudes of local communities towards English, colonial and political factors may affect EFL students' speaking English outside the classroom setting.

### **7. Research methodology**

The present study depends mainly on the students' perspective toward cultural factors that may affect on speaking English. Thus, it involves the use descriptive method.

## **7.1. Population and sampling**

We chose randomly to select the participants from the degree of First-Year Master students at the branch of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. They are all Algerians and share the same cultural backgrounds. We dealt with 30 students as a sampling from a population who are about 254 students.

## **7.2. Data gathering tools**

We chose questionnaire as a gathering data tool because it is suitable for this research study. It will help to provide the appropriate information concerning our topic from a large population in a short time.

## **8. Structure of study**

This study consists of three main chapters; the first two ones are theoretical part while the third is practical. The chapter one will be devoted to speaking skill and the chapter two will be allotted to the major factors that effect on speaking English outside classroom among EFL students' native culture. In other side, the third chapter will deal with the investigating and analyzing the obtained data.

## **9. Limitation of the study**

During this study, we faced different obstacles. To start with, the main focus of this study is on the native culture of EFL students, but unfortunately we did not find enough references on this subject. The most books of culture deal only with the foreign or second language culture. In addition to that, we suffered from the wrong codes of books in the library of our faculty. At many times we wrote a code of the needed book, but we received another one. Furthermore, we really suffered from the sudden leave of the supervisor in addition to the lateness of the administration to direct us to another supervisor, which drove us to be in a fight with the time to finish our work. The most remarkable limitation

is about the way of investigation. This kind of study depends mainly on the opinions of the sampling, but the other students' opinions can be different, and it seems not fair to generate the results to all of EFL students.

# **Chapter One: Speaking Skill**

## **Introduction**

Speaking is an innate human being and takes a central part in our daily life communication. It is a medium that links individual with society. It is often considered that a control of a language may be compared to the ability to speak that language well. Thus, people always evaluate the success of EFL students through how much they have improved in their speaking proficiency of the target language. For this reason, EFL students consider the ability to speak as an essential skill because they are in often times facing situations where speaking is needed.

In this chapter, we will shed light on the concept of speaking skill, its definition, and importance, moving to discuss its elements. In addition, we will mention some speaking difficulties in foreign language learning.

### **1.1 Definition of speaking**

Speaking is defined as the verbal side of the language and the less structure one. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context which occurs, the participants, and the purposes of speaking (Burns and Joyce, 1997). It is the process of producing utterances. Thornsbury states "Speaking is so much part of daily life that we take it for granted. The average produces tens of thousands of words a day" (2005, p. 1). In other words, speaking is in the heart of communication and occupied the important place in learning and teaching the first or second language.

People produce numbers of utterances in different situation in order to transmit a message "to tell somebody something they need to know" (McCarthy, 2002, p. 136), or maintain the social relationship "The lubrication of the social wheels (ibid)."

EFL students pay more attention to speaking because it is considered as an active skill and mastering a language always measured through it. Nunan (1991, p. 39) claims that speaking skill is the important aspect of learning a second or a foreign language, and students are required to master this skill in order to be able to carry out an effective conversation in the language.

## **1.2 The Importance of speaking**

EFL students always give the priority to the speaking skill and consider it as the most important one. They believe that the possession of this skill is the standard of mastering the target language. Moreover, the ability of speaking a language well helps the students to do the essential function of language. For instance, they can express their feelings, negotiate with others, ask, request, and so on. Celce-Murcia (2001, p. 103) points out, “speech is the most basic means of human communication.” It means that human beings depend on speech to accede to their needs.

Mastering the speaking skill means that the EFL student possesses the proficiency of other skills as what Ur postulates “all the four skills: speaking seems instructively the most important; people who know a language are referred to 'speaker' of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing” (2000, p. 12). According to him, knowing everything about a language is measured through the proficiency of the person in speaking that language. Furthermore, speaking has a great importance outside the classroom as well since who speak fluently a foreign or second language usually have many opportunities to get jobs in companies that deal with foreign people.

The importance of speaking occurs also inside the classroom, when teachers engage their students to interact and exchange their opinions orally in order to raise their level of

confidence and motivation. That is why, the communicative approach of language teaching and learning gives more attention to speaking than other skills.

### **1.3. The Relation between speaking and other skills**

In the process of learning a foreign language, the student does not rely only on speaking. He supposed to depend on all four skills, which are differentiated into two types. Speaking and writing are called productive skills, while listening and reading are called receptive skills.

During the learning process, students listen to the teacher in order to know what to say (speak), and they should read sentences, paragraphs, or instructions before learn how and what to write. That is to say, the four skills are integrated, although often treated separately according to the objective of the course.

#### **1.3.1. Speaking Vs Listening**

Speaking and listening are considered as the prominent skills in the second or foreign language learning and teaching. In this context, Harmer says: “Almost any speaking activity is bound to involve listening” (1998, p. 227). Each one relies on the other, speaker depends on listening in order to develop his vocabulary and improve the pronunciation. In addition, the student is expected to focus on the two skills to achieve communicative competence because the combination between speaking and listening helps to accomplish effective conversation. Therefore, in the oral communication, the equal attention is received into the both, as what is proposed by Anderson and Lynch “A carefully prepared L2 utterances is only a useful aid communication. If the speaker deals effectively with replies he received for the L2 learner in conversation, he needs to be skilled as both speaker and listener” (1988, p. 15). By this claim, they focus on the importance of being a good speaker and a good listener in order to carry out an effective conversation.

Finally, the EFL Students rely on native speaker speech to be familiar with the pronunciation of vocabulary and enhance their speaking; because of being a good speaker involves being a good listener.

### **1.3.2. Speaking Vs Writing**

Writing and speaking are both productive skills. We intend by the two processes to transmit a message into a one person or audience. However, Brown and Tule (1983, p. 20) distinguish between the two skills in the aim of understanding their nature. According to them, writing skill is necessary to language teaching, and it is characterized by well formed sentences, which are a part of highly structured paragraphs, but spoken language is an unstructured process, consists of linked utterances that are overlapped between interlocutors. Moreover, in writing, the audience cannot ask for clarification; the writer should be clear and accurate because he may not have an occasion for investigation. Whereas in speaking, the interlocutor is supposed to be in front of the speaker, so they can discuss and correct mistakes.

Writing skill is usually used in recording the most important element and events, because it is more durable than speaking. The spoken language is not expected to maintain for a long time. In another side, the advantage of speaking skill reveals in its easiness, the speaker can convey his ideas by using simple and less vocabulary in a short time. However, the writer is supposed to construct long sentences, which should be connected with conjunctions and subordinations to be clear for readers.

Finally, both writing and speaking are very important skills that EFL students depend on to learn the target language.

## **1.4. Characteristics of Oral Proficiency**

Oral proficiency involves student's fitness to be fluent and accurate when he uses the target language. Thus, in the communicative approach, the focus is mainly on both fluency and accuracy for developing the student's communicative competence.

### **1.4.1. Fluency**

Fluency refers to achieve the ability to speak like a native speaker. According to Hughes (2002), it is the ability to express oneself in an intelligible, reasonable and accurate without too much hesitation. It means that EFL student is expected to use clear and linked words in sentences or phrases with good pronunciation in order to help the listener in understanding his speech.

Thorunbury (2005) pointed out that fluency does not mean only being speed in speaking. It involves also the speaker's ability to fill the pauses of conversation. He suggested what is called 'tricks' or production strategies, which can be a repetition of the words or using specific expressions, such as 'I mean', 'I think', and 'you know'...

EFL students can reach the level of fluency in speaking only by keeping practice. They should surround themselves by English environment; they try to find opportunities to communicate, listen, and imitate until they could speak without using hard effort. They also need to overcome the psychological problems, and by time, they will achieve their purpose, as what Jones (2007, p. 18) claims that student needs time and self-confidence in order to develop his fluency.

### **1.4.2. Accuracy**

Accuracy means the ability to perform a correct speech, without making too many mistakes either in grammatical rules, or vocabulary. According to Jones (2007, p. 8), it refers to the knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structure and correct pronunciation. Thus, EFL students often pay attention to linguistic knowledge in order to enhance their

proficiency by assigning time for different activities that may provide them a chance to correct certain mistakes. Thereby, they can habituate their minds and perform easily.

To conclude, fluency and accuracy are two main factors, which can determine the success in speaking the target language. Therefore, the EFL students should focus on the two and develop them through practice.

## **1.5. Elements of speaking**

There are some elements, which are necessary for students to develop their speaking skill, and achieving fluency and accuracy in the target language. According to Harmer (2001, p. 269-271) the student should be aware of the language features and be able to process information and language in the same time in interacting with others.

### **1.5.1. Language feature**

It involves three main elements.

#### **1.5.1.1. Connected speech**

It is the speaker 'ability to produce linked utterances, not only separated phonemes. There is surrounded aspects influence on the sounds. Thus, they may be omitted, modified, added, or weakened.

#### **1.5.1.2. Lexis and grammar**

When speakers use the same lexical utterances in same language function, they should be provided with phrases of particular function in order to use them in a suitable context.

#### **1.5.1.3. Negotiation form**

Speakers usually need to comprehend an interaction through the use of negotiation of language. They seek to check understanding by different means such as repetition or ask for clarification of others' talk.

## **1.5.2. Mantel / social processing**

Students are required to possess the following abilities.

### **1.5.2.1. Language Processing**

It is the speaker's ability to process the language in their minds. In the situation of interaction, speaker should use their memories in order to construct a clear meaning / message for the interlocutor.

### **1.5.2.2. Interaction**

Students are expected to interact with others. In this situation, they are required to listen and understand others talk and know the time of taking the floor of the speech.

### **1.5.2.3. Performance variable**

It is the pauses for thinking of what to say next. Speakers try to avoid hesitation by filling silent time through using an expression like: I mean, well, you know, you see, and so on.

### **1.5.2.4. Information processing**

It is the ability to process information rapidly, which makes communication more effective. Speakers should be ready for getting information and respond to the others' talks immediately.

## **1.6. The Notion of communicative ability**

The speaking skill is the most significant aspect of communication that people depend on in order to reach their goals in the social life. However, knowing only language system, as using certain grammatical rules and knowing how to perform sentences, is not sufficient to manage effective communication. Thus, students should be able to use the target language in specific contexts. It should be relevant and socially appropriate manner to the immediate situation. Communication involves more than knowing the rules and

using a certain amount of vocabulary. It entails also the ability to use language correctly and appropriately to social context, and paralinguistic element of speech.

Richards, Platt and Weber define communicative language ability (communicative competence) as the student's ability to communicate competently and adequately, and they point out four areas to be included in communicative ability. The first area is concerned with the grammar and vocabulary of the language, while the second is about the knowledge of rules of speaking where the speaker is expected to know how to begin and end a conversation. The third area deals with student's ability to know to use and respond to different types of the speech act, whereas the last area is about how the speaker uses language appropriately.

According to (Hedge, 2000, p. 56), communicative ability composed of five main features:

### **1.6.1. Linguistic competence**

Linguistic competence is the ability to use the grammar, syntax and vocabulary of the language. It is the knowledge of the language itself, its form and meaning (Hedge.2000, p. 46). It enables the EFL student:

- to achieve accuracy in the grammatical forms of the language
- to pronounce the forms accurately
- to use stress, rhythm and intonation to express meaning
- to build a range of vocabulary
- to achieve accuracy in syntax and word formation

### **1.6.2. Pragmatic competence**

Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use the language appropriately in different situations for the purpose of communication with focusing on interlocutor's relationships. It helps students:

- to learn the relationship between grammatical forms and function

- to use stress and intonation to express attitude and emotion
- to learn the scale of formality
- to understand and use emotive tone to use the pragmatic rules of language
- To select language forms appropriate to topic and listener.

(Hedge.2000, p. 46)

### **1.6.3. Discourse competence**

Discourse competence refers to the ability of understanding the context, managing conversation and interacting effectively to keep the conversation going. Its aims for the student:

- to take longer turns, use discourse markers, and open and close Conversations
- to appreciate and be able to produce contextualized written texts in a variety of genres
- to be able to use cohesive devices in reading and writing texts
- to be able to cope with authentic texts

### **1.6.4. Strategic Competence**

Strategic competence consists of some strategies that speaker uses in order to manage difficulties that may arise in communication. Its aims for students:

- to be able to take risks in using both spoken and written language
- to use a range of communication strategies
- to learn the language needed to engage in some of these strategies, e.g.

“What do you call a thing that/person who...”

### **1.6.5. Fluency**

Fluency is the ability to speak a language easily and well in meaningful interaction without too much hesitation. According to Hedge (2000, p. 54) fluency refers to speaker’s

speaker's ability to produce linked units of speech with facility and without any hesitation during the speech. Its aims for the students:

- to deal with the information gap of real discourse
- to process language and respond appropriately with a degree of ease
- to be able to respond with reasonable speed in “real time." time”.

### **1.7. Oral communication strategies**

The communicative competence is the main aim of learning a second or foreign language. However, it is quite frequent that students find difficulties in using appropriate words or structures to perform effective communication, especially in earlier stage of learning. EFL students are not expected to know everything, but they should deal with unexpected obstacles in order to overcome the problem of communication when they occur.

There have been studies conducted in the field of communication difficulties. Ellis and Barkhuizen defined the concept of communication strategies as a way which students use to compensate for communication difficulties: “Speaker-oriented; that is, they are used by learners to compensate for lack of L2 knowledge or their inability to access the L2 knowledge they have” (2005, p. 170). These strategies are very important for students to manipulate their oral communication and avoid any unexpected factors that hinder their speaking performance.

Bygate (1987) describes two major types of communicative strategies, and each type includes subcategories. The both types of strategies help to solve problems of communication, but each one helps in a specific way.

### **1.7.1. Achievement strategies**

Students use these strategies seeking to substitute for the words or structures they lack, by trying to find alternative terms or phrases in order to convey their messages. The achievement strategies comprise the following subcategories:

#### **1.7.1.1 Guessing strategy**

In this strategy, students seek to find the substitution for the word by using three options. They may borrow a word from their mother tongue, hoping that the interlocutors will understand it. The second option is to 'foreignize' their mother tongue word and pronounce it as if it was a part of the target language. The last is to create a new target language word. This process depends on the knowledge of the foreign language to give the interlocutor a chance to understand the meaning.

#### **1.7.1.2. Paraphrasing strategy**

Student by this strategy tries to express the idea which he faces difficulty to convey in an alternative way. There are two options. Speaker may use some sort of definitions or explanations to express his idea this option is called circumlocution. The second one is called lexical substitution. Speaker searches for a word of similar meaning or simply tries to use a negation of the antonym seeking to explain the intended meaning.

#### **1.7.1.3. Cooperative strategy**

In this strategy, speaker appeals for help from the interlocutor. "Spontaneously asking another for the correct term or structure, or for help in solving a problem" (Alleright and Baily, p. 142). Speaker may ask for equivalence of a word from the target language either explicitly or through indicating.

### **1.7.2. Reducing strategy**

Student uses reducing strategy when he feels that is not able to find a substitute. So, he reduces his communication aim or may abandon it completely.

#### **1.7.2.1. Avoidance strategy**

In this strategy, student tries to avoid the possible troubles by changing the direction of his message topic. He may face difficulties in particular grammatical structure or items. For example, a student may avoid talking about a certain subject, because of the lack of vocabulary. Consequently, he may sacrifice a part of the message or simply keep silent.

### **1.8. EFL students' speaking difficulties**

Students often find themselves in situations where they are unprepared or unwilling to speak. During oral performance, they may experience difficulties either in linguistic features of the language, such as lack of vocabulary, misuse of grammar and pronunciation mistakes, or in their psychological factors.

#### **1.8.1. Linguistic problems**

Linguistic factors are considered to be strong features influencing students speaking proficiency, as what Thorunbury proposes, “ being skillful assumes having some kinds of knowledge base (...) Knowledge that is relevant to speaking can be categorized either as knowledge of features of language(linguistic knowledge) or knowledge that is independent of language (extra linguistic knowledge)”(2005, p. 11). That is to say, if a student lacks the linguistic features, he will not perform well in speaking, and face difficulties, which are identified as following:

### **1.8.1.1. Deficient vocabulary**

Learning a foreign language involves accumulating a great amount of vocabulary. However, EFL students often face difficulties the appropriate words when they try to communicate. They also find themselves possessed limited vocabulary and expressions, which affect negatively on their participation in speaking and expressing thoughts.

### **1.8.1.2. Grammatical mistakes**

Although teaching grammar often takes the main focus on the process of learning a foreign language, but many EFL students do not achieve all its knowledge. In many situations, they give up speaking due to the fear of making grammatical mistakes in front of their partners. In this case, they prefer to keep silent instead put themselves in an embarrassing situation.

### **1.8.1.3. Pronunciation mistakes**

Good pronunciation is an important element in speaking a language because it helps the speaker to be understood when he articulates words. However, EFL students usually fall in miss pronunciation because of the difficulty of rules, or to their poor listening. Therefore, they do not take a risk to speak avoiding to be judged in their pronunciation.

## **1.8.2. Psychological problems**

There are distinct psychological problems that stand as obstacles of speaking a foreign language. These problems include different feature such as lack of self-confidence, lack of interest in the subject, and anxiety... etc.

### **1.8.2.1. Lack of self-confidence**

Self-confident students usually like to present their speaking capacities without caring about situations they put themselves in. However, many students prefer avoiding

expressing their thoughts and opinions orally because they do not believe in their speaking abilities, and fear that they may break their good image. For instance, often times, students know the appropriate answer of the activities, but due to lack of confidence, they prefer to keep silent or ask their partners to answer instead of them.

### **1.8.2.2. Lack of interest in subject**

Sometimes, the subject of communication influences on the students speaking participation either inside or outside classroom. Insufficient information about the topic or the unfamiliarity with it, drive the speaker to lose the interest to discuss it. In this context, Ur declares that “The first thing to do to encourage fluency is to bring interesting subjects of the conversation to classroom (...). This means that, students need a reason to speak more than they need something to speak about” (1981, p. 5). That is to say, if students have a negative attitude towards the topic, they will not be expected to perform well in speaking.

### **1.8.2.3 Anxiety**

Language anxiety is a condition of feelings of uneasiness and worry that comes to students when try to speak. The anxious student feels uncomfortable when he is supposed to speak in front of others. He usually avoids any oral contact with his colleagues, which may affect negatively on his communicative performance.

There are other difficulties that stand as a barrier to the oral production. Ur (1995, 121) mentioned some of them when she discussed the learner's problems with speaking activities:

**Mother tongue:** This issue appears especially in classes where the majority of students speak the mother tongue. During speaking activities, students tend to express their thoughts through their native language because it seems to them easier to be uttered due to

the limited appropriate words and structures of the target language. Moreover, it sounds “unnatural” for them to communicate among themselves in a foreign language.

**Inhibition:** Speaking often involves courage and confidence to face the audience to transmit what the speaker wants to say. Student may feel uneasy to say things in a foreign language. In fact, they may feel worried about making mistakes.

**Nothing to share:** Students often do not find of what to say on a particular topic because they have not any relevant knowledge of the topic; they are not interested.

**Problems of participation:** In speaking activities some student may be dominating the conversation, whereas other participations feel upset and being down to speak out. This situation is further complicated in overcrowded classes, which makes speaking time allotted to a student limited.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we discussed different definition of concept of speaking skill and explored its importance for EFL students in achieving the communicative competence, plus securing their future. We also tried to explain how speaking skill integrates with the other language skills especially writing and listening. In addition to that, we mentioned the language features that EFL students could possess in order to improve their speaking proficiency. Moreover, we tried to state the difference between the two concept fluency and accuracy with presenting the role of each on in the process of speaking. In another hand, we listed some psychological and linguistic difficulties that hinder oral performance.

## **Chapter two: Factors that effect on speaking English outside classroom by EFL students among their culture**

### **Introduction**

English becomes the most widely spoken languages in the world, and it is considered as the universal language. Many countries give the priority to that language to be taught in their educational institutions than other languages. However, the spread and acceptance of English language are not at the same degree in all countries. Each country has its own culture, which may collide with learning and speaking English among society. EFL students often face many obstacles when they try to practice speaking English among their environment, especially outside the classroom. These obstacles often occur due to the impact of their cultural factors. They can be historical, social, religious, or economic factors.

In this chapter, we will discuss the concept of culture and differentiate between the two processes, acculturation and assimilation. We also try to mention the key elements of culture. Finally, we will state some cultural factors that effect on speaking English language as foreign or as second language outside classroom.

### **2.1. Definition of culture**

Culture is a complex concept, and it seems impossible to give it a standard definition. However, there are many scholars in different disciplines that have culture as an area of interest and study, which drives them to define it differently according to their own perspective. In this context, Hinkle (1999, p. 01) postulates:“ It may not be an exaggeration to say that there are nearly as many definitions of culture as there are fields

of inquiry into human societies, groups, systems, behaviors and activities.” He claims that every field of study defines the concept of culture from its perspective.

The simplest definition to start with is given by Chastain (1976). He distinguishes between the small ‘c’ culture which refers to a way of life of a certain society, customs, habits, traditions, act, and big ‘C’ culture, which relates to civilization and the contribution to a society. Sarosdy, Benceze, Poor, and Vadnay state: “ Culture, on one hand is what people created or achieved : art, music, literature, history and on another hand, it means the way we develop for our percept, by which mean our belief, value, attitude system, our world view and our social organization” (2006, p. 83). They see culture from two sides. The first one is what person achieved, and the second is what they developed.

Kramsch states that “culture can be defined as a membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings” (1998, p.10). By this definition, culture is what members of a given society share such as values, norms, and behaviors, which are acquired by social institutions (family, school...).

## **2.2. Acculturation**

Acculturation is defined as a process of contact between different cultures, which results in changes and modification in a society at different aspects. This concept has been a subject of study by different perspectives. Salkind (2008) defines acculturation as“ a complex process that includes those phenomena that result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous firsthand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups”(p.8). He also states the main areas that can be affected by acculturation, which are: identity, language, attitude and personality.

From above, acculturation in the context of second or foreign language learning appears when FL student affected by the culture of the target language. Although the

student may adopt some aspects of the life but he maintains the essential elements of his identity.

### **2.3. Culture assimilation**

Assimilation refers to the process whereby an individual or a group of people of one culture adopt the way of life from another society. In short, it is a kind of replacing the ethnic culture with a new one. Another definition is given by Salkind (2008) which is: “assimilation involves immersion into the surrounding society and adoption of the values and behaviors of the dominant group in that society, with limited heritage culture retention.”(p. 405). By this definition, assimilation refers to the negative aspects of the contact between cultures, especially if one culture is superior to the others.

In the field of second or foreign language learning, assimilation is regarded as a thread phenomenon to the FL students' identity, which builds a negative attitude toward learning and speaking foreign languages in a given society.

### **2.4. The Key cultural elements**

In this side, we will discuss the basic elements that demonstrate the distinct characteristics of people from different cultures.

#### **2.4.1. Values**

Values are a set of beliefs, which play the role of guiding principles that control the behavior of individuals among a given society. They indicate which is wrong or right, bad or good. In other words, they influence on how a person thinks and how he should act. Many scholars gave the definition to the word value in the field of culture. Haralambos and Halborn state that “A value is a belief that a something is good and desirable. It defines what is important, worthwhile and worth-striving” (2004, p. x). Kornblum (1994, p.104) also put a similar definition when he suggests that value is “socially shared ideas

about what is right." Both two definitions focus on the positive side and ignore the negative one. However, Henslin mentions the two sides of the value in his definition, "the standards by which people define what is desirable or undesirable, good or bad, beautiful or ugly" (2008, p. 48).

### **2.4.2. Norms**

Norms refer to the behavioral rules or standards that an individual ought to follow and respect in order to be consistent with the values of his society. For instance, keep silent when an old man starts speaking. There two types of norms, formal and informal. The former is related to instructions or written rules that manage and secure the life of the individuals "the standards of behavior considered the most important in any society" (Barkan, 2012, p. 65). This kind of norms involves a system of punishment, which enforces people to respect the rules. Whereas, the latter refers to routine features of daily life, which are learned by observation without following any instructions such as greeting, compliment or respect "the standards of behavior that are considered less important but still influence how we behave" (ibid).

### **2.4.3. Language**

Language is the medium of communication that individuals in given society use in order to accede their daily life needs. It can be represented in two forms, verbally (speech), or non verbally (written words, gestures, signs...). According to Barkan (2012, p.60), language is the crucial symbol in every society and people may face many difficulties when they lack the ability to use language.

Language is inherited through passing generations, but it may know different changes in structure or content. Many terms may be included or eliminated according to necessities of the period.

## **2.5. The Major affecting factors**

Speaking a foreign language in the EFL students' environment is generally controlled and determined by some influential factors which can be summarized in colonial, social, economic and religious factors, in addition to ideology of a given society (individualism vs. collectivism). Pavlenko (2005) insists that the people's social, political, and national identity are the major factors which determine his choice to speak or abandon a particular language. (McKay and Hornberger, 2009, p. 168 cited in Pavlenko, 2005)

### **2.5.1. Colonial factor**

It is argued that the colonial era affected mainly on spoken languages in colonized countries. Many nations around the world, especially in Africa and South American continents, till now speak the colonial language either as an official or a second language. People in Brazil speak Portuguese as official language because their country was a Portuguese colony for more than four hundred years, Argentines speak Spanish, and many African countries speak English or French as an official or second language. McKay and Hornberger (1996, p. 48) state: “in many parts of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, where colonial languages such as Spanish, French, and especially English became entrenched and continue to play crucial roles long after the cessation of colonial rule.”

Country	Date	Year of independence	% English speaker	Time of the report
New Zealand	September 26	1907	97.82	2006
Jamaica	August 6	1962	97.64	2003
Australia	January 1	1901	97.03	2001
United States	September 3	1783	94.2	2007
Dominica	November 3	1978	94.03	2003
Malta	September 21	1964	89	2012
The Bahamas	July 10	1973	87.13	2003
Ghana	March 6	1957	66.67	2010
Canada	July 1	1867	65.63	2011
Swaziland	September 6	1968	61.28	2008
Nigeria	October 1	1960	53	2009

**Table 2.1: British colonies where the majority of populations speak English**

Source: Wikipedia

### **2.5.1.1. The French educational policy in Algeria**

The great colonizers' power sought mainly to eliminate the culture of the settlements and reshape new culture through the imposition of their languages and cultures. In the case of Algeria, French colonizer aimed to impose its language by declaring it as the official language in Algeria and made Arabic as a foreign language, because French authority thought that changing Algerians' identity comes, firstly from changing or destroying their language. In this context, Heggoy (1973) states:

The attempt by France to control Algerians through the assimilation of Algerians into French culture was no more clearly demonstrated than in the field of education. The imposition of French educational norms and the denial to the Algerian of his

legitimate cultural identity through the controls of language, curriculum, and methods of instruction reveal the colonist policy in its most destructive. The French supplanted Arab educational values and moved to affect and maintains Algerian subordination through structural changes or pre-colonial education and implicit challenges to the spirit and direction of this education. (Bacher, 2013, p. 21 cited in Heggoy, 1973)

France during the colonial period created an educational system which dedicated the domination of French language over Algerian society. In addition to that, the authority intended to erase everything related to the local culture and Arabic language such as banning teaching Quran, and renaming the towns and streets with French names. This policy affected prominently on many aspects in Algerians' way of life, and its consequences extended even after the independence. French language, till now dominates many social activities; it is considered as the second language and it is taught from primary school. Furthermore, most of our supreme ministers use it in their political speech, and it is common to hear French terms in our daily conversations, especially in the north. For this reason, our society accepts French more than other foreign languages.

#### **2.5.1.2. The spread of English language**

A study conducted by a Lebanese Yazigy (1985) investigated the spread of the English language around the world mentioned the colonial factor. According to her, The historical factor such as the British colonialism has a great effect on the spoken language in former colonial countries because it lasted long time. The colonies had different languages. Therefore, English was imposed to be a medium of contact between them. Consequently, most of the former colonial countries nowadays use English as a medium of instruction.

To conclude, the colonial period has a great influence on the existence of certain languages among the settlements. Therefore, students of other languages often find difficulties when they try to practice the target language due to the domination and effectiveness of colonial language in daily life of their society.

### **2.5.2. Social factor**

It is believed that the social context has a great impact on providing EFL students with opportunities to develop their speaking proficiency. The relevant aspects that regarded to be the affective factors on speaking a foreign language are as follows, the social linguistic nature of the community; monolingual or multilingual, the attitude of the society toward the target language, and the EFL student' socioeconomic status.

#### **2.5.2.1. The social linguistic nature of the community**

In the case of Algeria, the social context is considered to be bilingual. The Algerian bilingualism is a result of French colonization and its policy in the country. During this period, the French language was imposed on the population in the reason of building a contact with the colonists. However, bilingualism in Algeria is not homogeneous because many people, especially in the west do not speak French. That is to say, Arabic and French are dominated languages in Algeria, and it is rare to find a chance to communicate another language such as English.

#### **2.5.2.2. Negative attitude toward the target language**

The attitude toward a foreign language plays a significant role in succeeding or failing to learn it. A study conducted by Shvidko (2012, p. 114) investigated the influencing of the social context on practice speaking outside classroom. It explained that Korean participants consider that the English language lacks the necessary honorific devices that are appropriate for use when addressing older people comparing to Korean language. Thus, they think that using English leads to violate the rules of etiquette, and

thus regarded as unacceptable in Korean society. Besides, she presented the result of David's (1986) research, when asked eighteen students to write an essay on the topic: "Students in the United States who are learning English should speak English at all times, and they should not use their native language at all, even at home" (p. 60). Ten participants responded that only through their native language; they could maintain closeness to their family and culture. They also considered the idea of giving up their native language is a kind of betrayal.

Furthermore, people sometimes make a negative judgment toward who speaks a foreign language since they think that he will lose his authentic identity. In other words, this phenomenon is regarded as a kind of assimilation, which defined by Clement (1980) as the process of adapting the aspects of another culture and losing the identity and the native culture (cited in Suliaman, 2006). There is also other research transmitted by Sulaiman (2006, p. 42-43) postulates that learning a second language is a social phenomenon, and it is affected by the social context. Participants declared that a certain group among Arab world reject and hate the western culture and languages, including English at the reason of the colonization and missionary movements. One of the participants responded as follows:

" I hate learning English and western culture when I see what is happening to the Muslims in Iraq was occupied by the Americans to wipe out our culture and identity, so we should interest more in our mother tongue, which is a part of our religion instead of excessive interest in other' languages"

### **2.52.3. The students' socioeconomic status**

The achievement in English language learning depends often on the student's socioeconomic status. In this context, Coleman (1996) claims that the students'

background is the most influenced factor within the process of learning. Students of higher social status are commonly provided with tools and devices that would help in improving their accomplishment. They are also expected to have more opportunities to meet and interact with native speakers than the students of low social status. (Cited in Yazigy, 1991)

### **2.5.3. Religious factor**

In many countries, the religion may play a significant role in accepting or rejecting speaking a foreign language among the society. The characteristics and aspects of a foreign language and its culture may collide with people's beliefs and faith in the local society.

#### **2.5.3.1. Missionary work**

In this context and according to a Lebanese study conveyed by Diab (2000), religious background of a multi sect in Lebanon played the major role a certain foreign language during missionary work in the nineteenth century. Only a Catholic community welcomed French language because they share the same religious faith, (Diab, 2000 cited in Mansfield, 1976, p. 240) that France no need to impose its language and culture on Christian Lebanese, since they already accepted it. In another hand, Protestant chose to adopt the English language as a medium of instruction thanks to American Protestant missionaries in the region. It is accounted that Christian did not welcome the American missionaries fearing the expansion of Protestant Churches (Diab cited in Constantine, 1995).

#### **2.5.3.2. The religious perspective toward EFL students' activities**

Arab societies in general see that activities such as singing or listening to music, watching movies and videos in the aim learning an English language may contravene their religious doctrine. Arabs also believe that Arabic is sacred because it is the language of

Quran. Therefore, speaking a foreign language among society is regarded as a threat to the status of their language (Sulaiman, 2006 cited Yazigy, 1994)

#### **2.5.4. Economic factor**

It is noticeable that there is a crucial relation between the widespread of the English language over the entire world and the postwar economic expansion of the United States. Most of international industrial companies situated in different countries are subordinate to the United States' economy, which entails English language as a medium of communication and negotiation. Countries that seek to develop their economy either by investing in other regions or international investments see the English language as a useful negotiation mechanism. Therefore, they adopted a new educational system which made English as a chief of foreign languages in their institutions "countries pursuing an economic strategy based on exports and the attraction of foreign capital should adapt their language education policies to the requirements of that economy strategy" (Coleman, 2010). Furthermore, according to (EF English Proficiency Index, 2015, p. 53), English language is becoming a basic skill for the entire global workforce. And it is the key component to country economic development. EF claims that countries with high English proficiency are at a high level of development, and it ranks Algeria at very low proficiency.

## ALGERIA

Very Low Proficiency

EF EPI score: 40.34

# **67** out of 70 countries

Algerian's English proficiency is very low and, overall, declining. Adults in the country have some of the weakest English skills surveyed. While English is primarily a language for business and science in Algeria, it is not widely used beyond these fields. The country's linguistic landscape is dynamic, but largely excludes English: Arabic is the national and official language, French remains common in some circles, and several Berber dialects are widely spoken.

EF EPI Edition

**Table 2.2: the rank of Algerian English proficiency.**

**EF EPI Edition (2015)**

### **2.5.4.1. The situation of economic in Algeria**

In Algeria, the economic system is very complex due to different effective factors, which hinder adopting English as the first foreign language for the requirement of the global economy, Coleman (2010) states:

In the late 1980s, the Algerian government considered the possibility of introducing English as a school subject in primary schools or even as a medium of instruction, as an alternative to French. (...). If reconciliation between these feuding parties could be achieved, then the country would be able to devote itself to the pursuit

of the economic and social development which it so urgently required.

This radical proposal was never implemented.

According to him, the Algerian modest degree of success in creating conducive context to national development is due to the fail of adopting English.

A high number of foreign investments in Algeria are French companies and institutions, and many goods and products are imported from or according to French. Consequently, instructions and names of items or products are frequently with French, so those speaking English rarely find chances to present themselves in this field. In addition to that, the government failed to promote the tourism which reflected in the littleness of opportunities to meet and interact with native speaker, and in jobs that English speakers may get such as working in hotels or as a tour guide.

### **2.5.5. Individualism Vs Collectivism**

There are few studies, which discussed the effect of ideology a given society adopts in the process of learning and speaking a foreign language. Concerning this subject, it is known that the world during the cold war was divided into two ideologies, individualism and collectivism. Each ideology has a great impact on the individuals' way of life in all areas even foreign language learning. To start with, we firstly try to define the two terms. We begin with individualism, which refers to the idea that supports the independence and self-reliance to act without reference to others “In individualistic cultures; the emphasis is on the growth and development of the individual as an increasingly independent entity that learns to meet his or her own needs” (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008, P.xiv). In another hand, collectivism is called also egalitarianism, which refers to the idea that supports the group work and domination of community over the individuals “ In collectivist culture; the emphasis is on the growth and development of

an individual who remains closely connected to his or her family and makes its well-being a priority ” (ibid)

Rosthstein-Fisch and Trumbull (2008, p. 8) listed some of the most contrasts between individualism and collectivism:

Individualism	Collectivism
Representative of mainstream United States, Western Europe, Australia, and Canada	Representative of 70% of world cultures (Triandis, 1989), including those of many U.S. immigrants
Well-being of individual; responsibility for self	Well-being of group; responsibility for group
Independence/self-reliance	Interdependence/cooperation
Individual achievement	Family/group success
Self-expression	Respect
Self-esteem	Modesty
Task orientation	Social orientation
Cognitive intelligence	Social intelligence

**Table 2.3: The Individualism/Collectivism Framework Rosthstein-Fisch &Trumbull (2008)**

From above, we conclude that the EFL students from an individualist country is supposed to be dynamic and persevering enough to reach speaking proficiency in the target language without caring about his social bonds. On the other side, who belongs to a collectivist country seems to be hesitating and lacks of the stimulus to achieve his goal, these are thanks to social norms and values that he is obliged to respect which affects negatively on his performance. In this field, Kim (2009) in his research about Cultural Obstacles to Speaking English in the Korean investigates how features of collectivism

discourage speaking English among Korean student; he lists the distinctive features of collectivism and individualism.

According to him, Korean students inherited special norms and values, which control their behavior in the community, he asserts also that Korean English teachers do not engage their students to speak neither inside nor outside classroom, and it is common to teacher when receive a negative response if speak English to him the outside classroom (p. 6).

To sum up, EFL students raised in collectivist communities are often expected not to possess a speaking proficiency because of surrounded environment, which does not secure the appropriate climate.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we discussed the role of students' culture in determining in what extent a foreign language could be spoken outside classroom. We firstly gave some definitions to the concept of culture and mentioned its components that serve our study. We also shed the light on the major cultural factors that drive a given society to build a certain attitude toward a foreign language and its consequences in EFL students' oral performance. We discussed the colonial, social, economic and religious factors besides to the impact of ideology. In addition to that, we tried to describe the effects of these factors on speaking English in Algeria.

## **Chapter three**

### **Field work: investigating the effect of Algerian culture on speaking**

#### **English outside classroom.**

#### **Introduction**

In the third chapter, we attempt to investigate the EFL student's views and opinions about the effects of the Algerian culture on speaking English outside the classroom. To achieve this purpose, we intended to choose the questionnaire as a tool of collecting data, which was addressed to the degree of first-year Master students of English department at Biskra University.

#### **3.1. Data gathering tool**

The significant objective of our study is to investigate the situation of speaking English by EFL students outside the classroom setting. Therefore, we intended firstly, to evaluate the students' speaking competences and their determination to achieve oral proficiency, then we assess if their speaking proficiency could be affected through their environment 'culture'. To reach this goal, we decided to choose a student's questionnaire as gathering tool because it is the appropriate one which secures the collection of the necessary data at the available time. Unfortunately, due to the limited time and the kind of this study (outside classroom), we could not use another suitable tool.

#### **3.2. The Administration of the questionnaire**

This questionnaire was addressed to the degree of First-year Master English students as the population of our research. They are 254 students, and they are divided into four groups. We selected randomly 30 students as a sampling, and then we handed them the questionnaire in April 2016. The participants took enough time in order to read

carefully and answer all the questions, then they handed back all the copies at the end of the lecture.

### **3.3. Description of the questionnaire**

This questionnaire is designed for collecting some worthy information about the educational and social background of the EFL students. It includes twenty eight questions. Most of them are closed questions require from students to pick out the appropriate option or answer by yes or no, and the others are open-ended questions, which require justifications.

The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first one seeks to obtain some information about English students' background such as their goals from studying English language, the socioeconomic and educational background of their parents, in addition to some questions about the daily use of English.

The second section is about the students' proficiency. We focused mainly on their oral performance by asking them to rate their proficiency, and providing numbers of tasks, which require from students to answer about in what extent they, can perform these tasks.

The third section seeks to discuss the students' views about some cultural factors, which may affect in the speaking English among their society. In this context, we provided a number of statements about these effected factors and asked students in extant they agree with them.

### 3.4. Analysis of the questionnaire

In this field, we will try to give comments and interpretations to the results of the student responses in each table.

#### Section one: Background information

**Question 01: why do you choose to study English (students may choose more than one option)?**

Options	Number of students	%
In order to communicate	12	40
To get a good job in future	12	40
Because it is a universal language	10	33.33
Other purposes	08	26.33

**Table3. 1: why students choose to study English.**

The participants may choose more than one option. Therefore, the total percentage (%) exceeds (100%). According to the table above, the four choices are approximate, 40% of students chose to study English in order to communicate it. The same number of them justified their choice to securing a future job. However, 33.33% of students claimed that they selected English because it is regarded as a universal language. In another hand, 26.33% of them have other purposes (most of them chose English because they like it so much).

#### **The other purposes:**

- I just like it.
- To for further studies in international language.

- I like it, and I think that this language can make everyone confident when he travels.
- I like it o lot.
- I find it so interesting language, and I am so attracted to it.
- I like it.
- I like this language too much.

**Question 02: What is your father’s educational background?**

Options	Number of students	%
Primary	9	30
Middle	8	26.66
Secondary	4	13.33
University	4	13.33
No one	5	16.66

**Table 3.2: Fathers 'educational background.**

From the table above, we see that 30% of students claimed that their fathers did not exceed the primary school, and 26.66% joined the middle school. Those fathers reached the secondary school are 13.33%, and the same percentage concerning university. However, 16.66% of them declared that their fathers did not join to any educational institution. This seems to be a result of the social situation in their period.

**Question 03: What is your mother's educational background?**

Options	Number of students	%
Primary	8	26.66
Middle	9	30
Secondary	4	13.33
University	4	13.33
No one	5	16.66

**Table 3.3: Mothers' educational background.**

The majority of students' mothers did not reach the secondary school. 16.66% of them did not have any educational level, 26.66% joined only primary degree, and 30% of them achieved the middle school. In the other hand, 13.33% of students said that their mothers reached the level of secondary school, and the same number of students declared that their mothers attended university. This result is predictable because female in certain period of time was forced to stay home, which reflects on the role of mothers in helping and guiding their children.

**Question04: What is your father's occupation?**

Options	Number of students	%
Handicrafts man	3	10
Headmaster or engineer	3	10
Businessman	3	10
Retired	17	56.66
Jobless	3	10
Other occupations	1	3.34

**Table 3.4: Fathers' occupation.**

The other occupation is lawyer.

This question was conducted to represent the students' socioeconomic. From the table above, the most students' fathers are retired (56.66%). Those work as handicraft's man scored 10%, and likewise, those work as headmaster or engineer, and businessman. Jobless represent 10% and only one participant said that his is a layer. This means that the majority of students belong to a low socioeconomic background.

**Question 05: Is there in your family who speaks a foreign language?**

Options	Number of students	%
Yes	18	60
No	12	40

**Table 3.5: Family member those speak a foreign language.**

From the tables above, we result that 60% of students indicated that there is at least one person in their families speak a foreign language. In the other side, 40% of them said no.

**Those said yes, which languages? (Students may choose more than one option)**

Options	Number of students	%
English	8	44.44
French	15	83.33
Other languages	1	5.55

**Table 3.6: languages spoken by family members.**

According to the participants, French language is the most spoken one among their family members, which represents 83.33%. English comes in the second place in the percentage of 44.44%, while the minority of them (5.55%) speaks another language.

**Question 06: Do you speak English at home?**

Options	Number of students	%
Yes	21	70
No	9	30

**Table 3.7: Students' speaking English at home.**

Although there is a little number of family members those speak English but 70% of students declared that they used to speak English at home. This indicates that students have the determination to create opportunities in order to improve their speaking skill. However, 30% of them said no and gave different excuses.

**Those said no, they justify:**

- Because I do not have who I speak with, we use only Arabic.
- Because I do not have someone to talk with, and my family do not understand me.
- Because there is no one in my family who mastered this language.
- I use just some words with my little girl.
- Because there is no one can understand me.
- Because my family will understand me well, also I do not like to use it at home.
- There is no one who I could communicate with.
- I am always busy outside, and I do not have time to communicate in English at home.

**Question 07: Do you get any opportunity to speak with English native speakers?**

Options	Number of students	%
Yes	14	46.66
No	16	53.34

**Table 3.8: Students' opportunities speak with English native speakers.**

According to the tables above, there are many students (53.34%) do not find opportunities to speak with English native speakers. This seems to be due to the nature of our region which rarely attracts the foreigner. Whereas, 46.66% of them claimed that it is happened for them to speak with native speakers.

**How often?**

Options	Number of students	%
Always	1	7.15
Sometimes	8	57.14
Rarely	5	35.71
Total	14	100

**Table 3.9: How often students speak with native speakers.**

Students contact with English native speakers with different degrees. According to the results, 7.15% of participants said that they always speak with native speakers, 57.14% pretended that they sometimes do, and 35.71% declared that rarely get a chance. In this context, speaking with native speakers seems to be through the social media because they rarely come to our region.

**Question 08: In which stage you felt that English interested you (Speak English)?**

Options	Number of students	%
Primary	5	16.66
Middle	18	60
Secondary	7	23.34

**Table 3.10: The stage students felt that English interested them.**

The majority of students (60%) felt that English interested them at the stage of middle school. This seems to be due to programming English language at this stage in most of our educational institutions. 16.66% of them stated that cared about English at early stage (primary school) which can be as a result of the influence or motivation by one of their family members, while 23.34% of students interested in English only in secondary school.

**Question 09: In which language you set up your personal devices (cell phone or computer)?**

Options	Number of students	%
Arabic	1	3.34
English	21	70
French	8	26.66

**Table 3.11: language that students set up their personal devices.**

This question aims to know if the students try to create a special environment to practice English with their useful devices. Most of the students (70%) answered that they prefer to set up their personal devices with English language. However, other students prefer to use either French (26.66%) or Arabic (3.34%). Every student justified his choice.

## Why?

There are only six students did not mention the purpose of their choices. However, the others gave different justifications. Only one student set up his devices with Arabic language and justified by the following statement: “All those I deal with are Arabic people so I prefer to use Arabic language.” However, 17 students use English. Most of them claimed that they like too much, and it is the better way to gain new terms in different fields. The other justifications are:

- In order to improve it and do not forget it.
- I feel more comfortable when I use it.
- I can understand it better.
- In order to discover new words in English. In addition to that, it is my specialty and.
- I like it because of its simplicity.
- I am studying it, plus I would like to make my milieu like the native one to feel this language.
- To make it easy for me.

In addition to that, six students use French language and justified as following:

- Because since the primary school we have practice French.
- It is the more influenced one.
- As Algerian, we get used of French.
- I like French language.
- May be it is the most useful language at home, especially for the different devices (TV, PC).
- Because I want to learn more about the French language.

## Section Two. Students Proficiency:

### Question 10: How do you find learning English?

Options	Number of students	%
Very difficult	0	00
Difficult	14	46.66
Easy	15	50
Very easy	1	3.34

**Table 3.12: How students find learning English.**

The half (50%) of students agreed that learning English is easy, and 46.66% of them found it difficult. Only 3.34% of participants consider learning English very easy, but no one said that learning English is very difficult.

### Question 11: How do you rate your English proficiency?

Options	Number of students	%
Very poor	0	00
Poor	10	33.33
Average	19	63.33
Very well	1	3.34

**Table 3.13: How students rate their English proficiency.**

The table indicates that a great number of the sampling (63.33%) rated their English proficiency at an average level, while 33.33% stated that they are poor. Only 3.34% of students claimed that their proficiency is very well. In another side, no one evaluated his proficiency at a very poor level.

**Question 12: Do you speak English when discuss with your friends in public?**

Options	Number of students	%
Yes	21	70
No	9	30

**Table 3.14: Students' speaking English in public.**

This question was selected in order to evaluate the students' ability and confidence to discuss in English in front of people. Fortunately, 70% of them said they the ability to speak English language with their friends in public. Whereas, the other students (30%) granted that there some difficulties stand against them

**Those said no:** 4 did not justify and 5 gave the following justifications:

- Firstly, we are influenced with our native language. Secondly, we do not find the readiness among them.
- Because we have the habit to discuss in our mother tongue, so we think that if we discuss in English, the message might not be received.
- Because if someone hears us speaking English he will say that we are showing off.
- We do not master the language.
- Because we feel that we are weak in using English, so we prefer to give up speaking it.

## How much you can perform the following tasks?

### Task 1: I can understand movies in English without subtitles

Options	Number of students	%
Perfectly	2	6.66
Well	16	53.33
Fairly	6	20
Not very well	5	16.66
Not at all	1	3.34

**Table 3.15: In what extent students can understand movies in English without subtitles.**

We result from above that the students did not find serious difficulties in understanding movies in English without subtitles. 53% of them answered that they can do this task well, and 6.66% said that they could perform perfectly. Few numbers of students (20%) claimed that they could do this task but fairly. In another hand, a minority of students (17%) saw that they are not very well in understanding movies without subtitles, and only 3.34% of them regarded themselves as not capable of perform this task.

**Task 2: I can listen to English TV programs and understand them.**

Options	Number of students	%
Perfectly	2	6.68
Well	18	60
Fairly	5	16.66
Not very well	5	16.66
Not at all	0	00

**Table 3.16: In what extent students can listen to English TV programs and understand them.**

This task is different from the previous one in the term of the quality of expressions used during conversations. In TV programs, the expressions are often more formal and have deep meanings. According to the table, most of the participant (60%) considered listening to and understanding English TV programs as an easy task and they can perform it well. Moreover, 6.66% of students regarded it as a very easy task. Small number of students who represent 16.68% saw that they may understand TV programs but fairly, and the same percentage confirmed that are not very well in doing this task.

**Task 3: I can talk about my daily life activities in English.**

Options	Number of students	%
Perfectly	8	26.66
Well	15	50
Fairly	4	13.34
Not very well	3	10
Not at all	0	00

**Table 3.17: In what extent students can talk about their daily life activities in**

**English.**

This task is organized in order to measure the students' English speaking performance in different sides of life. According to the results, the majority of students can talk about their daily life activities in English. The half of the sampling answered that they can perform well this task, and more than the quarter claimed that this task is very easy (they can do it perfectly). Concerning the other participants, 13.34% of them can this task fairly, and 10% confirmed that they are not very well in this task.

**Task 4: I can express my own opinions in English in front of people.**

Options	Number of students	%
Perfectly	5	16.66
Well	7	23.33
Fairly	12	40
Not very well	5	16.66
Not at all	1	3.34

**Table 3.18: In what extent students can express their own opinions in English**

**in front of people.**

Concerning this task, we did not end up to a direct result. 16.66% represents those responded that they are able to express their opinions in English perfectly, and 23.33% represents those can perform this task well. In another side, 40% of students indicated that they somehow can perform this kind of task, and the other participants are supposed to find some difficulties to do so. These difficulties are expected to be due either to personal problems such as anxiety and lack of confidence, or to social factor such as the negative attitude toward English language.

**Task 5: I can understand native speakers' speech without the frequent use of the dictionary.**

Options	Number of students	%
Perfectly	2	6.66
Well	4	13.34
Fairly	10	33.33
Not very well	14	46.67
Not at all	0	00

**Table 3.19: In what extent students can understand native speakers' speech without the frequent use of the dictionary.**

It seems that students face difficulties in the task of understanding native speaker's speech without the frequent use of the dictionary. 46.67%% of them responded that is not easy to do very well in this kind of activities. In addition to that, there are some students claimed that can do this task but fairly, and they represent 33.33%. However, few numbers of students did not find difficulties in doing this task, 13.34% can do it well, and 6.6 % can do it perfectly.

**Task 6: I can use English language in different situations without hesitation.**

Options	Number of students	%
Perfectly	3	10
Well	9	30
Fairly	9	30
Not very well	8	26.66
Not at all	1	3.34

**Table 3.20: In what extent students can use English language in different**

**situations without hesitation.**

This task aims to evaluate the speaking fluency of the students. From the table above, we result that students' level of speaking fluency is average. Only 10% of students can speak English perfectly in different situations, 30% can do this task well. Furthermore, 26.66 % confirmed that doing this activity is not easy, and 3.4% declared they are not capable to do it. In another hand, 30% of participants looked at this task a moderate one.

**Section Three: Effecting Factors**

**To what extent you agree with the following statements?**

**Statement 01: It is important for Algerians to learn English.**

Options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	23	76.66
Agree	4	13.34
Neutral	3	10
Disagree	0	00
Strongly disagree	0	00

**Table 3.21: The importance of learning English for Algerians.**

This statement is designed to know in what extent students see that learning English has importance in our society. The result shows that the majority of the participants (76.66%) strongly agree with this statement, and in less degree 13.34% of students agreed with this idea. However, only 10% did not give direct perspective on the importance of English, while no one of them neglected that importance.

**Statement 02: If English was programmed as the second language in Algeria, people would speak it more than French.**

options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	14	46.66
Agree	12	40
Neutral	3	10
Disagree	1	3.34
Strongly disagree	0	00

**Table 3.22: The situation of speaking English in Algeria if was programmed as the second language.**

Through this statement, we intend to know the role of the Algerian curriculum in the spread of speaking English in our society from the students' perspective.

From the table, we see that the majority of samplings are with the idea of programming English as the second language helps in its expansion. 46.66% of them said they strongly agree and said they agree. 10% of students did not persuade with this idea in good extent whereas, only 3.34% disagree with it.

**Statement 03: The domination of the French as a foreign language is due to the French colonization.**

Options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	24	80
Agree	5	16.66
Neutral	1	3.34
Disagree	0	00
Strongly disagree	0	00

**Table3. 23: students' perspective about the domination of French as a foreign language in Algeria.**

Nearly all of students accepted the idea which states that the domination of French language in Algeria was a result of the French colonization. The result of table indicated that the majority of students (80%) strongly agree with this idea. This illustrates that students clearly observe this phenomenon in daily life speech in our community. In addition to that, 16.66% of the students said that agree, which explains that noticed this domination even in fewer degrees.

A very small rate of sampling did not give the obvious attitude toward this idea by the choice (neutral). However, no one chose to disagree with this idea.

**Statement 04: Our local community thinks that we will lose our identity when we speak English.**

Options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	3	10
Agree	1	3.34
Neutral	3	10
Disagree	13	43.33
Strongly disagree	10	33.33

**Table 3.24: The society's fair of losing the students' identity when they speak English.**

Through to students' responses, speaking English language does not affect on EFL students' identity. 43.33% of them chose to say that they disagreed with the view which says that our society regard speaking English as thread to students' identity. Moreover, 33.33% strongly disagree with this idea. In another side, 10% preferred to be neutral, whereas only 3.34% thought that speaking English has an effect on students' identity.

**Statement 05: The geographical distance between Algeria and Britain or USA influences in the spread of English.**

Options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	6	20
Agree	8	26.66
Neutral	11	36.68
Disagree	5	16.66
Strongly disagree	0	00

**Table 3.25: The role of geographical distance in the spread of English**

**language in Algeria.**

According to the results, the geographical distance is not a strong influential factor in the spread of English in Algeria. Less than half of participants accepted this thought, 20% of them said that they strongly agree and 26.66 stated that they agree. On the other hand, 36.68% of students do not have a clear overview about this subject, while 16.66% indicated their rejection to the impact of geographical distance.

**Statement 06: People hate English due to USA policy in Middle East.**

Options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	1	3.34
Agree	4	13.33
Neutral	9	30
Disagree	10	33.33
Strongly disagree	6	20

**Table 3.26: The students' opinions about the impact of USA policy in Middle**

**East on people's attitude toward English.**

It seems that the majority of students are against that there is a relation between people's attitude toward English language and the USA policy in Middle East. The table indicates that 20% of students expressed their strongly refuse to the effect of USA policy, in the same context and with less degree 33.33% declared that are not with this view. Moreover, 30% of participants chose to be neutral about this proposal. However, few numbers of students saw that the attitudes toward English can be related to USA policy.

**Statement 07: Studying English does not secure the future in our society.**

Options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	4	13.33
Agree	4	13.33
Neutral	8	26.66
Disagree	8	26.66
Strongly disagree	6	20

**Table 3.27: The students' opinions about if studying English secures the future in our society.**

From the table, nearly the half of participants has an optimistic sight about the chance of getting a good job through studying English. 20% represents those strongly disagree that studying English cannot secure the EFL students career in our country, and at less extant 26.66% stated that they disagree. In other side, 26.66% have a pessimism view about their future, whereas another 26.66% of students did not represent their views.

**Statement 08: Speaking English in front of old people is considered as a kind of disrespect in our society**

Options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	10	33.33
Agree	7	23.33
Neutral	7	23.33
Disagree	5	16.66
Strongly disagree	1	3.34

**Table 3.28: speaking English in front of old people in our society.**

This statement aims to investigate the effect of norms and etiquette in our community on speaking English. The higher number of students adopted the view which considers speaking English in front of people can be understood as a kind of disrespect in our society. 33.33% represents the students who are strongly agreeing and 23.33% represents those said they agree. 23.33 % of them have no comments by choosing the option neutral. Whereas, only 16.66 % refused this view by saying that they disagree and with more degree of rejection, 3.34 % of students are strongly disagreeing.

**Statement 09: Algerian people regard English as a language of non Muslims**

Options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	2	6.66
Agree	4	13.33
Neutral	4	13.33
Disagree	16	53.34
Strongly disagree	4	13.33

**Table 3.29: English language from religious perspective.**

According to the results, the majority of students preferred to separate speaking English from the religious perspective. The highest number (53.34 %) disagreed to look at English as a language of non Muslims, in addition to 13.33% who indicated their strongly refusing. However, 13.33% of participants chose to be neutral.

**Statement 10: Lack of business with Britain and USA influences on the limitation of using English in our country.**

Options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	4	13.33
Agree	13	43.33
Neutral	6	20
Disagree	5	16.66
Strongly disagree	2	6.66

**Table 3.30: the students' views about the role of business with Britain and**

**USA on the limitation of using English in our country.**

The table above indicates that most of the participants accepted to consider a lack of business with Britain and USA as an influential factor in the limitation of speaking English in our country. 43.33% of them said that they agree, while 13.33% strongly agree. In another side, 20% of students did not state their opinions about this subject, 16.66 % disagreed and 6.6% strongly disagreed.

**Statement 11: The lack of tourism movement in Algeria has an impact on the opportunities to practice English.**

Options	Number of students	%
Strongly agree	12	40
Agree	11	36.66
Neutral	2	6.66
Disagree	1	3.34
Strongly disagree	4	13.33

**Table3.31: the impact of tourism movement in Algeria in practice English.**

By this statement, we intended to know in what extent EFL students believe that the lack of tourist, especially English native speakers, eliminates the opportunities to practice English in Algeria. According to the responses, the higher numbers of students are with the impact of the tourism on speaking English. 40% of students stated they strongly agreed, and 36.66% said that they agree. However, 13.33% strongly refused the relation between the tourism movements and speaking English, while 3.34% did not express their attitudes.

### **3.5 Discussion**

With regard to our participants' responses have been obtained from the students' questionnaire, many conclusions can be noticed concerning the situation of speaking English by EFL students in Algeria. These conclusions were shaped in three significant points, the EFL students surrounded educational and socioeconomic background, and the major cultural factors that hinder their speaking performance.

Firstly, the findings reveal that most of EFL students belong to families where the parents did not achieve a high educational level. The majority of them did not exceed the

level of middle school where English language is first taught. This contributed to eliminate the role of parents in guiding and motivating the students to develop their competencies in hand, and affected in providing them with the appropriate environment to present their speaking abilities. Furthermore, even if there are high educated members in EFL students, but they generally speak French as a foreign language more than English (see Q5). In another point, results showed that a high number of EFL students come from a low or middle socioeconomic background. This means that they would not be provided with helpful tools and materials to enhance their oral performance. They are also not able to visit places where they can contact with native speakers.

Secondly, from our investigation, we result also that EFL students do their efforts in order to improve their performance. Although most of the students classified themselves at an average level of English proficiency, but they perform certain activities aiming to develop themselves. Many students try to speak English at home, even if they are sure that no one can understand them (see Q6). In addition to that, most of them are good at big extant in performing different tasks such as talking about their daily life activities in English and listening to English TV programs and understand them (see task 02+03). Moreover, nearly all of students prefer to set up their personal devices with English language for discovering and learning new terms and expressions plus to create a milieu of English like the native one (see Q 11). Then, there are a number of students have succeeded to contact with English native speaker, although it is very difficult to get this opportunity in our region.

Finally, through investigating opinions and views of English Master one students at Biskra University, we concluded that there number of factors stand as obstacles to the use of English among our society. The domination of French as a foreign language in our country is the overpowering factor that hampers the spread of English language. Most of

the educated members in EFL students' families speak French because it has a preference through programming it at primary school. This political decision influenced on the situation of English in Algeria. In the same context, the majority of EFL students' interest in English only at the middle school stage when it is programmed at curriculum (see Q10). This means than if English was programmed as the second language instead of French many people would speak it in Algeria (see St 01). The economic factor is also considered that has a great influence on the participation of English. Highest number of students agreed about the role of lack of business with Britain and USA helped in limiting the chances of using English in our country. At another point, since Algeria does not attract the great number of tourist, EFL students do not find enough opportunities to meet foreigners and communicate with them. In least point, even speaking English collides with our etiquette, but there is a strong refuse about the Algerian negative attitude toward this language. According to students, people do not relate speaking English to USA policy and do not consider it as a kind of assimilation (see St 04+06).

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we succeeded to collect the needed and suitable information for our study through conducting a student's questionnaire. The answers were very clear and came in big extant to confirm our hypotheses. The analysis showed that the majority of students belong to a low socioeconomic status where their parents did not achieve a high level of education. Moreover, according to responses most of the students have an average level of English speaking proficiency, but they possess the determination to improve it by trying to perform different tasks and activities. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that students confirm the strong effect of colonial, political and economic factors on their speaking of English outside classroom in Algeria, and at the same they deny the effect of religious factor and the negative attitude toward English.

## **Recommendations**

Since it is very difficult to change the position of English language in Algeria due to political and cultural aspects, EFL students are recommended to depend on themselves. They are required to perform different activities in order to create more opportunities to speak English outside the classroom at the aim of improving their speaking proficiency.

1. They should try to speak only in English when they meet.
2. They are also advised to be self-confident and do not focus on their mistakes or the comments of surrounded people.
3. They should use social media network (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram...) in order to contact with native speakers and benefit from their pronunciation (academic language is required).
4. They should try to talk in English in front of a mirror. Even it seems very bizarre, but it helps with the time to possess speaking spontaneity.
5. They are recommended to translate the speech or conversation of their closest friends into English for fun.
6. They are advised sometimes to record their oral performance in order to check the most repeated pronunciation mistakes and try to fix them.

## **General conclusion**

During this study, we have attempted to shed the light on one of the most important subject in the process of learning a foreign language, which is the relation between the student environment and his oral performance in the target language. In our case of study, we have tried to discuss the situation of speaking English in Algeria and its reflection in EFL students' oral proficiency. Our main objective of this research is to highlight the most effective factors in the process of speaking English among the culture of EFL students.

In the theoretical part, we have suggested two related variables; speaking skill, which is regarded as an essential aspect in the process of learning a foreign language, and the cultural factors that effect on speaking English as a foreign language. In the field of investigation, we administrated questionnaires to students of Master one at English department of Biskra University. The questionnaire contains a number of questions about the students' social background, their oral proficiency level in English and their overviews concerning the position of speaking English in Algeria.

The analysis of the obtained data showed that we succeed in a big extent to confirm our hypotheses. We resulted that the EFL students' willingness collides with Algerians cultural background. They rarely find someone speaks or understands English out of their specialization which contributes to provoke their achievement in oral performance. According to EFL students, the domination of French language drives them to give up speaking English; French was imposed to Algerians during colonial period. Therefore, it is the only understandable foreign language to most of them. In addition to that, although English is the international language, but French takes the advantage in our educational curriculum. In this context, students agreed that if English was offered at earlier stage instead of French, many would choose to speak it. Furthermore, the situation of tourism reflects on the opportunities that are offered to EFL students to have a real communication

with native speakers. From the economic perspective, it is rare to find foreign companies or factories where the staffs speak English. Nevertheless, the findings did not confirm a part of our hypotheses, which is concerned with the negative attitude toward English from the religious perspective, and due to USA policy in Middle East.

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## Appendix

### Students' questionnaire

This questionnaire which is an attempt to gather information needed for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. We direct this questionnaire to investigate about **The Impact of Algerian Culture on Speaking English outside the Classroom**. We would be so grateful if you could sincerely answer the following questions, so please, give us precise answers as you can. Be sure that the answers you provide will certainly remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

Please, put a tick “√” in the appropriate box, give a full answer whenever necessary, and justify your answer wherever it is needed.

### Section One: Background Information

1. Why did you choose to study English? (You may tick more than one option).

- In order to communicate.
- To get a good job in the future.
- Because it is a universal language.
- Other purposes? Please state them.

.....  
.....

2. What is your father's educational background?

- |         |                          |            |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Primary | <input type="checkbox"/> | Secondary  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Middle  | <input type="checkbox"/> | University | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None    | <input type="checkbox"/> |            |                          |

3. What is your mother's educational background?

Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middle	<input type="checkbox"/>	University	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>		

4. What is your father's occupation?

Handicrafts man	<input type="checkbox"/>	Headmaster or engineer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Businessman	<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobless	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Other occupation? Please state it

.....

.....

5. Is there in your family who speaks a foreign language?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

If yes, which language?

English	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other language (s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
French	<input type="checkbox"/>		

6. Did you speak English at home?

Yes

No

If no, why?

.....

.....

.....

7. Did you get any opportunity to speak with English native speakers?

Yes

No

If yes, how often?

Always

Sometimes

Rarely

8. In which stage you felt that English interested you (speak English):

Primary

Middle

Secondary

9. In which language you set up your personal devices (cell phone or computer):

English

French

Arabic

Why?

.....

.....

**Section two: Students proficiency**

10. How do you find learning English?

Very difficult

Difficult

Easy

Very easy

11. Do you speak English when discuss with your friends in public.

Yes

No

If no, why?

.....

.....

.....

12. How do you rate your English Proficiency?

Very poor

Poor

Average

very well

13. Indicate how well you can perform the following tasks:

Statements	Perfectly	Well	Fairly	Not Very Well	Not at all
I can understand movies in English without subtitles					
I can listen to English TV programs and understand them					
I can talk about my daily life activities in English					
I can express my own opinions in English in front of people					
I can understand native speaker's speech without frequent use of a dictionary					
I can use English language in different situations without hesitation					

### Section Three: effecting factors

14. Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is important for the Algerian to learn English					
If English was programmed as the second language in Algeria, people would speak it more than French.					
The domination of French as foreign languages due to French colonization.					
The geographical distance between Algeria and, Britain or USA Influences on the spread of English.					
Our local community thinks that we will lose our identity when we speak English.					
People hate English due to USA policy in Middle East					
Studying English does not secure the future in our society.					
Speaking English in front of old people is considered as a kind of disrespect in your society.					
Algerian people regard English as a language of non-Muslims.					
Lack of business with Britain or USA influences on the limitation of using English in our country.					
The lack of tourism movement in Algeria has an impact on the opportunities to practice English.					

## ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة ذات الطابع الوصفي التحليلي للبحث في مدى تأثير البيئة الحضارية في الجزائر على فرص طلبة شعبة الانجليزية في تحدث هذه اللغة خصوصا خارج المؤسسة التعليمية لكون تحدث أي لغة هو المعيار الأساسي في إتقانها، و ذلك من خلال التطرق الى أبرز العوامل المؤثرة في هذا الجانب. من هنا وضعنا الفرضيتين ألتاليتين الأولى تقول أن البيئة الجزائرية يمكن أن يكون لها تأثير سلبي في قابلية التكلم بالانجليزية خارج إطار القسم، أما الفرضية الثانية فتصب في أن موقف المجتمع المحلي إضافة لكل من العامل الاستعماري، السياسي وكذلك الديني قد لا تساعد في توفير فرص للطلاب لاستعمال الانجليزية. للتحقق من مدى صحة كلتا هاتين الفرضيتين ارتأينا أن نوجّه استبيان خاص بالطلبة الى طلاب السنة أولى ماستر، شعبة الإنجليزية في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة بغية تحصيل المعلومات المناسبة لدراستنا هذه. بعد تحليل المعطيات انتهينا الى أن الجزائر لا تتوفر على الظروف المناسبة التي تخدم مسار طالب شعبة الانجليزية في تحسين قدراته الكلامية وهذا ينعكس من خلال الحاجز الذي جاء نتيجة كل من العامل الاستعماري و الاقتصادي وكذا العمال السياسي.