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**The Learners' Educational and Cultural
Background Effect on Their
Proficiency in Learning English
The Case of First Year English Students at Biskra
University**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my dear parents,
To the memory of my brother, Mohammed, who did not live to see this
research accomplished.

To my dear children: Imededdine, Khaled and Imene

To all my family, and friends.

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Abstract

The present research investigates the factors behind the intercultural competence deficit among EFL learners at Biskra University through their inability to analyze and evaluate cultural values, noted in their oral and written performances and their negative attitude towards the English communities culture; namely when the target language cultural concepts prove to be excessively different from their own. Despite learners' high motivation to learn English, they are unable to analyze and judge the target language cultural differences which may create a distance between the foreign language learning objectives and the efforts they make to acquire it. It is hypothesized in this study that EFL intercultural incompetence is the consequence of either, learners' weak linguistic proficiency, their de-motivation, or because of the cultural content type presented in middle and high school textbooks which does not promote their intercultural competence. Three research tools were used to collect data: a questionnaire was administered to First year students at the English department, University of Biskra, to probe their overall motivation and depict any cultural obstacles that may create a resistance to learn that foreign language, a proficiency test to find out the areas where learners' deficiencies lie, and an analysis of English textbooks designed for middle and high school levels to check the approach used in presenting the English speaking communities culture in the former phases of education; the analysis investigates the efficiency of developing learners' intercultural competence and the presence of analysis/critical thinking training tasks in former educational phases. The qualitative analysis shows that the EFL learners are highly motivated to learn English and that there are two sources of learning flaws; on the one hand, middle and high school textbooks do not provide enough opportunities to discuss or explain the cultural concepts and, on the other hand, they present the target language culture through an interpretive perspective that enriches the learners' view of culture but, the activity type and the absence of speculative texts do not develop pupils' critical skills making them unable to interpret and relate the target language cultural concepts with their own culture and automatically entailing a handicap in raising and evaluating cultural issues properly.

List of Abbreviations

AC: Abstract Conceptualization.

AE: Active experimentation.

CPH: Critical period hypothesis

EFL: English as a foreign language.

ICC: Intercultural competence

ID : Individual differences.

L2: Second language.

LLS: Language teaching strategies.

LTM: Long term memory

MLAT: Modern language aptitude test.

PLAB: Pimslerur language aptitude battery

RO: Reflective observation.

SCT: Socio-cultural theory

SLA: Second language acquisition.

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General Introduction

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the problem

The lack of intercultural competence is one of the main obstacles that foreign language learners encounter in EFL classes; it is often identified as the outcome of radical differences presence between the learner's culture and the target language culture; differences that may cause learners' disappointment. In the absence of intercultural competence, and in an effort to maintain their psychological comfort, foreign language learners keep some distance and gradually develop a negative attitude that can influence their learning motivation as well as efforts.

The Algerian learners of English have technically been exposed to the English basic knowledge and its cultural concepts since the age of 12. This presumes that they have been familiar with many peculiarities of the English speaking communities in terms of behavior and values in a formal context but not in a way that may disappoint the learner in addition to the informal source of information available through the different media.

EFL students enter university where they are introduced to the target language cultural differences in an explicit way through subjects like literature where some notions may very often be seen as shocking. At this level, teachers who are aware of how

a learner is perceiving these notions, and is affected by stereotypes, try to turn them into discussable issues, however, this may not always be the case.

The ability to analyze and develop a judgement is extremely important in the academic contexts in general and particularly in foreign languages streams. Analyzing what we learn is a better understanding of what we acquire as information; it prevents learners from rushing to conclusions and urge them to search the positive and negative aspects of every cultural issue .

2. Background of the study

Having taught English and American literature for 08 successive years, I noticed that students of English develop a negative attitude towards the English and American cultural values whenever met in the taught subject and fail to apply analytic strategies when required.

On many teaching occasions, the majority of students develop a negative attitude observed via avoiding to ask questions, to answer my own questions, comment on the writing once a small detail about the writer' biography or the general idea of the text is mentioned; this attitude is frequent when the issue constitutes a notion seen by our culture as deviant or unacceptable. Brilliant students behave differently; they avoid criticizing the behavior that they consider as deviant by searching arguments that do not oblige them to mention what they really think or how the mentioned detail is seen through their culture; in other terms, the good students try to find a compromise between their own culture and the FL culture to avoid cultural conflicts. However, the negative

attitude of less proficient students had gradually turned into missing literature sessions and lack of willingness to read within good students who have the aptitude to read and appreciate literature. Literature represents considerable cultural and linguistic benefits for foreign language learners; it introduces the learner into a profound range of vocabulary, appeals to his imagination, develops his cultural awareness and encourages his critical thinking.

The real problem of EFL learners in Algeria lies in their former phases of education which do not help them develop analytical and critical abilities, to search explanations about the foreign culture in formal contexts and develop value judgements. Hence, they do not make distinction between the objectives of learning a foreign language and considering its cultural peculiarities. These learners had been taught English starting from the age of 12 and since then had accumulated considerable knowledge about the foreign culture but since the textbooks in former education did not contain cultural concepts that might rise pupils speculation or disappointment, (Lakhal Ayat, 2008) they were not given the opportunity to comment, criticize or evaluate them referring to their culture. These students lack the intercultural competence that enables them to consider cultural concepts' positive and negative facets, develop their attitude after analysis and be able to discuss openly the cultural differences. These are the reasons that urged us to undertake this research.

3. Aim of the study

Given the above mentioned problem and rationale, this study aims to investigate English learners' lack of intercultural competence; namely two of the ICC skills which

are: the learners' attitude toward the target language culture and second, their inability to interpret, relate and analyze the target language cultural concepts and values, and to check whether or not learners' educational background and cultural differences constitute part of learners' intercultural incompetence causes. Following this aim, the study will attempt to answer some research questions:

1. Are learners originally motivated to learn the foreign language?
2. Do learners have a deficiency in one of the language skills?
3. Does high and middle school textbooks' cultural content develop pupils' intercultural competence?
4. Do middle and high school textbooks provide tasks that train pupils to critical thinking which gives them the necessary tools for free objective judgement on the target language culture?

4. Hypotheses

In this research, it is hypothesized that the intercultural incompetence of university English students is the outcome of the following factors:

- 1-First year English students have a negative attitude towards the English learning and the subjects taught in this stream.
- 2- The approach used in portraying the target language culture in the English textbooks does not develop learners' intercultural competence in terms of assisting the learner to critically form his attitude towards the target language and its speaking communities.
- 3- First year students do not have the necessary linguistic knowledge that enables them to understand the concepts and thoughts that literary texts express, or have a deficiency in the foreign language skills.

5. Operational Definition

Intercultural Competence is interchangeably used with Cultural Awareness and many other terms as far as foreign language learning is concerned; it is explained by Cortazzi and Jin, (2002:01) as:

Moving from descriptive to interpretive and critical perspectives, this involves familiarity with language functions, close attention to contextual variation and social diversity, the need to suspend judgement and step outside our own frameworks of interpretation, the search for alternative explanations for what surprises, puzzles or irritates us when we interact with people from culturally diverse communities.

The quotation presents the intercultural competence as a complex construct that encompasses different skills among which, the attitude, the linguistic competence, the critical reflection and the cultural awareness.

6. Methodology

In the present research, three research instruments are used:

First: A questionnaire is administered to obtain qualitative and quantitative data about students' motivation to learn English at university, the kind of motivation they have and the attitude they hold towards the target language culture: possibility of assimilation.

Second: a proficiency test of the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) is administered to measure the English first year students' aptitude to learn English at university according to an international aptitude test, and to distinguish the areas where deficiency is noteworthy.

Third: an analysis of four textbooks designed for middle and high school pupils to explore the type of cultural content implemented in the English textbooks at these levels

and its efficiency in learners' intercultural competence promotion on one hand, and on the other, to check the presence of tasks encouraging pupils to interpret and analyze the foreign concepts. The exploration takes into account the components of Intercultural competence that the textbook cultural content develops.

7. Analyzed Textbooks

According to the aims of the research, we analyzed two English coursebooks in each level; second and third year middle school and second and third year high school English coursebooks. This choice is based on the following criteria:

- The number of textbooks is 4/7 which constitutes more than 50% of the taught program at these levels.
- We avoided first year middle school textbooks because the sample population entered middle school in 2002 and was taught with the previous textbooks until 2004.

8. Content of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of six chapters. Chapter one is devoted to the related literature on Individual Differences in foreign language learning to lay out different views of the areas where FL/SL learners may differ. Those are individual criteria like aptitude to learn the target language, motivation, age, personal convictions, gender, learning styles and cognitive strategies which are all related either directly or indirectly to the FL/SL learning process.

Chapter two sheds light on the relationship between the learner's culture and the cognitive ability to learn a foreign/ second language. The cross-cultural psychology theories provide significant contribution to the understanding of the various strategies a learner may embrace to avoid cultural conflict situations and the importance that learners culture constitutes in the field of linguistic anthropology.

Chapter three highlights the main elements that form the university students educational background starting with the meaning of prior knowledge and its influence on later information treatment. The chapter presents as well an overview of the arabisation of the educational system since the 1960's and its negative implications through lessening the importance of foreign languages in general in addition to the last educational reforms launched after 2001. It also focuses on the local textbook's cultural content models based either on the source culture, the target language culture or on universal cultures. It also highlights the different types of culture information teaching approaches. Finally, the chapter presents an overview of the evaluation models of the textbook cultural content.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the research design and data analysis . It unfolds the research aims and presents the main steps and instruments used in the investigation in addition to the analysis procedures. It also provides the results of the questionnaire adressed to the population sample, as well as the language proficiency test findings with their interpretation.

Chapter five presents the evaluation of middle and high school English textbooks using the Cortazzi and Jin model (1999) where we check the type of cultural content of the program taught and its efficiency in promoting learners' intercultural competence along with checking the presence of tasks that can develop pupils' critical thinking i.e: analysis and interpretation abilities.

In Chapter six, the data results obtained from the three instruments in this study are recapitulated and related in an attempt to answer the research questions and reconsider the factors that increase the intercultural competence among the sample population. Finally, we present the pedagogical implications of this investigation with the possible initiatives to enhance learners' intercultural competence in English classrooms and draw some limitations of the study and some future research perspectives.

Chapter One

Individual Differences in Foreign Language Learning

Introduction

In this chapter, we will highlight the learners' differences as far as foreign language learning is concerned taking into consideration the fact that researchers in this field of study have advanced different classifications depending on their domain of research. So the main objective here, is to cover all the differences and most importantly those in relation to two variables : the learner's background that is closely related to his language aptitude and the learner's cultural background which is linked to his motivation towards learning a foreign language. More space is dedicated to these areas of difference : Language Aptitude and motivation. Through considering learners' individual differences in this study we project to give a complete portrayal of the foreign language learner in terms of the possible factors that might affect the learning process; the different views on what differs a learner from another and how each factor/characteristic is related to the learning process along with focusing on locating and explaining the study variables, among them, Aptitude and motivation.

1. Areas of Individual Differences

Individual differences in learning appeared during the Greco-Roman times but did not become really significant in the field of education until the early twentieth century. The issue, being complicated and controversial was and still is subject to different studies in various disciplines starting with psychology and cognition to cultural studies and many other fields. For psychologists, investigations' first objective had always been to understand the human mind's general principles and the second is to determine its uniqueness, the latter was established as a separate discipline known as differential psychology or Individual Differences. As far as learning is concerned, the link between this process and human traits and characteristics as multiple as they are on one hand, and to determine that human characteristics are influencing the learning process on the other, constitute fertile issues for investigation not only in psychology but in many disciplines.

Snow, (1979: 23-26) wrote that one of the oldest facts about human learning in educational settings is that individuals differ, profoundly and multiply in how they learn. Researchers' conviction that while learning a foreign language, learners put at work their individual, psychological, social , cognitive and cultural abilities took some time to be adequately formed as we can find it in recent investigations, a conviction that resulted of the intervention of various disciplines into the field of education as explained by Atkinson (2002:526) in the following statement: "our obsession with the decontextualized,

autonomous learner has prevented us from conceptualizing SLA as a situated, integrated sociocognitive process”

Dornyei, (2005:5) states that nobody would question factors such as language aptitude, motivation, or learning styles as being important contributors to success in mastering a foreign language. He added that the first scholar who investigated individual differences scientifically and is credited as the father of ID research is Francis Galton (1822-1911). Furthermore, Galton is credited for elaborating empirical and methodological research and quantitative techniques for data analysis; for this, he is considered as a pioneer in quantitative psychology as a whole.

The influence of attitude and motivation in second language learning was initially investigated by Gardner and Lambert (1959 in Dornyei 2005: 9), these scholars’ research highlighted the link between variables which determine, on one hand, the learners second language proficiency, and on the other, his rate of success in SL learning. Gardner and Lambert are, hence, credited for being pioneers in the elaboration of the Socio Psychological Theory. According to them, second language learners’ psychological readability to embrace the target language community cultural aspects and peculiarities affects their rate of success. (Ibid)

Studies by Oller (1977), Strong (1984) and Feenstra (1968) have all assumed that once attention is given to measuring, the impact of socio-psychological variables on the acquisition of second/foreign language, we can be led to a better understanding of the

facilitating events that take place in our students' minds and emotions. Gardner's study on the measurement of the achievement of French speaking high school students indicated that an integrative motive was of great importance for becoming bilingual. (Alansari and Lori, 1999: 24)

In the late eighties more focus was given to the effect that learners differences can have on the learning process. They were classified under four main areas: language aptitude, learning style, motivation, and learner strategies, considering that there are other less researched areas such as personality.

In the Encyclopedia of Psychology, sponsored by the American Psychological Association, De Raad (2000:41) offered a broad specification, with possible characteristics including intelligence, attitudes, values, ideologies, interests, emotions, capacities, skills, socioeconomic status, gender and height while Revelle (2000:249) advanced in the same encyclopedia that research on individual differences ranges from: "Analyses of genetic codes to the study of gender, social, ethnic, and cultural differences and includes research on cognitive abilities, interpersonal styles, and emotional reactivity"

Birch and Hayward, (1994:08) state that individual differences in psychology have been equated with personality and intelligence but usually the term is interpreted more broadly. The International Society for the Study of Individual Differences lists : temperament, intelligence, attitudes, and abilities as the main focus areas, whereas in his recent overview of the field, Cooper (2002: 262) presented four main branches of IDs;

abilities, personality, mood, and motivation. In the same context, the journal of Individual Differences Research involves a particularly broad range, covering all areas of:

personality, interests and values, spirituality, affective disposition, coping style, relationship style, self and identity, the individual in groups and interpersonal contexts, attitudes and perceptions, cognitive functioning, health and lifestyle, assessment, and individual differences related physiological, organizational, and education topics.

The above mentioned definitions give different names to the individual differences but as a whole agree on concepts such as : Aptitude, motivation, learning styles and strategies and personal traits of the learner. Taking into consideration these various classifications, we opted to divide the learners individual differences into four main areas and then divide them into subareas so that we can drop none of the above mentioned learners differences or at least cover the maximum of these characteristics.

1.1 Language Aptitude

Language learning aptitude has been viewed as the first observable area of difference and we could notice this fact with the first Aptitude Test that dates back to 1967 authored by Carroll and Sapon, as we will see below.

Robinson (2002:128) advanced that second language learning aptitude is characterized as “strengths that individual learners have -relative to their population- in the cognitive abilities information processing draws during L2 learning and performance in various contexts and at different stages’. This definition lays out various dimensions of aptitude : the cognitive ability, information treatment and performance.

Carroll (1981: 84-91) explains the concept of language aptitude with several statements. He referred to aptitude by “capability” and defines it as: “Capability is presumed to depend on some combination of more or less enduring characteristics of the individual”, Thus, aptitude as conceived here, is a set of enduring or fixed individual features.

In addition to Carroll’s claim that language aptitude is “relatively fixed” and “relatively hard to modify”, Carroll (ibid) suggests that foreign language aptitude is not synonymous with ‘intelligence,’ for foreign language aptitude measures do not share the same patterns of correlations with foreign language achievement as intelligence and academic ability measures. In addition, Carroll, (1968) emphasizes that People differ widely in their capacity to learn foreign languages in terms of rapidity and ease. In fact, Carroll views to aptitude as a cognitive ability that individuals possess far from the learning process or context; his focus on the enduring quality of aptitude enforces this view; aptitude is a learner generated individual trait.

Yochihiro, (1988: 13) defines, referring to Carroll’s (1968) definition, language aptitude as an ‘unchangeable characteristic of the individual; it is not easy to modify by learning which means that it is a stable trait of the human beings and so did Gardner and Lambert (1972: 231) in defining the term Aptitude:

Language aptitude is a term that has been used to identify those ability characteristics that influence how well individuals can learn a second language...

Initially, research was concerned with the role that intelligence played in second language learning, but in the early 1920's researchers became dissatisfied with the prediction attainable with measures of intelligence, and instead focussed their attention on special prognosis tests. This first view about aptitude's main feature "being fixed" had been criticized recently by Harley and Hart (1997:329) who state that aptitude can change with age as denoted in the following quotation:

There are several findings in this study that provide some support for the argument that language analytical ability is more closely associated with second language outcomes when intensive exposure to the language is first experienced in adolescence. This relationship appears to hold though not as strongly, even when exposure takes place in an environment outside the second language classroom.

As the quotation denotes, the researchers found that the age factor can influence the second language aptitude in a special context; when the learner at the adolescence age is continuously exposed to the second language even in informal contexts which implies that aptitude can change with more exposure to the foreign language. Aptitude can be proportional to language formal and informal exposure.

1.1.1 Components of Language Aptitude

Language aptitude was divided into distinct components by some scholars as we will see below.

1.1.1.1 Carroll's Components

On the basis of extensive analyses, Carroll, (1981) proposed that foreign language aptitude consisted of four components:

- a- Phonemic Coding Ability : the capacity to code sounds so that they can be retained for more than a few seconds.
- b- Grammatical Sensitivity : the capacity to identify the functions that words fulfil in sentences.
- c- Inductive Language Learning Ability: the capacity to take a corpus of material in a target language and make extrapolations from that material.
- d- Associative memory : a capacity to form links between native and foreign language. (Carroll, 1981: 105)

1.1.1.2 Pimsleur Components

Pimsleur (1966) also researched the subject of language aptitude, which led to the development of the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery. Pimleur's research resulted in identifying two main factors of language aptitude in addition to motivation and study habits. He advanced two components of language aptitude :

- a-Verbal Ability : ability to handle the mechanics of learning a foreign language
- b- Auditory Ability : ability to hear, recognize and reproduce sounds in a foreign language.

We have to note here that Pimsleur was particularly interested in students who failed foreign language courses while doing well in other subjects. He noted that the majority of such students were weak in auditory ability.

1.1.1.3 Robinson's Aptitude Complex Hypothesis

Robinson (2001:368-9), searched the possible relationship between the learning process in various contexts and individual differences in cognitive abilities. His

work was not enhanced specifically for second language learning but rather to explain the learning process in general. Nonetheless, his investigations can be useful, according to him, in the explanation of :

1. Differences in language learning success in a given teaching context.
2. Differences between implicit, incidental and explicit learning processes.
3. Age differences in language learning abilities.

Robinson's (2002: 114-5) framework is based on the idea that the "Aptitude Complexes" or simply, the cognitive abilities are related to the process of learning under specific learning situations that he refers to by "the psychological treatment conditions". For Robinson, explaining SLA needs mainly:

1. A Transition Theory: referring to the acquisition processes related to cognitive abilities and the way knowledge is moved from point A to point B.
2. A Property Theory: through which the existing knowledge in A and B is defined.

1.1.1.4 Language Aptitude Tests

Testing EFL learners aptitude constitutes an elementary part of our investigation, through citing the below studies mentioned below, we projected to gather data on the nature, types as well as validity of foreign language testing. Lutz (1967:31), claims that early efforts to develop aptitude tests for foreign languages resulted generally to tests of two sorts :

a-Tests of ability and achievement in the English language.

b-Work sample tests involving short lessons or problems in the language to be studied.

The main objective of these tests was to measure learners intellectual abilities according to the teaching method during the 1920's and the 1930's which aimed basically at teaching the students to read or to translate a foreign language. These tests were criticized for many reasons :

- 1- They correlated more with learners general intelligence than with their ability to learn a foreign language.
- 2- They involved dependency on some prior learning like the foreign language grammatical rules.
- 3- They did not match the change that the foreign languages teaching was launching which is the move from focusing on the written language to the oral-aural abilities. (Lutz: ibid)

Carroll and Sapon (1959:14) defined the value of a given test score as follows:

Knowing the individual's level of ability, we may infer the level of effort and motivation he must expend to learn successfully. A student with a somewhat low aptitude score will need to work harder in an academic language course than a student with a high aptitude test score. If the score is very low, the student may not succeed in any event.

Thus, the aptitude test is useful not only to measure foreign language learners abilities and readiness to acquire the foreign language but also to determine the approach and efforts needed to teach them this language.

1.1.2.1 Modern Languages Aptitude Test (MLAT)

One of the earliest language aptitude tests was elaborated by Carroll and Sapon between 1953-1958 for a major purpose, being to foresee the rate of achievement success

in the second language. (Dornyei, 2005:34). Carroll and Sapon's investigations gave birth to several kinds of tests to depict the factors they judged necessary to keep and omit the unnecessary ones. The MLAT is a written test battery that contains five parts. Dornyei (2005:37).

1. Part One: Numbers: Here, the candidates are asked to learn numbers from (1-4, 10-40, 100-400) in a new language, then, to translate up to 15 numbers from 1-400 to the English language.

2. Part Two: here, the candidates are introduced to 30 meaningless short words to listen to. They are provided with four alternatives of each word's written form at the same time, hence they have to choose the right spelling of each word among the 30 words they heard.

3. Part Three: This part relies mainly on the candidate's vocabulary laggage; the test provides five optional words to choose from, the nearest synonym to each of the 50 words that the test presents.

4. Part Four: In order to measure the candidates grammatical mastery, the test in this part uses a key sentence where a word or a phrase is underlined. This sentence is followed by other sentences, where other words or phrases are underlined too being alternatives to the word/phrase contained in the key sentence. The candidate is then required to choose among the alternatives, the one that has the same function as the one in the key sentence.

5. Part Five: In this test students are expected to learn through listening 24 pairs of words in their local language and the target language.

1.1.2.2 Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB)

Another written test constructed by Pimsleur, administered in 60 minutes and is divided into six parts.

1. Part one: the candidate is asked to relate his last obtained marks in the following subject: English, history, mathematics and science. (Dornyei, 2005:38)
2. Part Two: the student is asked here, to indicate the extent to which he is interested in learning the foreign language on a five point scale.
3. Part three: this is a task of multiple choice to find out synonyms for 24 words that the test presents. For each word the student is introduced to five alternatives.
4. Part Four: is a task where the candidates are given 15 English phrases to be translated into a fictitious language. Each of these phrases is followed by optional translations. The purpose of this activity for the candidates is to learn how to build up new words.
5. Part Five: Here, the subjects learn words through listening to a tape. Pimsleur (1966:14)

These two aptitude constructs contain two common features:

1. Pimsleur's verbal intelligence is similar to grammatical sensitivity.
2. Auditory ability is similar to the phonetic coding ability .

The difference in the nature of the two batteries is to be noted, the Pimsleur test evaluates basically what is reported by the learner about his grades, degree of interest while the MLAT is rather measures his proficiency through language exercises.

1.1.2.3 Aptitude Tests Administration and Validity

The MLAT, being elaborated to measure individuals' readiness to learn a foreign language on the ground that the aptitude to learn does not change, has a validity up to five years. (Dornyei, 2005:43)

1.1.2.4 Uses of Language Aptitude Tests

The language aptitude test can be useful mostly in selection procedures, defining learners needs, research in cognitive abilities, program evaluation and to fit the designed curricular to the learners level of proficiency.

1.2 Foreign Language Learning Motivation

Motivation constitutes another variable in the present study, we noted that the literature is replete with the concept definitions, types and views about the importance attributed to motivation in the field of foreign language learning.

1.2.1 Concept Development

When Lambert and Gardner (1956) began their research, it was generally agreed that learning another language involved intelligence and verbal ability. Concepts like attitudes, motivation and anxiety were not considered to be important at all. Dornyei, (1998:117). According to Weiner, (1990: 64) the concept of Motivation was searched and explained on the basis of how behavior was understood; Weiner (1990) refers to the concept as ‘what moved a resting organism into a state of activity’, and movement is justified by four main causes: instinct, drive, need and stimulus.

The human motivation research as an extension of the findings on animals behavior investigation, could not be fruitful because of the complexity of human behavior compared to animals’ behavior on one hand, and on the other, the new perspectives of cognitive revolution that dispatched motivation studies from the mechanical approaches of behavior studies. In the cognitive developmental theory laid down by Piaget (in Oxford and Shearin, 1994:23), ‘motivation is perceived as ‘a built-in

unconscious striving towards more complex and differentiated development of the individual's mental structures' and with the development of cognitive approaches, the concept acquired more implication to the domain of educational psychology (Weiner 1990). More focus is then put on students' learning choices instead of the manner or the time needed to fulfill the learning process.

L2 motivation research has been a fertile subject within L2 studies with several books and hundreds of articles published on the topic since the 1960s. To provide a concise overview of the field, it is useful to divide its development into three phases:

(a) The social psychological period (1959–1990) characterized by the work of Gardner and his students and associates in Canada.

(b) The cognitive-situated period (during the 1990's) characterized by work drawing on cognitive theories in educational psychology.

(c) The process-oriented period characterized by an interest in motivational change, initiated by the work of Dornyei, Ushioda, and their colleagues in Europe.

Although motivation is widely recognized, it has a broad meaning and different definitions. According to Gardner, motivation is a construct composed of three characteristics:

1. The attitudes towards learning a language.
2. The desire to learn the language.
3. Motivational intensity.

In other terms, a highly motivated individual will want to learn the language, enjoy learning the language, and strive to learn the language.

According to Gardner, (1985) motivation can be divided into integrative and instrumental. The first refers to the learner's desire that acts between communicating and integrating with the target language speaking community, while the second is for operational reasons like ensuring a profession. Gardner (1985, in Dornyei 1994: 419). For Keblawi (2006:72), though it is a well established belief among most researchers that motivation is essential in students' learning, the concept of motivation is complex because it constitutes a multidisciplinary subject where educational, social, and cognitive psychology, as well as general educational and social theories and sociolinguistic theories have all a role for understanding language learning motivation in a formal school context. In addition to the above mentioned disciplines, according to Dorniey (2001), the concept of motivation involves neurobiological and physiological explanations.

This leads us to consider that the complexity of the concept of motivation resides in its attempts to explain individuals' actions and behaviour which cannot be accounted for by one single approach or according to a specific discipline. In this study, we are mostly concerned with foreign language learners' motivation and the factors that can affect it either positively or negatively among which we will highlight the effect of FL learners' culture.

1.2.2 Motivation defined

The word motivation comes from the Latin word 'movere' which means 'to move'. According to the Dictionary of Education, 'Motivation' is broadly considered as a process of arousing, sustaining and regulating activity. It is an integral factor that arouses, directs

and integrates a person's behaviour. Despite the unchallenged position of motivation in learning foreign/second languages, there is, in fact, no agreement on the exact definition of motivation (Oxford and Shearin, 1994). Dornyei, (1998:117) observes that:

Although 'motivation' is a term frequently used in both educational and research contexts, it is rather surprising how little agreement there is in the literature with regard to the exact meaning of the concept.

Following this observation, we can notice that Gardner, for example, defined motivation as a 'combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language' and "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity". (Gardner, 2005:10). Motivation is also defined as the impetus to create and sustain intentions and goal-seeking acts (Ames and Ames, 1989). It is important because it determines the extent of the learner's active involvement and attitude toward learning.

Thus, though motivation is differently defined, there is a concensus in psychology as well as in cognitive science (the mentioned definitions) on assuming that motivation directs the learner's action.

1.2.3 Integrative Vs Instrumental Motivation

Within the L2 motivation field, the concept that had most attention is the integrative orientation, defined by Gardner and Lambert (1972: 132) as:

Reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group'. Instrumental orientation, in contrast, is a more utilitarian orientation; it

refers to learners' desires to learn the language in order to accomplish some non-interpersonal purpose such as to pass an exam or to advance a career.

The difference noted in the above quotation between integrative and instrumental motivation leads to a better understanding of learners motivation to learn a foreign language, depending on what objective is traced. The word 'sincere', here, implies that a learner with an integrative motivation has more readiness to understand and interact with the target language culture than a learner with instrumental motivation.

This leads us to consider that, if learners' type of motivation depends on the objectives they project for themselves in the FL learning, how can motivational strategies affect their motivation? Does motivation change?

1.2.4 Motivational Strategies

The way motivation is enhanced constitutes one of its main discutabile issues when it is taken into account that motivation is a key to the learner's performance in learning the foreign language. In this perspective, researchers investigated the change in learners motivation in various sociocultural, ethnolinguistic and educational contexts. (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Dornyei, 1998) to show that motivation changes continuously. Coleman (1994 in Dornyei 2009:128) compared British university students motivation to learn a second language to a sample in Ireland, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Austria and France. The variables that were subject to comparison were: the proficiency, background, attitudes and motivations of the samples, to find out that there is a considerable difference between these students in terms of group peculiarities and motivation to learn the second language.

Thus, the foreign language learners' motivation can not be related only to the learning motive but also to the learner's individual differences such as their aptitude to learn or background.

As far as the motivational strategies are concerned, we can note that research presented motivation through a process oriented approach (Dornyei, 2003; 2005). Hence, motivation can be enhanced, in a three phase process: First, a preactional phase, where the second language learner is assisted to elaborate his objectives from learning L2. Second, the actional phase where the learner's motivation is 'maintained (Dornyei, 2005: 84); in this step the teaching method and classroom management are oriented to protect learners' willingness to learn L2 and develop through classroom tasks a positive attitude to the target language. Finally, the postactional phase, once the motivational techniques are completed, the learner can benefit from both his own appreciation of his achievement and teachers feedback that, in their turn, can enforce his motivation and ensure its progress and continuity. (Dornyei, Ibid)

1.2.5 Motivation Components

Motivation was divided into various components. .

1.2.5.1 Gardner's Socio-Educational Model

As studies on motivation are so multiple and varied in purpose, they can be grouped under two trends: motivation content theory and the motivation process theory. As far as this research is concerned, we are mainly interested in relating the foreign language learner motivation as an individual characteristic feature to the learning of a

foreign language and its culture; our aim is then, to determine how culture (either the learner's culture or the foreign language culture) affects the foreign language learner's motivation in learning.

Since the 1950's, Gardner and Lambert, launched a series of studies examining how language learners' attitudes towards the L2 speaking community affected their desire to learn the L2 and that starting with the importance of the foreign language learner's adaptation with his own culture as we can see in Gardner, (1979: 194) quotation: "The student's harmony with his own cultural community and his willingness and ability to identify with other cultural communities become important considerations in the process of L2 acquisition."

Research also focused on the influences of the social context and the relational patterns between the language communities, measured by means of the individual's 'social attitudes towards the specific language group proved that they are bound to influence how successful learners will be in incorporating aspects of that language' (Gardner, 1985:6). The investigation has been supported by numerous studies, attesting to the fact that L2 motivation is generally associated with a positive view toward the L2 group and the values the L2 is linked with, regardless of the nature of the actual learning context. What is noteworthy in the revised model is that Gardner (2007) had reconsidered the first socio-educational model by including:

1. Antecedent factors: which can be biological or experiential such as gender, age or learning history.

2. Individual differences: learner variables, language acquisition contexts, and learning outcomes. The main learner variables covered by the model are intelligence, language aptitude, language learning strategies, language attitudes, motivation and language anxiety. These, in turn, affect
3. Foreign language attainment in formal and informal learning contexts, which result in
4. Linguistic and non-linguistic learning outcomes

To provide a broad view of motivation components we present three different models in the following table:

Authors	Motivation Components or dimensions
Trembley and Gardner'(1995)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Language attitudes (Interest in L2, attitude to L2 speaking community, integrative/instrumental orientation, attitude to L2course and teacher) 2- Goal Saliency: goal specificity and frequency 3- Self efficacy 4- Adaptive attributors 5- Motivational behavior: attention, persistence, motivational intensity.
Dornyei (1996b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Affective/ integrative dimension 2- Instrumental /pragmatic dimension 3- Macro-context-related dimension: intergroup criteria or multicultural properties 4- Self-concept-related dimension like personality traits. 5- Goal related dimension 6- Educational –context related dimation 7- Significant other related dimensions like parents or friends
Williams and Burdens (1997)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Intrinsic interest of activity: curiosity and challenge 2- Percieved value of activity 3- Sence of agency: ability to trace goals 4- Mastery: feeling competent 5- Self concept : being aware of one's weaknesses and strengths 6- Attitude to the taught language 7- Other affective states: confidence, fear 8- Age 9- Gender 10- Significant others: parents and friends 11- The relationship with the significant others 12- The learning environment 13- The broader context: cultural norms, social expectations...

Table 1: Motivation components/ Dimensions (in Dornyei, 2009: 125-127)

In the above table, it can be noted that the scholars referred to some components with precision and to the others, rather, broadly (adaptive attributors, personal traits) and little

agreement can be found in terminology. Many similarities as well as differences can be marked:

- The learners' goal from learning L2 is common in the three presentations.
- The educational environment is present in Dornyei (1996) and in Williams and Burden (1997).
- The language learning aptitude is present in the three presentations: (Self efficacy, one's strengths and weaknesses and mastery).
- Cultural norms , in Dornyei (1996) and inWilliams and Burden (1997)
- Motivational behavior is present only in Trembley and Gardner (1997)
- Trembley and Gardner (1995) consider that one of the motivation components is the learners' attitude towards the L2 speaking community while in Williams and Burden 1997, the attitude towards the taught language is considered.
- The 'significant others' is considered by Dornyei (1996) and Williams and Burden (1997)

1.2.5.2 Schumann's Acculturation Strategy

Under the conviction that acculturation is a key factor to the mastery the foreign language, Schuman (1986) theory on acculturation concerns the different elements that may entail a psychological distance between the learner and the target language speakers (in Dornyei 2004:88); a distance that can negatively affect the process of learning the foreign language. For this reason, Schuman (1986) developed the acculturation model where we find three areas highlighted in the theory, among which, two areas seem to be particularly relevant to our study:

- (a) culture shock and cultural adaptation;
- (b) language attitudes and motivation..

1.2.5.2.1 Culture Shock and Cultural Adaptation

The concept of cultural shock was initially introduced by Oberg (1960) who identified six sources of cultural shock:

- (a) Strain due to the effort required to make necessary psychological adaptations.
- (b) A sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession, and possessions.
- (c) Being rejected by / and/or rejecting members of a new culture.
- (d) Confusion in role, role expectations, values, feelings and self-identity.
- (e) Surprise, anxiety, even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences.
- (f) Feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope.

Schumann (1986:379) defines culture shock as “the anxiety and disorientation experienced upon entering a new culture due to the recognition that established mechanisms to cope with routine activities that do not work in the new environment”. This definition refers more to learners of a second language in its authentic environment, however, Furnham, (1993) considers that “culture shock is a complex notion covering a broad range of negative psychological and social reactions to immersion in another culture”. (in Dornyei et al 2004: 89)

The above mentioned sources of cultural shock concern mainly learners who live in the target language community and develop a negative attitude towards them as a result of direct interaction with them as we can note: feeling such as rejection, deprivation, and impotence. Culture shock is a normal expected reaction of all individuals new to a given culture.

1.2.5.2.2 Language Attitudes and Motivation

Dorniey et al (2004:88-90) assumes that the attitude and motivation to learn a foreign language are complex constructs following the complexity of language, being “complex and socially overloaded” as stated by Gardner (2001): “The learners' appraisal of the host environment and the L2 community is a key determinant of their willingness and eagerness to actively engage with the locals”. In the same context, Aston (1988) emphasizes that L2 learners’ positive view to the target language speaking community cultural values along with the ability to interact with them affect positively the learning process.

In concluding terms, we can understand that the socio-psychological distance is an expected reaction from the part of the learner when the learning context provides foreign culture concepts that shock him and that the appreciation of the speaking communities culture can be a determinant of his willingness to learn the foreign language.

1.2.5.3 Clement's Concept of Linguistic Self Confidence

In the present study, as noted before, we highlight the investigated variables in terms of their relation with each other as well as their effect on foreign language learning. For this purpose we believe that the learner’s self confidence is multidimensional concept being related to both, motivation and aptitude. Self confidence in general refers to one’s belief or trust in abilities and skills. As far as linguistic confidence is concerned, the concept was originally proposed by Clement et al (1977) in Noels et al 1996: 248) as: “Self-perceptions of communicative competence and concomitant low levels of anxiety in

using the second language'. After extensive research, Clement et al (1994) sought to establish a link between L2 learning and the following variables:

- ethnolinguistic vitality
- attitudinal/motivational factors,
- self-confidence and,
- L2 acquisition/acclimation processes (Clement et al 1994:441).

Clement and his associates found that in multiethnic communities, the extent to which the members build contacts determines their rate of integration and communications which means that linguistic self-confidence in Clement's view is first of all, a socially defined construct. (Noels et al, 1996:249). Furthermore, Clement et al. (1994 in Dornyei 2005: 73) assumed that the learner's self confidence affects considerably the L2 learning even in learning situations where there is little or no contact between the learner and the target language speakers as is the context in the present study.

1.2.6 Motivation and Foreign Language Learning

Research on the relationship between motivation and foreign/second language learning has been initiated as we could see by social psychologists interested in language learning but we could also notice that it was not integrated in the domain of applied linguistics. Dornyei (2005:108) advances an explanation of the exclusion of motivation from Applied linguistics research by the fact that there could be two different scholarly backgrounds of the researchers working in the two areas . In his view, there are two reasons, first, because of the inclusion of psychological elements in foreign language research while Applied linguistics focuses on language knowledge and skills. Second,

because motivation and foreign language acquisition are both researched through a process oriented approach. Nonetheless, the relationship between learning a foreign language and motivation was addressed by Turuk (2008:256) who related L2 demotivation to ignoring learners' intellectual abilities as can be seen in this quotation:

Lack of motivation by some students could be partly attributed to over-emphasis on teaching language structure which is ineffective in setting to motion students' intellectual abilities.

Turuk's view is initially founded on the Zone of Proximal Development layed out by Vygotsky (1978) which differentiates between the learner's abilities in achieving tasks alone and his abilities when assisted by adults. Other scholars' contributions (namely Gardner, Dornyei, Williams and Burden, opcit) gave motivation a contributinal dimension to foreign language and seconf language learning.

1.3 Language Learning Strategies and Learning Styles

Since the 1980's to the 1990's, more importance has been given to learning styles and strategies in order to determine their importance in shaping individual differences. For instance, Oxford (2003:01) considers that language learning strategies and styles as factors that "help determine how and how well students learn a second or a foreign language" and that they are valid whatever is the learner's first language. An overview of learning styles and strategies seems necessary to prove their active role in foreign /second language learners' aptitude.

1.3.1 Learning Styles and Cognitive Styles

Learning and Cognitive styles are the best example of second language learners differences, they are defined as “the patterns that give general direction to the learning behavior” (Cornett 1983:09). Thelen (1954) referred to the LS to describe group dynamics. (in Ehrman et al, 2003:201), while ‘cognitive styles’ was proposed by Allport (1937) to describe “ways of living and adapting modulated by personality”. Learning styles is often used to mean learners’ natural and habitual preferences in learning. Cognitive styles are generally defined as the preferences in brain activity (Dornyei, 2005: 123). Furthermore, the learning style refers to personality criteria; they are often used interchangeably with personality type, sensory preference, modality, and others (Ehrman et al, 2003:314) which leads us to conclude that the learning style refers basically to personality while the cognitive style refers to ability and performance prediction.

These definitions agree on the fact that different learners can achieve a task while learning in different ways and that the style is intuitive not learnt, which follows Kinsella, (1995: 171) idea that the concept of learning and cognitive styles offers a “value neutral approach for understanding individual differences among linguistically and culturally diverse students” .

1.3.1.1 Types of Learning Styles

According to Ehrman and Oxford (1990) there are four dimensions of the learning styles that are particularly and prominently relevant to the field of second language learning focusing on the fact that LS are not dichotomous as stated by Ehrman, in Oxford, 2003: 03): “Learning styles generally operate on a continuum or on multiple, intersecting continua”. These dimensions are presented in the table below:

Dimensions:	Learners' categories:
Sensory Preferences	1-Visual : Learn through visual simulation 2-Auditory: learn by listening 3-Kinesthetic: learn through movement 4-Tactile: learn by touch
Personality Types	1-Introverted Vs extroverted 2-Intuitive random Vs sensing sequential 3-thinking Vs feeling 4-judging Vs perceiving
Desire of Generality	1- <u>Global</u> : are learners who do not pay attention to details (ex grammar), feel good even if they do not have all the information 2- <u>Analytic</u> : concentrate on details and an not prduce free linguistic flow.
Biological Differences	1-Biorhythms: by reference to the period of the day when the learner feels best; morning, afternoon.... 2-Sustenance: learner who can not learn being in need of food coffee.... 3-Location: the learning environment features like temperature, light....

Table 2: *Dimensions and categories of learning styles: Oxford (2003: 03-7)*

Despite the categorization of learning styles, other scholars conducted a number of studies to determine their models. Kolb (1974) work in this field, is considered below.

1.3.1.1.1 Kolb's Model of Learning Styles

The Learning-Style Inventory (LSI) was introduced in the 1970s by David Kolb (Kolb, 1974) to measure an individual's use of four different learning abilities:

- (1) concrete experience (CE) (2) abstract conceptualization (AC)
- (3) reflective observation (RO) (4) active experimentation (AE)

Kolb's four dimensions of the the learning abilities highlights various criteria of the learning process: the concrete Vs abstract thinking on one hand, and on the other,

reflective Vs active information processing. His model divides learners to four categories depending on the abilities they put at work while learning:

Learner's Type	Characteristics:
Diverger	Concrete and reflective: prefers concrete situations that generate ideas like brainstorming.
Converger	Abstract and active: Abstract thinkers who generate ideas and theories.
Assimilator	Abstract and reflective: understand a wide range of information and put it into a concise logical form.
Accommodator	Concrete and active: like concrete experiences and active experimentation and are stimulated by challenging experiences up to take risks.

Table 3: Kolb's Types of Learners Adapted from Dornyei, (2005:130)

This model provides for a better understanding of EFL learners' different abilities in accumulating the information taught, its treatment and most importantly their achievement in the four skills.

1.3.2 Language Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990, 2003) states that the word strategy has its origin in the Greek language, from the term "strategia" that means steps of action. In contrast with the idea that some individuals may be just gifted by the aptitude to acquire a foreign language, the learning strategies use by learners constitutes now one of the criteria that distinguish high achievers from low achievers in learning. O'Malley and Chamot (1990:02), especially

when the learning strategy used fits the learner's learning style as advocated by Oxford (2003:08).

Griffiths (2004:01) claims that the seventies research on learning strategies carried the assumption that the learning strategies are "an extremely powerful tool" but little agreement can be found on what exactly characterizes a learning strategy. In this perspective (O'Malley et al, 1985:22) state:

There is no consensus on what constitutes a learning strategy in second language learning or how these differ from other types of learner activities. Learning, teaching and communication strategies are often interlaced in discussions of language learning and are often applied to the same behaviour. Further, even within the group of activities most often referred to as learning strategies, there is considerable confusion about definitions of specific strategies and about the hierarchic relationship among strategies.

The quotation explains the difficulty of searching the learning strategies as a subject that is closely related to human preferences. We can clearly see that there is a strategy applied when learning, teaching or communicating. The main difficulty lies, according to O'Malley et al, is that different strategies can be applied to the same behavior.

1.3.2.1 Learning Strategies Terminology

The term strategy is often used interchangeably with other terms (Griffiths 2003, 2004) like tactics (Seliger, 1984) , techniques (Stern, 1992) and learning behaviors. The terminology of second language learning strategies is still debatable; some researchers use the term learner strategy like Rubin (1987), others as O'Malley and

Chamot (1990) use the term Learning strategy and Oxford (1996) using” language learning strategies” Griffiths (2003). Nonetheless, these scholars agree on strategies/techniques and tactics characteristics: being generated by the learner, help developing second language competence, can be either seen or invisible and put at work the learners linguistic knowledge: grammar and vocabulary in addition to memory.

Considering the language learning strategies characteristic features, we can conclude that the learners’ achievement in FL learning are linked thightly to their language aptitude in the sense that the learners strategy is learner generated and not taught. If the success or failure of the FL learners depends on the learning strategy they put at work, then, it is related to their language aptitude. The following studies on learning strategies would assist our comprehension of the degree to which these two individual differences are linked.

1.3.2.2 Learning Strategies Definition

One of the earliest researchers in this field, Rubin (1975:43), provided a broad definition of learning strategies as “the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge”. Being a broad term, learning strategise were given various definitions by educationalists and researchers. Early on, Tarone (1983) defined a LS as: “An attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language to incorporate these into one's interlanguage competence". Rubin (1987: 22) later wrote: “LS are strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly". In their seminal study, O'Malley and Chamot (1990:01) defined LS as : "The special thoughts or behaviours that individuals

use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information". In a helpful survey article, Weinstein and Mayer (1986:315) defined learning strategies broadly as: "behaviours and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning" which are "intended to influence the learner's encoding process". In 1981, Rubin identified two kinds of learning strategies: those which are involved directly to learning, and those which contribute indirectly to learning. She divided the direct learning strategies into six types:

1. Clarification/verification.
2. Monitoring.
3. Memorization.
4. Guessing/inductive inferencing.
5. Deductive reasoning,
6. Practice.

The indirect learning strategies she divided into two types/

1. Creating opportunities for practice;
2. Production tricks.

Griffiths, (2003, 2004) identifies the learning strategies as characteristics of a good learner, referring to Stern (1975) who produced ten language learning strategies. He believed that the good language learner is characterised by:

1. A personal learning style or positive learning strategies
2. An active approach to the learning task.
3. A tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language which is empathetic with its speakers
4. Technical know-how about how to tackle a language

5. Strategies of experimentation and planning with the object of developing the new language into an ordered system with progressive revision
6. Constantly searching for meaning,
7. Willingness to practise,
8. Willingness to use the language in real communication,
9. Critically sensitive self-monitoring in language use
10. An ability to develop the target language more and more as a separate reference system while learning to think about it. (Griffiths, 2003:12)

These early definitions from the educational literature denote the origin of LS in cognitive science, carrying assumptions that human beings process information and that learning involves such information processing. Certainly, LS are involved in learning in general, in whatever context and whatever included content.

1.3.2.3 Language Learning Strategies Classification

Given the diversity of the issue, scholars provided different classifications of the learning strategies; Oxford (1990) identified six major groups of L2 learning strategies that are: Cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective and social strategies. Biggs (1992), following Schmeck model (1988) presented another categorization of LS according to the purpose of learning and encompasses motivation as well. The two models are presented in the following table:

Categorization Model	Types of learning strategies
Biggs (1988)	1-Surface : little effort is invested by the learner to achieve a task; learners memorize information for example to sit for an exam 2-Achieving: to pass a competition or an exam. 3-Deep: when the learner makes considerable effort in a given task being motivated, he tends to associate his schemata with the newly learnt information and draws conclusions. It is a profound involvement where previous knowledge and experience are implemented.
Oxford (1990)	1-Metacognitive: the learner defines his preferences and needs and elaborates his own evaluation of the task success 2-Cognitive: ex: reasoning, analysis, taking notes and synthesizing 3-Memory related : ex relating sounds, images and key words. 4-Compensatory: ex: Guessing meaning from the context 5-Affective: Anxiety level, feelings, rewarding one's self 6-Social: ex: asking for questions

Table: 4 *Classifications of language learning Strategies*

Thus, the learning strategies are, according to the above mentioned models, related to the learner's aptitude as well as to his motivation. On the one hand, the learning strategy is a cognitive process that a learner generates, which leads us to consider that there are learners who are able to generate strategies that help them succeed and others who can not. On the other hand, and according to Biggs (1992), the type of motivation is also related to the type of learning strategy in foreign language learning.

1.4 Personal Traits

1.4.1 Age

The peculiarity of age as an individual difference in the field of foreign/second language learning results from the fact that age is the most obvious difference between first and second language acquisition and it is also the one that has produced the highest level of interest and the most researched one. (Loup 1994:74). The issue was significant under the continuous attempt of foreign or second language learners to arrive to be native-like speakers which could never be achieved perfectly even while the learner grows up learning that language; the debate focuses on the importance of age as having positive or negative influence on how a second or foreign language learner learning performance. Early studies, (Selinker, 1972:209-11) considered that the apparition of this factor is the result of conviction that whatever the effort a second language learner makes in learning, he can not reach a native-like performance. This idea gave consequently birth to the so-called: “approximative systems”; which referred to an intermediate position that is different from the learner’s native language and the target language.

The impact of Age differences on second language acquisition research was enhanced by the work of Schuman (1975), who suggested two factors to explain this impact:

1-A social factor: the learner’s contact with the second language culture and social norms can increase in time and scope which increases his motivation with time.

2-The psychological factor: Schuman (1975) links between the learning situation and the learner’s attitude and motivation; adults and children have different perception of the learning environment.

1.4.1.1 The Critical Period Hypothesis and Second Language Acquisition

In the 1970's, under the belief that adults are unable to achieve a native like language performance, Munoz (2006), research was undertaken mainly to find out what can distinguish an adult from a child in learning second language, consequently, three main generalizations were reached:

- 1- Adults are faster in learning grammatical rules.
- 2- Older children learn grammar faster than young children.
- 3- Learners who start learning a second language early achieve better than those who start in adulthood.

Since that time, many studies sought to compare second language learners' (those who start learning early with those who start late) performances to native speakers. One of these studies that reached tangible evidence was conducted by Johnson and Newport (1991:114-7) who proved the existence of maturational constraints in second language acquisition. The age consideration in foreign /second language learning is a significant factor in the present study; it supports the hypothesis that the learning process in the first phases of education has an extreme importance in terms of content and teaching approaches. The middle school foreign language learners learn better in these early educational stages than in later stages.

1.4.2 Gender

Studies on differences between male and female learning a second language provided deviant findings; some scholars as Macaulay (1978) reached the conclusion that there are no significant gender distinctions in terms of verbal abilities and others as

Ehrhardt (1984:54) sees differences through a biosocial viewpoint as can be seen in the following quotation:

The study of gender related behavior had been hampered in the past by the narrowly defined main effect model that posits biology versus learning. Instead, a biosocial perspective that includes constitutional as well as environmental factors needs to be applied if we want to make a progress in our understanding of human behavior.

Thus, the study of gender differences in learning has to encompass external factors as well as biological characteristics that can both affect the learning process. This leads us to consider another view by Bem (1981:179) who states that the differential aspects of human biology are relatively constant while the cultural context varies a great deal. The cultural context of a female is definitely different from males'; according to Bem, the cultural context can either exaggerate, counteract or even be neutral to the influence of biology.

1.4.3 Learners' Convictions

Studies on the impact of second language learners beliefs on learning was initiated in the eighties through the work of Horwitz (1985; 1999) whose works showed that some of the second language learners convictions such as cross-cultural beliefs, have a negative effect on the learning process and outcomes.

In the same perspective, Dorniey, (2005: 216) states that : "past research in the area has produced some evidence that the beliefs language learners hold considerably affect the way they go about mastering the L2." and that :

That epistemological beliefs influence higher order thinking, particularly when learners encounter complex information, and therefore the study of epistemological beliefs provides insightful theoretical explanations of cognitions, such as comprehension and cognitive flexibility.

In other terms, Dornyei's view is, in fact, founded on the relationship between the learners' convictions and his cognitive abilities, whether a tangible link can be built between these two areas is an issue for future investigations.

Conclusion

The study of Foreign and second language learners' individual differences as loose and extensive as we noticed provides considerable contributions to the understanding of the learner as part of the foreign and second language learning process possessing various cognitive, biological, social, cultural and psychological criteria that can either directly or indirectly affect his FL/SL proficiency. Four main areas are distinguished to divide these differences into aptitude, motivation, learning styles and learning strategies, and personal traits.

Learners' individual differences may be a fixed trait like aptitude which the literature posits as a primary and essential criterion in second and foreign language learning, along with the acculturation predisposition on the one hand. On the other hand, studies on learners' cognitive and learning styles insights on how the FL/SL acquisition is linked to the mental processing of information while learning strategies provided us with knowledge on approaches and ways learners proceed in information treatment.

As far as learners' motivation is concerned, there's a general agreement on the relevance of this individual feature to the foreign and second language learning process, although, there's little consensus on what motivation is, motivational strategies efficiency and the extent to which this feature is significant in the context of this study.

Specific traits in SL/FL learners such as age and gender raise the long lasting issue about the possibility for learners to reach a native like linguistic proficiency depending on the differences between child and adult FL/SL learners, the critical age hypothesis, and male/female socio-biological differences to interactional and conversational differences. Furthermore, learners' beliefs constitute the final trait considered as affecting FL/SL learning in terms of the foreign language teaching and learning objectives and outcomes.

Chapter Two

Cross-cultural Psychology and Foreign Language Learning

Introduction

There is a general agreement that strong cultural understanding and the ability to reflect it in language communication, comprehension and production are essential for reaching professional levels of language performance. The recognition of culture as a relevant component in second and foreign language learning and teaching linked cultural studies to different disciplines, such as: -Cross-cultural Psychology, -Linguistic Anthropology, Sociolinguistics, Acculturation Psychology and Ethnopsychology. All of these disciplines provide considerable support to a better understanding of the relationship between the individual's culture and behaviour in general, but more specifically learning. The study of culture as an essential constituent of action and communication is deeply grounded in the belief that culture guides the individual's action through the interactive process and offers him orientation in the shape of background expectations and cognitive models.

Because culture encompasses many components that may be sometimes referred to differently by researchers, and because it is a term seen and defined by

researchers in various fields of research, the study of language learning interaction with culture is far from being a clear mission . Following our research aim, we will highlight the relationship between the FL/SL learner's culture and the learning process as well as cultural transmission. in terms of the natural way local culture goes from generation to generation and how it acts on the unconscious level. The literature review presented in this chapter determines the extent to which language, cognition and culture are interrelated from varied view points, and in different disciplines. For this end, an account of cultural studies development and the gradual inclusion of individual cultural peculiarities in learning and teaching are to be highlighted.

2.1 Early Steps in Cross-Cultural Psychology

For Berry (1997: xiii), cross-cultural psychology is fundamentally concerned with understanding human diversity; a basic proposition of the field is that cultural factors affect human behavior. It, thus, follows that cultural factors must also affect the psychology that we do, including the way we conceive behavior, study it, interpret it and apply it. Psychology is then closely linked to human culture. Research in cross-cultural psychology was enhanced by many figures, though their works were different in perspectives but all led to the development of the field such as Tylor (1832-1917) who was considered as the father of anthropology, Francis Galton, who is credited for being the originator of differential Psychology and Piaget who started working since 1928 on what is now referred to by Socio-cultural factors. Jahoda and Crewer (1997: 18-27)

Triandis (1997:5) advocates the fact that “human beings are ethnocentric which reflects the truth that we all grow in a specific culture and learn to believe that the

standards, principles, perspectives, that we acquire from our culture are the way we look at the world". Thus every human being carries the specific characteristics of the culture he grew in that guides his behavior as well as the way he understands his surroundings.

The first steps of cross-cultural studies can be found in the early fifteen and sixteen centuries when, after the collapse of the feudal system, there was an increase of populations contact through conquest, exploration of lands and also trade. (Jahoda and Crewer, 1997:5). Peoples' contact provide recognition of the existence of considerable differences between communities in terms of behavior, habits and thinking.

2.2 Definition of Culture

The term culture was given hundreds of definitions in all domains and throughout time, the word "culture" is vague and can be used to refer to civilization for example as can be seen in Tylor (1832-1917 in Jahoda and Crewer 1997:18) definition:

Culture or civilization, taken in its widest ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws custom and any othe capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

The American Heritage English dictionary explains the term culture as "The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought."

Within the same line of thought, Trinovitch (1980:550) states that culture is all inclusive:

...an all-inclusive system which incorporates the biological and technical behaviour of human beings with their verbal and non-verbal systems of expressive behaviour starting

from birth and this all-inclusive system is acquired as the native culture. This system may be referred to as socialization and prepares the individual for the linguistically and non-linguistically accepted patterns of the society in which he lives.

Furthermore, Brown, (1994:170 in Cakir 2006:155) indicates that culture can be an integration of some components that shape the individual's behavior:

Culture is a deeply integrated part of the very fiber of our being, but the language, the means for communication among members of a culture, is the most visible and available expression of that culture. And so a person's world view, self identity, and systems of thinking, acting, feeling, and communicating can be disrupted by a change from one culture to another.

Lampe, (1992:357) argues that the literature of anthropology and linguistics is replete with definitions of "culture," some of which include almost every aspect of society: the cultural knowledge, perspectives, values, practices, behaviors, and products that are reflected in or influence human communication. Other scholars provide simple definitions of culture as Hall (1959:186) who states that "culture is communication and communication is culture" and Lonner and Adamopoulos (1997:46), who state that "Culture, then, is that ephemeral quality consisting of customs, language, and land"

The numerous culture dimensions we noted in the aforementioned definitions attribute to 'Culture' an immense landscape, but as far as our study is concerned, we noted that language (Brown:1994), the non-linguistically patterns, the verbal and non verbal behaviour Trinovitch (1980), and the socially transmitted behavior, all form constituents of learners' background treated in this research. These components and many others are given different classifications as we will see below.

2.3 Types of Culture

Following our aim to determine the position and effect of the learner's culture on the FL/SL learning process, we seek through presenting the types of culture to classify the local culture according to its characteristics; the classification may explain aspects of our culture in relation to education. The differences in cultures among different populations and communities urged scholars to classify cultures into distinct divisions as can be seen in the following classifications:

Cosmides and Tooby (1992:528) distinguished between epidemiological and evoked cultures. The first refers to values and concepts that are transmitted from generation to generation while the second refers to cultural concepts that are not transmitted through people but are acquired from the environment. According to Cosmides and Tooby, all what is considered as culture in sociology is evoked. Another classification divides culture into individualistic and collectivistic cultures, proposed by Trumbull et al (2006). What is noteworthy in this classification is that differences are traced concerning the learning and teaching processes and how they are conceived in these cultures differently in terms of teaching and learning objectives. In the same direction, Govea (2007:06) provided a detailed presentation of the individualistic and collectivistic cultures, from which we chose six criteria related to education, in the following table:

Collectivistic Culture

Individualistic Culture

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1.The society shows a positive attitude towards whatever is traditional | 1.The society shows appositive attitude towards whatever is new. |
| 2.Students are expected to learn how to do. | 2.One is never too old to learn”permanent education” |
| 3.The young have to learn while the old do not accept the student role. | 3.Students are expected to learn how to learn. |
| 4.Individual students intervene in class only when called upon personally by the teacher. | 4.Individual students speak up in class in response of the general invitation by the teacher. |
| 5.Education is a way of gaining prestige in one’s environment. | 5.Education is a way of improving one’s economic worth and self respect based on ability and confidence. |
| 6.Acquiring diploma is more important than acquiring competence . | 6.Acquiring competence is more important than diploma. |

Table: 05 *Comparing Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures in education*

Adapted from Govea (2007:06)

The above comparison between individualistic and collectivistic cultures in education denotes a basic difference in their view to education; a pragmatic view in the individualistic culture founded on a substantial need for education in terms of the knowledge acquired. In the collectivistic culture, education equals diploma and prestige.

2.4 Cultural Adaptation

Relevant to our research is the influence of the individual 's culture on his identity construction and characteristics; the way the individual reacts when learning a cultural concept may oppose his identity principles since the major feature concerning identity is "consistence". Studies on this relationship like Camilleri and Peyre (1997: 54 in Berry et al 1997) provide the evidence that serious cultural conflicts can lead to cognitive dissonance and difficulties in the construction of a coherent identity. The construction of identity is a process of compromise between the sameness of the person in time and space and the integration of new experiences, values and representations. Sameness does not refer to physical and psychological traits but also to the coherence of the "value system". (Camilleri,1990). To understand the cultural adaptation process, it is necessary to highlight the value judgement development.

2.4.1 Value Judgement as a Process

In the present study, we consider that the SL learner's ability to form a judgement on target language cultural values and concepts constitutes a basic requirement in intercultural competence. Hence, we will shed light on the value judgement development process and mechanisms. For example, Geertz (1973 in Eckensberger and Zimba 1997:301), rules, as normative regulators of human interactions, are central to definitions of culture. The cross-cultural view to the value judgement process can also be seen through the work of Piaget (1977) who believes that: First, the individual builds his reasoning according to external rules; (those rules designed by institutions or authorities),

then moves to the internal standards, that he builds by his own and uses them as a basis for reasoning. Accordingly, the process of evaluating a value occurs in these two stages. (Eckensberger and Zimba, 1997)

Second, value judgement as a process, is achieved in the individual specific cultural context with which, balance is maintained. Third, the process of developing a judgement is relative to whether the society is modern or traditional; in traditional societies where it is believed that a supernatural power controls, rewards and punishes every one helps in enforcing young people rigidity in sticking to values. (Havighurst and Neugarten, 1955:144 in Eckensberger and Zimba, 1997:303)

Piaget's view was criticized for taking the individual outside his social context and ignoring the effect of his peers and family on his value judgement. (Eckensberger and Zimba, 1997:302). Another contribution in value judgement development can be found in the works of Kohlberg (1986) who believes that the value or moral judgement stages are universal and internally consistent (ibid :312) as can be seen through the six stages he presents in the following table:

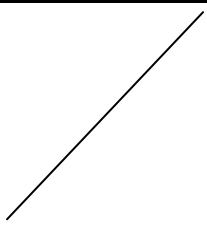
Stage Level	Structure	Deficiency/ incitment	Content
Post conventional : (6) Universal ethical principles	Moral point of view Ideal role taking	<u>Deficiency</u> : Restriction to the situation	Following one's chosen principles
(5) Social contact or utility and individual rights.	<u>Prior to society perspective</u> : Considering moral and legal point of view	<u>Deficiency</u> : Restriction to concrete systems <u>Incitment</u> : Experience of different roles of real responsibility	Equality, equity, reciprocity as values, maximization of human , rights and rules are relative to the group
Conventional : (4) Social system and conscience	<u>System perspective</u> : takes the point of view of the system that defiones roles and rules.	<u>Deficiency</u> : restriction to shared good motives, ; no place for law. <u>Incitment</u> : Experience of responsibility in role contexts	Laws have to be upheld except when they conflict with fixed social duties
(2) Mutual interpersonal expectations and dinterpersonal conformity	<u>Concrete relations</u> : Aware of the shared and expectations feelings, agreements and expectations over individual interests	<u>Deficiency</u> : No coordinatio of interest of different subjects <u>Incitment</u> : Participation in decisions	Living up to what is expected by people close to you or what generally people expect.
Preconventional : (2) Individualism, instrumental purpose and exchange	<u>Concrete others</u> : Aware that every individual has his own interests so rights are relative	<u>Deficiency</u> : Endless circle of retaliation <u>Incitment</u> : Role taking opportunities	Right is what is fair, what's an equal exchange, a deal or an agreement following rules
(1) Heteronomous Morality	Ecocentrism Does not relate two points of view, the confusion of authority perspective with one's own		To avoid breaking rules backed by punishment, obedience for its own sake and avoiding to cause damage to other persons.

Table 06 : Summary of Kohlberg theory on the development of moral Judgement : Stage labels, structures, developmental conditions and related contents cited in Eckensberg and Zimba (1997:310)

Kohlberg's Theory on the moral value judgement suggests, as layed out in table 6, that the individual moves from a stage of heteronomous morality where he is guided generally by his own convictions, but, if he avoids breaking the law it would be a personal character (obedience for the sake of obedience). However, the individual is not able to relate two contradictory concepts or values. In the second stage of forming a value judgement, the individual learns what is right and wrong from others, thus, rightness is a relative concept. In the third stage, and through the individual's contact with others, the shared expectations and agreements would gain priority over the individual's. The fourth satge, is a phase where the individual yields to a social system and its rules. Then, in the fifth stage the individual's interest and priorities are adjusted to the social system rules. And finally, idealism is reached, the individual chooses his own principles.

Though Kohlberg's process of moral value development is stratified into distinct and clear stages, the theory is based on the individual's contact with other members of the social community without specification of whether it is a local or foreign community in addition to ignoring many particularities like developing moral values judgement in learning and the gender differences. The only possible source of conflict is the authority that issues laws that may oppose the fixed social system principles.

2.4.2 Cultural Conflict Avoidance Strategies

When the individual undergoes a social change, the balance that culture creates between his moral and pragmatic needs is no longer achieved (Berry et al 1997:56). After extensive empirical research on about 1500 Tunisian young people who immigrated to

France and who suffered from parents divorce cases, Camilleri (1973, 1997) found out that the problems of these young people were the result of their conflict with their parents; conflicts that entailed a social change. Furthermore Camilleri's research proved that the research sample developed their own ways to relief the impact of the divorce problems. According to Camilleri (1991: 83-87) conflict avoidance strategies can be grouped under two main axes:

- The pragmatic needs prevail over the moral needs.
- The relative need for preserving coherent identity.

Consequently, there are two strategies to deal with conflictual cultural issues:

a strategy of "simple coherence", by which the individual suppresses one of two contradictory statements and "complex coherence" when the person tries to elaborate rationalizations that help reconcile two contradictory statements.

2.4.2.1 Conflict Avoidance by Simple Coherence

This first strategy is applied by individuals who stick to their moral principles and can not make compromises about them; they choose to maintain their values in all cases; an example of this case is the religious fundamentalist. (Camilleri and Peyre 1997:57).

2.4.2.2 Conflict Avoidance by Complex Coherence

For other people, it is not always possible to chose between two contradictory values, they try rather to create an in-between position to reduce the contradiction This process is referred to by Festinger, (1957 in Berry et al 1997: 57) as : "the reduction of

cognitive dissonance”, an example of this case is the re-explanation of a religious text to justify or excuse a forbidden behavior (Camilleri and Peyre: *ibid*)

2.5 Transmitting Culture

Understanding the transmission process of culture serves to explain the possibilities of assimilating foreign culture values. The benefit of identifying the process of transmission in the present study is to check whether learning a foreign language can be a means to transmit its culture.

Prior to the inclusion of culture in the fields of social psychology, evolutionary anthropology, sociology and even economics, the research on how culture is transmitted followed the findings on animals’ social system. In this context Castro and Toro (2004:49) state that:

Cultural transmission in our species works most of the time as a cumulative inheritance system allowing members of a group to incorporate behavioral features not only with a positive biological value, but sometimes also with a neutral, or even negative, biological value.

The Quotation denotes that the common feature between the animals’ social system inheritance and human culture transmission lies in the fact that the human preferences and rules are inherited. Bisin and Verdier (2005:01).

The transmission of culture through the works of Benedict and Mead as described by Levine (1973: 53) is explained in the following quotation:

The transmission of culture from generation to generation is a process of communication, many aspects of the growing individual’s cultural environment relay the same messages

to him, messages reflecting the dominant configurations of his culture. He acquires his cultural character by internalizing the substance of these messages.

Referring to this quotation, the process of transmission depends on the internalization of messages content that result from the individual communication with his environment. In other words, the individual's interaction with the other members of his community permit an exchange of information that alters his behavior and shape his character. Toro and Castro (2004) proposed three steps that lead to the individual's character as a consequence of social interaction:

1. to discover and to learn a behavior
2. to test and to evaluate the learned behavior.
3. to reject or to incorporate the behavior into the behavioral repertory.

In the same perspective Norenzayan (2006:124) argues that from an evolutionary point of view, there are two naturalistic accounts of how culture emerges:

1. Culture can be evoked by local environmental triggers acting on the same underlying psychology (evoked culture).
2. Culture can travel from mind to mind by processes of transmission, analogous, but not identical, to Darwinian genetic evolution. She states that :

Culture emerges when information is transmitted not genetically but socially through social learning mechanisms such as mimicry, imitation, and instruction as well as a byproduct of communicative processes such as gossip, conversations, and telling of stories.

However, According to Richerson and Boyd (2005:456), human cultural transmission is relatively rich and quickly transmitted which makes of it a second system of human inheritance that interacts with genetic inheritance. Furthermore, Richerson and

boyd believe in the existence of a learning bias that equips the new born babies with an adaptation predisposition to adopt the rules and behavior of their social group. It can be noted that in Richerson and Boyd (2005) view, the learning bias is explained as a natural selection when a baby is prepared to learn his social culture, which leads us to conclude that the above mentioned studies are attributing to social transmission a natural selection aspect on the basis that the group culture starts with natural traits like preferences and beliefs that may be inherited. Nonetheless, other scholars such as Heyes (1994), Heyes and Galef (1996) and Schuman (1978) advance other processes that ease the cultural transmission as can be seen in the points below.

2.5.1 Culture Transmission Through Imitation

Individuals learn behavior through different forms, either when punished, when the same behavior is rewarded or through imitation; the latter is often presented as the main mechanism of learning a behavior. In this context, Sperber (1996:20); argues that:

Behaviors acquired through imitation are completely different from those acquired through other forms of learning, they are retained if they are punished while alternative behaviors are rewarded equally, or if alternative behaviors are preferentially rewarded.

Heyes (1994) and Tomasello (1999) agree on that imitation is that learning instrument of behaviors that are difficult to learn through individual learning or through indirect social learning. Hayes and Galef (1996), whose works on social learning through imitation in animals as the roots of culture, suggest an approach to analysis of social learning processes that assume that social interactions affect the probability of

introduction of novel behavior patterns into an individual's repertoire and that consequences of engaging in a socially learned behavior determine whether that behavior continues to be expressed. They argue :

We claim that imitation in the hominid lineage did not evolve as an alternative to rigorous assessment of individually learned behavior, i.e., a mechanism to adopt conducts without evaluating them. Imitators learn easily the diverse cultural variants present in the population, but imitation does not act as an inheritance system that allows the reproduction of the phenotypic structure of the parental population.

But even if imitation is presented as a facilitator of social norms learning, it acts negatively on the development of higher intellectual abilities as argued by Triandis (2002) who believes that individuals who imitate behavioral processes take as a model other individuals with relatively higher thinking levels which lessens their creativity and critical thinking. In concluding terms, imitation is one of the main canals of cultural transmission, it is characterized by copying easily a behavior without reinventing it in contrast to the individual learning that generally happens when the environment changes, which makes of imitation a characteristic feature of societies that change slowly or are static.

2.5.2 Culture Transmission Through Language

According to Schumann (1978), language has three broad functions: a communicative function, an integrative function, and an expressive function. Specifically, the role of language is to assist transmitting information, in enforcing membership to a given social group, and in expressing individual emotions, ideas, and even personality. Schumann argues that second language learners use primarily their second or foreign

language for communication, and then will seek to use the language to affiliate to a social group. He considers that culture and language are strongly linked together. (Schuman, 1978 in Garrido, 2007:92)

Schuman (1978) based his Acculturation Model on the idea that language is one aspect of culture, and the link between the learner's original community and that of the second language is significant in second language acquisition. The basis of the model states that 'The degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language' Schumann, (1978:380).

Thus, if the cultural transmission is partly a result of natural selection as stated by Richerson and Boyd (2005) and partly of social norms that constitute the individual's environment as stated by Norezayan (2006), then it is necessary to consider in the present study the social processes learning. In concluding terms, the above studies on possible means of cultural transmission, though different in their perspectives, agree on the fact that to assimilate a foreign language culture, the learner has to interact with the native speakers of that language and imitate them.

2.6 Culture in Psychological Anthropology

Lonner and Adamopoulos (1997:46) advance that the individual's culture and personality are closely linked not because one defines the other, but for the fact that "to appreciate the characteristic mode of the behavior of other people is to understand the role of culture in influencing their behavior". This principle was supported by Schuman (1985) and Dornyei and Ushioda (2009).(See chapter 1)

2.6.1 Culture and Identity

Norton (2000:10) refers to identity as “the way a individual may understand his relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future”. While Camilleri (2000:48) state that the most common way to trace the structure of individuals’ identity was elaborated by Kuhn and Mc Partland, (1954), is to ask them to answer repeatedly the question : Who am I ? to which they could obtain three categories of answers :

1- Values they cherish based on representations of what things are or should be and on the implicit meaning they attribute to life.

2-Categorical attributes by which they define themselves as members of a social group eg : I am a human being, a father, a student.....

3-Personality traits eg : Iam ambitious, I am kind.....

In the field of second language learning, the concept of identity is not yet elaborated in terms of relating the SL learning context and the SL learner. (ibid), while Kanno (2003:135) states that:

It is possible for bilingual youths to reach the balance between two languages and two cultures. The trajectoire of their identity development show a gradual shift from a rigid simplistic approach to bilingualism and biculturalism to a more sophisticated skill at negotiating, belonging and control.

Kanno’s quotation refers basically to the intercultural competence of bilinguals as a benefit for the identity development, through creating that equilibrium between their membership to a social group, their negotiation of cultural differences and finally control over an in between system of the two languages and cultures.

Identity is closely linked to culture and society, (Norton, 2000) which urged scholars to consider these two identity aspects in addition to the identity psychological dimension which gave birth to a social identity and the sociocultural identity.

2.6.1.1 Social Identity and Sociocultural Identity

The social identity is the person's knowledge that he belongs to a social category or a group (Norton, 1995:11), and, via comparing the social processes of the other people, those who are similar to the self are classified as being : "the in- group". On the other hand, Norton (2006) emphasizes that research into the social dimensions of the individual identity encompasses also the individual's community cultural characteristic features.

2.7 Culture and Cognition Development

Central to our study is to establish the link between the cognitive development and culture in terms of the degree of influence that the learner's culture might have on his thinking. For this end, we present different studies that highlights this relationship. The most significant early research to convey this idea is that of the Russian school; Vygotsky (1978) and Luria (1971) that will be discussed later (Sociocultural theory). However, recent studies in cognitive anthropology are concerned with linking thought and culture Nisbett and Norenzayan (2002: 5-10); the link is achieved through the "Shared knowledge structures" which are described as follows:

1. Basic cognitive processes are universal: every normal human being is equipped with the same set of attentional, memorial, learning, and inferential procedures.

2. The basic cognitive processes work in much the same way regardless of the content they operate on.
3. General learning and inferential processes provide the growing child with all it needs to learn about the world. Content is supplied by these cognitive processes operating on the environment.
4. Since the social, political and economic worlds of different people are different, the content of human minds, theories, beliefs, values, is indefinitely variable.

In this perspective, Tomasello (2000:37 in Sharkeff et al 2000:148) advances that:

human children grow into cognitively competent adults in the context of a structured social world full of material and symbolic artifacts such as tools and language and structured social interactions such as rituals, games and cultural institutions like families and religions.

Thus, for Tomasello, the cultural context is not only a facilitator or a motivator of the cognitive development but is the unique ontogenique niche. (Ibid)

2.7.1 Language as a Carrier of Culture

Language expresses its culture and undertakes the role of explaining it as Baker and Jones' (1998) statement denotes: "All languages are embedded in the culture of the language where they are spoken". Schuman (1978) advances that one of the main factors that determine the success of the learning process is the degree of difference between the target language culture and the learner's native culture. The functions of language, as argued by Schuman (1978 in Noble 2007:92) -being a communicative, integration and expression tool- does not only transmit information but also marks the speaker's membership in a group and permits the expression of the speaker's ideas, feelings and

character features. Furthermore, Schuman's acculturation model, defines language as an aspect of culture and assumes that the importance of how the SL learner conceives the TL culture can not be underestimated in the SL acquisition process and success as can be understood in the following statement: "The degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the foreign language" Schuman (1978: 34)

2.7.2 Socio-Cultural Theory and Foreign Language Learning

The influence of the sociocultural theory advanced by Vygotsky (1896-1934) on the SL learning process and outcomes had been highlighted by many scholars (Noble 2007, Turuk 2008 and Lantolf 2000). The central principle of the SCT according to Lantolf (2000, in Turuk, 2008: 245) was initially based on the link between the human mind functions and the learner's cultural artifacts and that the human mind is mediated: Vygotsky advocates that humans do not act directly on the physical world without the intermediary of tools, whether symbolic or signs, tools are artifacts created by humans under specific cultural and historical conditions, and as such, they carry with them the characteristics of the culture in question.

The above quotation denotes that the cultural knowledge is an active participant of the learner's behavior in all sorts of tasks and that the mental processes are guided by the learner's culture.

Another aspect of the SCT is the importance it attributes to the social interaction as a major factor in SL learning success (Lantolf, 2005:337) and that adopting a task-based teaching of a second language improves the teaching and learning outcomes. (Lantolf, 2005: 346). This view is also shared by Williams and Burden (1997 in Turuk, 2008:247) who focus on presenting the study units in all their complexity instead of teaching

knowledge and skills in isolation. The SCT theory emphasizes the forming of the learner as an active meaning maker and problem solver. Thus, as far as the SL learning process is concerned, the contribution of SCT is noteworthy in the sense that it emphasizes the role of culture in guiding the learner's mental functions on one hand and, on the other, it sheds light on the importance of encouraging the learner to be a problem solver, to focus on meaning and to indulge flexibly in the learning process.

2.7.3 Culture in the Foreign Language Learning Process

Culture is increasingly acquiring importance in foreign and second language teaching curricula on the basis of viewing language as incorporating a wider range of social and cultural information on one hand and on the other, the clear and prominent cultural use of language. The teaching of culture used to be through presenting facts on the target language speaking community; the every day life activities or through the highbrow and/or statistical information that introduces the learner to a small portion of the knowledge required for intercultural competence. This tradition of culture presentation in curricular had been criticized by Byram and Feng, (2005:917) on the basis that culture is "a social construct, a product of self and other perceptions". Brown (1986:33) argues that 'second language learning is often second culture learning', while Buttjes (1991: 06) explains the relationship between the bilingual education and the transmission of cultural knowledge as:

If language learning can be seen as cultural transmission between two cultures, serious bilingual education will have to be truly bicultural, allowing children to make use of their cultural potential in order to develop their own intercultural strategies in response to their specific experience.

In the same view, Byram (1991: 19-20) presents an approach to combine the teaching of a foreign language and its culture taking into consideration the learner's first language and culture, emphasizing the importance of comparing the two cultures activities that enforce the SL learner's critical view towards both of them for a better understanding of the the target language. The approach is illustrated in the following diagram:

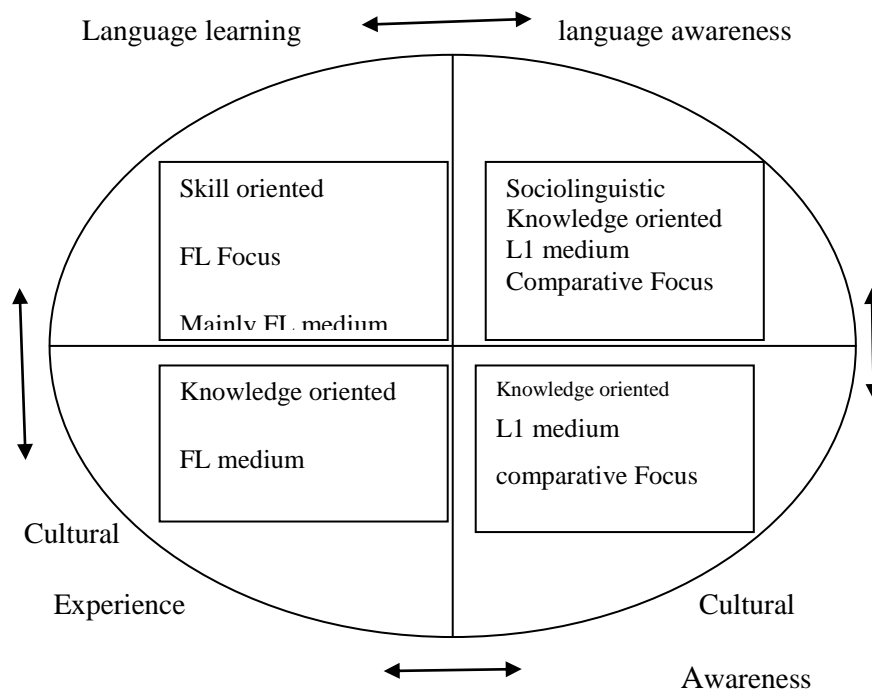


Figure: 1 *Combining language teaching and culture. Byram (1991:20)*

As we can see in the diagram, the learner's use of his mother tongue for comparative analysis of his culture and the foreign culture can be combined with the teaching of the foreign language and both as a subject and as a medium of experience of

foreign cultural phenomena. In other terms, the combination of culture and language in teaching the foreign language involves:

1. Language learning in the sense of skill acquisition enriched by sociolinguistic and cultural knowledge to acquire language awareness.
2. Both of these are carried out with comparative analysis through learners' mother tongue to acquire cultural awareness.
3. The direct experience of selected aspects of the foreign culture from the point of view of the target language speaking community which would contribute to the target language learning process

Thus, the above unfolded combination between the target language, its culture and the learner's first language and culture enables the foreign language learner to acquire a linguistic competence and cultural awareness of the target language only if he makes use of comparative analysis using both his language and culture. Comparison is then, an important element in promoting the foreign language learner information processing as far as language and culture learning are concerned. This view is supported by Holme (2003, in Georgiou, 2010: 64-65), who presents five principles of culture inclusion in foreign language curricular, it points at:

1. A competence view: considers that a foreign language learner has to possess a structured ethnographic contact with the foreign language.
2. A deconstructionist view: focusing on the necessity of understand the foreign language implicit meanings.
3. A communicative view: to provide learners with knowledge to use in every day contexts.

4. The culture-free-language view: that arises from the threat of cultural contamination when learning a dominant language.
5. The classical-curriculum view: founded on considering the culture's role of enhancing intellectual value of language.

In the same perspective, Paige et al (2003:177 in Kiet Ho 2009:65) defines culture learning as:

The process of acquiring culture-specific and culture general, skills, attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals of other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental and ongoing process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviourally and affectively.

Paige et al developed a conceptual framework of culture learning that divides the learning of culture into knowledge, behavior and attitude as can be seen below:

a-Knowledge:	1- Culture-general : intercultural phenomena. Cultural adjustment stages. Cultural shock. Intercultural development. Culture learning.. Culture identity. Cultural marginality. 2- Culture specific. Little "c" target language culture. Big "C" target language culture. Pragmatics.
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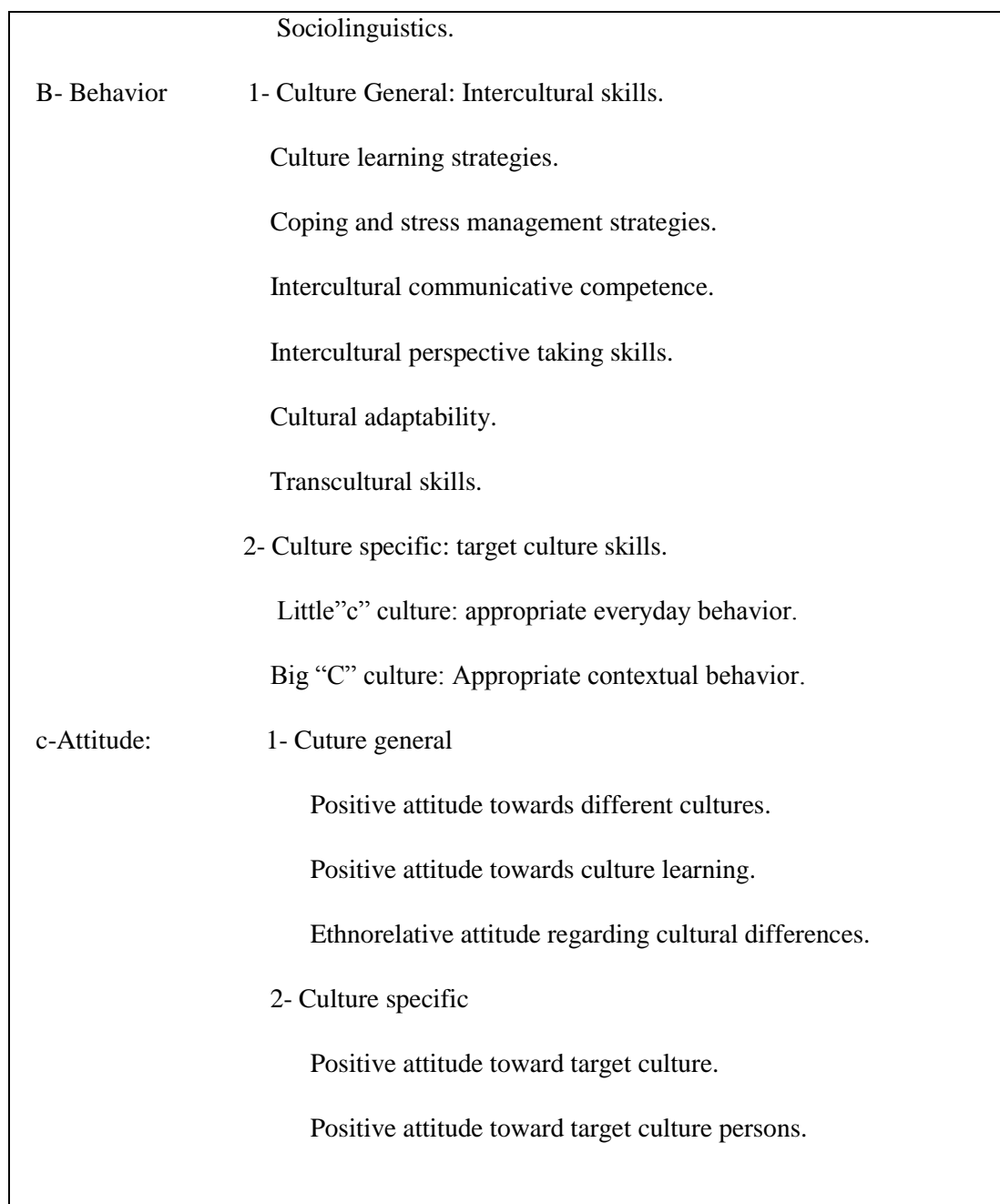


Figure 2 *Conceptual Model of culture learning. Paige et al (2003:07)*

The framework presented here, contains a broad range of knowledge and skills learning about culture in its specific as well as general aspects. Such elements inclusion in a teaching program follows the learners needs and the learning objectives; as we can note, there's focus on teaching both the little “c” and Big “C” culture, the target language

culture as well as other cultures. Relevant to our study, is the inclusion of Attitude where the author emphasizes a positive attitude toward different cultures in general and to the target language culture specifically, though, the type of attitude (positive/negative) is normally a result of the SL learner's comparison and rationalization (see chapter Two 2.4.2).

2.8 Culture and Motivation in Foreign Language Learning.

For Dornyei et al (2004:89) the second language learner motivation is the main factor in the learning situation because it is considered as a multi dimensional construct:

Because of the complex, socially-loaded nature of language, the motivation to learn a second language is a multi-faceted construct, involving a range of components such as attitudes towards the L2 speakers and their culture; various pragmatic benefits of L2 proficiency; issues related to the learner's personality/identity; and a host of factors rooted in the actual context of the learning.

Hence, The SL learner's positive attitude to the foreign culture is a supportive factor to raise the second language learner's willingness to learn the SL. Furthermore, as argued by Aston (1988 in Dornyei et al, 2004), the SL learner needs to acquire the interactional rituals of the SL culture in order to develop his /her intercultural competence as we shall see below.

2.9 Second Language Learner's Intercultural Competence

There is no consensus on the definition of Intercultural Competence (Fantini, 2009) since many terms are interchangeably used to have the same meaning such as:

multiculturalism, cross-cultural adaptation, cross-cultural awareness, and global citizenship (Deardoff, 2009:65). But, we can find in the literature many definitions that agree on considering that Intercultural Competence as a concept closely related to the individual's career and the teaching learning process where it is generally described as the degree of acceptance of others' cultures. One of the early definitions of ICC was elaborated by Hamer et al (1978:206 in Deardoff, 2004:41), who defines it as: "the ability to manage psychological stress, the ability to communicate effectively, and the ability to establish interpersonal relationships"

Hamer et al, (ibid) definition points at the individual's ability to control the psychological resistance that the individual shows towards new and different cultures in addition to the skills of communication and interacting with people of the other cultures, while Cortazzi and Jin, (2002:01) define FL/SL learners' Intercultural Competence as follows:

Moving from descriptive to interpretive and critical perspectives, this involves familiarity with language functions, close attention to contextual variation and social diversity, the need to suspend judgement and step outside our own frameworks of interpretation, the search for alternative explanations for what surprises, puzzles or irritates us when we interact with people from culturally diverse communities.

This definition points clearly and fairly at the criteria of ICC such as the possession of knowledge of the other cultures, searching explanations the interpretation and critical reflection to develop value judgements, however, Bennett (2008:97) defines Intercultural competence without any specification concerning the learner' needed characteristics, ICC components or steps to acquire ICC as:

“A collection of capacities and of cognitive, affective and behavioural skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts”

We can notice that little agreement can be found as far as the definition of intercultural competence is concerned; the above mentioned definitions agree on considering that ICC is a set of skills of communication and interaction.

2.9.1 Intercultural Competence Components

Byram and Zarate, (1997.a: 7-9) and Byram et al (2002) consider five main skills that constitute a foreign language learner intercultural competence, these skills are:

1. Attitude: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.
2. Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.
3. Skills of interpreting and relating ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate to documents from one's own.
4. Skills of discovery and interaction: the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.
5. Critical Cultural Awareness: Ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures.

The above mentioned skills are interrelated in a way or in another. As we can see by now, the Intercultural competence can be developed within the individual depending on his domain of activity; in learning as well as in a professional carrier and the lack of one or more among these skills constitutes a negative feature of intercultural incompetence. In the present study, the sample population lacks two skills among the above mentioned, namely, the “attitude” and the skill to “interpret and relate” a document or an event from another culture.

ICC can be assessed and measured according to how many skills an individual possesses, we are unable to determine the amount of information needed to own a perfect intercultural competence and the continuous change in social norms. Hence, it is obvious that a complete intercultural competence can not be achieved by nonnative teachers and learners.

Another identification of Intercultural Competence components is developed by English (1996 in Deardoff, 2004:46), sharing one element in common with the above mentioned ICC components which is “Knowledge”. English (1996: *ibid*) cites: 1)World knowledge, 2) foreign language proficiency, 3) empathy for other cultural viewpoints, 4) approval of foreign people and cultures and 5) the ability of practicing one’s profession in an international setting. In the same context, Deardoff, (2006) elaborated a model where the criteria and elements of intercultural competence are presented:

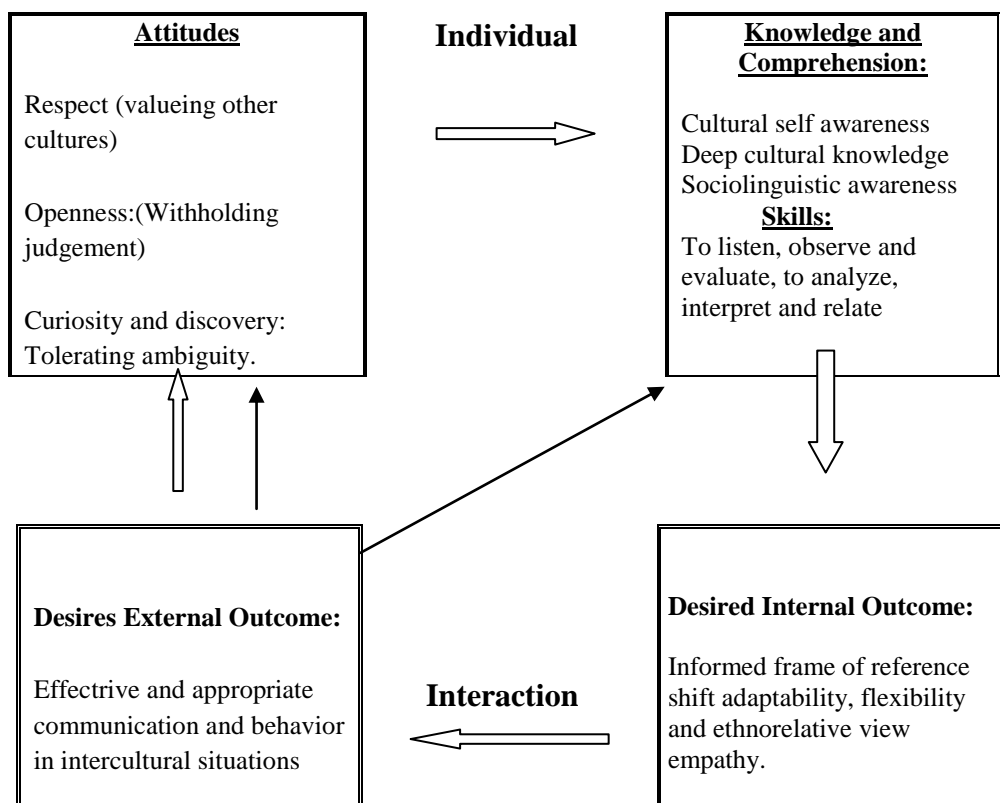


Figure 3: *Intercultural Competence Model.* Deardoff (2006:67)

Deardoff' model , (2006, 2009) stresses the fact that:

1. The intercultural competence is an ongoing process.
2. Critical reflection plays a crucial role in an individual's ability to acquire and evaluate knowledge.
3. Attitudes are the basic component of this model.
4. The deep understanding of knowledge entails a more holistic and contextual understanding of culture.

In this model, in this model, the critical reflection is essential to develop learners' intercultural competence and a tool to push learners to go beyond descriptive reflection is to use a set of questions such as: What? So what? Now what.? Reflection should be taught of as a critical and legitimate process to promote learning; through effective

reflection learners are urged to examine their own opinions, attitudes and personalities and explore their relation to the others. (O'Grady, 2000).

2.9.2 The Importance of Intercultural Competence

The second language learner, when taught a second language, is introduced to a foreign culture that presents new and different concepts. His motivation to learn the target language is to a great extent, dependant on his comprehension and appreciation of the foreign language speaking communities (Shuman 1986, Dornyei, 2004). The learner's openness towards the foreign language culture, his ability to relate and interpret cultural differences properly, his cultural critical awareness, are all skills of intercultural competence that enable him to comprehend and judge the target language culture properly with the continuous social change on the one hand, and on the other, the learner would possess the ability to a better understanding of the target language as a carrier of culture.

Conclusion

Through the chapter, we could understand that culture is an all inclusive system, it can be transmitted by imitation as well as through language. The cross cultural and anthropological studies provide a considerable contribution in relating the individual's culture with his behavior in general and more specifically, the second language learning process. Hence, the degree of acceptance of a foreign culture can determine the degree of success in learning foreign language in terms of raising or lessening the learner's motivation to learn that foreign language. In terms of comprehension and value

judgement ability , the second language learner who does not interact with the FL speaking communities is unable to effectively comprehend their cultural cues. When learning the foreign language, depending on his learning objectives and his acceptance degree of the foreign culture peculiarities, his motivation to learn that language may change.

Chapter Three

English Learners' Educational Background

Introduction

In this chapter, we will lay out the main constituents of university first year students' educational background; namely, students' prior knowledge formed by learning English along seven years by teachers who are fruits of an arabised system, English language textbooks that undergo changes in form as in content frequently, and a linguistic history marked by a mother tongue and a second language. The chapter sheds light also on the cultural content of the English speaking communities contained by the Algerian English textbooks, models of implementing this cultural content as well as the various theories of its evaluation in terms of developing learners' intercultural competence.

3.1 Prior Knowledge

The main concern of teachers is to transmit ideas to their learners clearly and efficiently but research has shown that a learner's prior knowledge can be a significant

obstacle to the teacher's best efforts transmitting his ideas. Many studies brought evidence that the learning process begins from the learner's prior knowledge, then through the treatment of the new information presented. Prior knowledge can be in contradiction with the presented material, and consequently, learners will misunderstand or reject the newly learnt knowledge. Neglecting learners' prior knowledge can result in the audience learning something opposed to the teacher's message, no matter how well the message is presented in the lesson.

Research on the psychological processes shows that what we understand of something is a function of our past experiences, our background knowledge, or what are sometimes called Schemata Carrell (1983). Different researchers use different labels for the concept of background knowledge like "frames", "scripts" and "event chains".

For Elharbi (2010: 144), the peculiarity of a second language learner's prior knowledge is due to the difference between learning a language at an early age and learning a second language at a later age; in other terms, children acquire their mother tongue naturally in their native cultural and linguistic environment, while adults who learn a second language in their native environment at a later time, are learning the target language out of its authentic milieu which creates considerable learning difficulties in terms of relating their previous knowledge to the new information they are learning.

Previously, learning was considered as a process of accumulating information or experience and Prior knowledge as a result of both a processing and storage mechanism.

3.1.1 Definition

Cognitive research assumes today that what guides actions is the prior knowledge or cognitive structures that reside in individual minds. For Carrell (1983:81), these structures are used for various academic and practical tasks, with the assumption that new information could be taught with the knowledge structures that experts use, and thus become experts themselves.. In other terms, we understand something only if we can relate it to something we know already.

Bowden et al (2005:115) prefer the term “Working Memory”, divided into Long Term Memory (LTM) and Short Term Memory (STM). They consider the working memory as an important component of learners’ aptitude which is defined in the literature as a specific talent for foreign language learning that varies from individual to individual as we related (in chapter One); Language aptitude is considered to be a largely stable trait and has been identified as the individual difference most predictive of L2 learning outcomes. Recent studies by Miyake and Shah, 1999 in n Bowden and al, 2005: 115) give a broader definition when they wrote:

Working memory is those mechanisms or processes that are involved in the control, regulation, and active maintenance of task-relevant information in the service of complex cognition, including novel as well as familiar, skilled tasks.

Prior knowledge is also referred to as “Schemata” which Rhumelhart, (1980) defines as the building blocks of cognition and may be thought of as “interaction of knowledge structures “ (Rhumelhart and Ortony, 1977:100 in Carrell, 1983) stored in hierarchies in long term memory. Moreover, Carrel (1983:82) advances that:

Schemata have been shown to guide the comprehension not only of events, scenes and activities but also guides the interpretation of the linguistic representation of these events, scenes and activities i.e of oral and written texts.

Furthermore, Roschelle et al (2000:84) argue that in general, learning involves three different scales of changes that are of a close relevance to our research:

1. Learners assimilate a new experience to their existing knowledge (theories and practices).
2. Less frequently, an experience causes a small cognitive shock that leads the learner to put ideas together differently.
3. Much more rarely, learners undertake major transformations of thought that affect everything from fundamental assumptions to their ways of seeing, conceiving, and talking about their experience. While rare, this third kind of change is most profound and highly valued.

The above mentioned changes describe the way learners react to the information that put into question an existing knowledge , mainly when they are concerned with fundamental assumptions like cultural issues, identity or religion.

The aforementioned definitions; Carrell (1983) and Roschelle et al (2000) provide an image of the prior knowledge as being a complex cognitive mechanism in which we find, the information stored and the skills and competences a learner possesses prior to the learning process.

Prior knowledge can act as an assistant to or hinder new learning. Individuals carrying pre-existing information of a topic understand and remember more than those with a limited prior knowledge (Schneider and Pressley, 1997). Neisser (1976:91)

investigated the role of prior knowledge in perception and describes it as “the skills and experience of the observer or, further, as what he knows in advance”, while Marr and Gormley (1982: 90) describe prior knowledge in a far larger scope as: "knowledge about events, persons, and the like which provide(s) a conceptual framework for interacting with the world".

As far as the second language learning process is concerned, the idea that prior knowledge is a basic requirement of the learning process is supported by Richards et al (1992: 205) who advanced that “the use of a negative language pattern or rule leads to an error or inaccurate form in the target language”. Thus, we can consider the relevance and importance of the learner’s prior knowledge as being part of the treatment skills of information he stores which makes of prior knowledge part of his aptitude to learn.

3.1.2 Types of Prior Knowledge

While discussing Prior Knowledge terminology, the broad term “Knowledge” is to be broken into many categories. Scholars have given numerous dichotomies and divisions such as : declarative Vs procedural knowledge, episodic Vs semantic, Tacit Vs Explicit, experimental knowledge. Roschelle (2000:48) or Formal Vs Content knowledge . Carrell (1983: 83). In fact, these dichotomies are based on whether the prior knowledge is the information itself or the nature of the steps of the information processing. Some dichotomies are presented below.

3.1.2.1 Declarative Knowledge Vs Procedural Knowledge

For Postner, (1978:48 cited in De jong, 1986:48) , the declarative knowledge is also called “conceptual knowledge”, it is the meanings of symbols and concepts and

principles of a particular field of study while the procedural knowledge is the knowledge of action, manipulation and activities. The difference between the declarative knowledge and the procedural knowledge is that procedural knowledge refers directly to action or activity, while declarative knowledge requires an interpretation in order to lead to an action. (Roschelle, 2009: 49). The declarative knowledge can be further divided into episodic and semantic knowledge. Episodic knowledge refers to the sum of contextual and incidental personal experience in its context of time and place. However, semantic knowledge refers to a presentation of the external world abstracted from its context and conceptualized in semantic memory.

3.1.2.2 Content Knowledge Vs Formal Knowledge

Carrell (1983:84) attributes this division to the reading comprehension process where the reader is supposed to possess some formal knowledge of the genre that a text belongs to, how the text is developed and organized, while the content prior knowledge concerns the reader's information about themes and ideas conveyed through the text.

3.1.2.3 Experimental Knowledge

The experimental knowledge is seen as part of the prior knowledge which is not formally analysed and which is acquired through life, work and study. Horwitz (1989: *ibid*).

3.2 Teachers' Prior Knowledge

In the foreign language learner's prior knowledge, the teacher constitutes a major component of his schemata; being the official transmitter of knowledge along the

learner's educational trajectory. The way teachers are trained and formed affect either positively or negatively their practical knowledge and hence, their teaching practice.

3.2.1 Definition of Teachers' Practical Knowledge

Borg (2003:81) gives two interpretations of teachers' practical knowledge as being "part of the teacher's cognition" and as "what teachers know, believe, and think".

Elbaz (1983:5) argues that teacher's practical knowledge :

"encompasses first hand experience of students' learning styles, interests, needs, strengths and difficulties, and a repertoire of instructional techniques and classroom management skills"

While Connelly and Clandinin (1988:25), define teachers practical knowledge as follows:

Personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation.

Thus, the teacher's practical knowledge being an important constituent of the learner's educational background, when put at work, encompasses more than the information taught but a considerable amount of information about the teaching process itself, which includes his own background as a learner, the methods of teaching and his experience. In the same view, Borg (1999) investigated the relation between an EFL teacher's pedagogical systems, teacher cognition and grammar teaching. One finding of his studies was that the teacher's instructional decision-making was influenced by his knowledge of context, educational experience, and teaching experience.

Johnston's and Goettsch's (2000: 446-7) attempted to explore the ESL teachers' prior knowledge in grammar teaching, they found out that teachers have been initially influenced by two factors:

1. Their educational background, "ranging from middle and high school grammar classes to graduate course work in linguistic courses focusing on the structure of English.
2. Their teaching experiences.

In concluding terms, the second or foreign language teacher transmits certainly his prior knowledge, his knowledge of the target language, and, his personal assumptions obtained through his experience in teaching. The flaws of the teachers' educational background certainly affect their practice and hence the learners' educational background.

3.3 Teaching Languages in Algeria after Independance.

The factors entailing adults' weaknesses in learning a foreign language are subject to many studies in various disciplines. Error analysis provided tangible explanations on mother tongue interference either in foreign language comprehension or pronunciation, while cross-cultural psychology related the foreign language learning difficulties to cultural conflicts that learners undergo when introduced to a new culture (Schuman, 1978, 1985 and Cammillei, 1997) through a foreign language. In psycholinguistics, learners' motivation is often justified by their individual differences in learning strategies, cognitive abilities or attitudes towards the foreign language (Gardner, 1985, 2000 and Dornyei, 2005). It is generally recognized that the causes of failure in learning a foreign language can not be limited to one or more factors, since learners present a sum of aspects among which we can cite : prior knowledge, psychological,

social, biological and cognitive abilities (see in Chapter one) which are all at work in the learning process. (Dornyei, 2005: ibid). One of the main components of the foreign language prior knowledge is the learner's first language.

Research on the impact of SL learners' native language on learning the target language provided evidence that "the transfer of patterns from the native language is undoubtedly one of the major sources of errors in learner's second language proficiency as advanced by Lightbown and Spada (1999:165 in Alharbi 2010:145).

As far as Algeria is concerned, the linguistic background is very rich and complex too. It makes of Algeria a unique arab nation with the number of languages taught and used either in academic or non-academic contexts. In Algeria, a considerable number of University students learning English show a difficulty to write and speak correctly in English even if these students tended to be highly motivated to learn the English language. To explain this situation we found it necessary to give an overview of university English learners' educational background which underwent since 1962 until the 1990's a long term policy called « Arabisation » and find out its effect on teaching English in Algeria as a third language.

The Algerian linguistic situation is unique in the arab world as described by Tabory and Tabory, (1987:64) :

“A crossroad of tensions between French; the colonial language, Arabic, the new national language ; classical Arabic Versus colloquial Arabic and the various Berber Dialects versus Arabic”

The noteworthy diversity of language in Algeria denotes a diversity of communities' origins on the one hand, and on the other, the absence of one mother tongue for reference. The linguistic question in Algeria, in fact, is still a debatable issue that has a historical, political as well as social and cultural dimensions as is advanced by Benrabah(1994, 1999). Kaplan and Baldauf (2007:07) state that 'the language issue during the pre-independence and post-independence eras marks the uniqueness of Algeria within African countries'. The same view can be found in the following statement by Djité (1992:16): "Nowhere else in Africa, has the language issue been so central in the fight against colonialism, as in Algeria"

Benrabah, (2007:225) divided the development of the Algerian educational history into three main phases, the first of which is the dominance of the educational system in Algeria by the French colonization, the second, lasted from independence to the 1990's where a policy of arabisation was implemented and the third one began in the early 2000 characterized by the transition to globalized pedagogy or the free market economy.

During the French colonization, Algerians were obliged to learn French as a national language while Arabic was given a status of a foreign language in 1938 Benrabah (2007: 226). Arabic and the different dialects spoken at that time were not taught at schools but were symbols of identity and nationalism. Even though, French was an imposed language, and originally designed for French students if we consider that the majority of pupils were French.

The French colonization had marked the Algerian culture and French became part of the every day spoken dialects, even more, there are regions in Algeria where people talk every day using academic French until the present day as a consequence, Algeria emerged as the second French speaking French country after France. (Grandguillaume 2004:04). After independence, when the arabisation policy was launched, the only recognized language officially was Arabic; and this was totally logical because of the government and people tendency to drop all what could represent the 130 colonization years.

3.3.1 Arabisation Policy Implementation and Consequences on Education in Algeria

Starting from 1962, the Algerian government that inherited French schooling system based on a European content and conducted in a foreign language by foreign teachers, sought to gradually increase arabic sessions in all levels and all subjects were taught in Arabic as stated by Holt (1994:38) : “The language of arabisation was motivated by the Islamic faith which remained the most fundamental component of the Algerian identity” and there was a decrease in the amount of time for teaching French. This policy, of course favoured the national integrity and unity and religion as explained by Grandguillaume, (2004:05) who states three reasons for launching the Arabisation policy:

1. Being a cultural aspect of independence.
2. Being the language of Islam.
3. Being the language of the Arab nation

The arabisation policy had been widely criticized for ignoring the population linguistic diversity as is the case of the Berber language speakers (Grandguillaume, 2004:118) and the lack of teaching personnel (Benrabah, 1999:25) which pushed the government in 1964 to recruit 1000 Egyptian as Arabic language instructors who had :

1. An Egyptian Arabic that was difficult to understand by Algerians and especially for the Tamazight speaking population.
2. A traditional pedagogy based on physical punishment and class recitation. (Benrabah: *ibid*)

The main flaw of the arabisation policy was the way it was applied in the Algerian educational system under the absence of the necessary staff and materials; the process was quick in terms of its planification and application in addition to the fact that the government objective of Arabisation did not take into account the variety of local languages which in their turn were an aspect of identity as is the case of the Berber community.

3.4 Educational Reforms before 2001

The education planning reforms in Algeria after the independence can be globally classified under two major periods:

1. From 1962 to 1970's: Which was characterized by bilingualism in French and Literary Arabic.
2. From 1970's until now, characterized by monolingualism in standard Arabic for the majority of the population. (Baldaurf et al, 2007: 25-27)

3.4.1 The Foundation School

Until the 1970's the educational system consisted of five (05) years in the primary school, Four (04) years in the middle school and three (03) in secondary school

(Grandguillaume, 2003:04). Starting from 1976, the fundamental school was implemented; a new schooling system that is completely arabised where nine schooling years fused the primary and middle school grades with all the subjects taught in Arabic except for the foreign languages. (Kaplan and Baldaurf, 2007: 73-74). For the secondary education, pupils could choose one of three optional streams: general, technical, or vocational to sit for the Baccalaureat examination before attending university, technical institutes, or vocational training centers, or directly to employment (Grandguillaume, 2004: 5), starting from 1993, School children in grade four could choose between French and English as the compulsory foreign language to study. (Benrabah, 1999:83).

The arabisation policy was completely reorganized by 1989. Nonetheless, the textbooks in Arabic that were published in 1988 lacked the critical approach as can be understood through Lardjane (1993:5-6), statement: “ If the philosophy textbook fails to help Algerian teenagers think of themselves as autonomous , free and critical subjects, then what is the use of teaching philosophy at all”

The issue of critical thinking enhancement and pupils autonomy through textbooks, is still debated as we can see in the works of Simister (2004) who emphasized the idea that repeating the accepted ideas generates dull and uninspired pupils, and Turuk (2008: 256) who believes that “students should be taught to create, adjust their strategies and assimilate learning activities into their own world”

French continued as the favored language of instruction in general, particularly in mathematics and science (Grandguillaume, 2004:02) though the majority of teachers

were Algerian. Arabization of the education system was considered an important objective of the 1990s in addition to teaching professional skill programs to fit the industrial needs. (ibid).

3.4.2 The Higher Education Reforms

The Algerian universities after the independence, followed the French system; faculties were autonomous in terms of possessing an independent administration for each faculty and free in designing the teaching programs in form and content. The decision to arabize Algerian universities was issued in 1991 (Grandguillaume, 2004: ibid), as a consequence, about 1500 Iraqi teachers were employed but the decision was suspended a year later. Nevertheless, the universities still loosely resemble the French model, and French remains widely used for instructional purposes. The number of French instructors has declined, however, as the number of Algerian teachers has increased after 1980. In 1981-82, for instance, 64.6 percent of the teachers at all levels of education were Algerian. By the academic year 1990-91, the percentage had increased to 93.4 percent.

A follower of the arabisation policy implementation in the educational system can see that it could be applied in a relatively flexible way in the general education than in higher education since in the first,former, teaching Arabic aimed primarily at replacing the spoken dialects and correcting pupils' deficiencies in the language, while, in the latter, , arabization was hard to achieve in the specific scientific domains taught at university level. The Arabisation implementation, process and results were portrayed in several occasions as the source of failure in the Algerian educational system as can be understood from the following statement by Ahmed Djebbar (1995), Minister of education (1992-

1994) in Grandguillaume, (2003: 13) who explains that the qualitative failure of education is due to many reasons, among which, three are related to Arabisation decisions of the 1970's:

- 1- First, the Arabic language taught is 'utilitarian' and similar to that 'taught to tourists' which implies that the cultural component of language had been ignored.
- 2- Second, Arabic was implemented at the expense of foreign languages, and even for the French language that maintained a considerable position compared to English, the French teaching has no cultural dimensions.
- 3- Human sciences like philosophy, history and literature are being slowly marginalized though they constitute the educational area of culture and critical thinking.

3.5 Educational Reforms after 2001

In 2002, French was reintroduced into the second grade of primary school. And English is scheduled in the sixth grade of the middle school, two grades earlier than in the past. Some subjects, as Sciences and Mathematics would be partly taught in French. (Lakhal-Ayat, 2008).

3.5.1 The LMD System

Since 2004/05, the License-Master-Doctorate system was applied; a university system is to replace the classical system, as was the case in many Anglo-Saxon countries, it was issued in the Executive Decree 04-371 of November, 21st 2004. The main difference between the classical and the LMD system is the duration of the studies; three years of enrollment instead of four years. Lakhal Ayat (2008).

It can be noticed that from the 1960's to 2000's, the most considerable change in the educational system in Algeria was the arabisation policy in terms of the required implementation time and efforts but as layed out by Benrabah (2007:248), the linguistic convergence was the main pragmatic result with the creation of a 'new nationalism' of the Berber community on one hand, and on the other, it led to opposition between Algerian French and Arabic speakers.

3.6 English Textbooks in Algeria

Many scholars investigated the adequacy of school English textbooks in Algeria in terms of units organization, skills balance, illustrations number and appropriacy, texts readability, subject knowledge and the content of the material taught and tried to relate these criteria to the program and the learner needs such as Lakhel Ayat, (2008) reflecting the progress and flaws of the educational system. Other researchers focused on the presence, the role or position of cultural information in the textbook, taken as an important component of curriculum as concluded by Merrouche, (2006) who states that: Culture remains the weakest component of the Algerian FL class due to its uneven treatment in the coursebooks, lack of familiarity, among teachers, and with the techniques needed to teach it and the learners' unawareness of its relevance to the "essential business of teaching a language. (ibid: 556)

Other researchers highlighted the role of textbooks in enforcing the otherness conception by the Algerian English learner as Yacine (2012:366), who concluded that "the Algerian textbooks present an unbalanced and biased cultural contextualization". It is noteworthy,

here, that the two scholars had analyzed different textbooks since textbooks in Algeria had undergone considerable change before and after the last educational reforms.

3.6.1 Cultural Content in the EFL Textbooks

3.6.1.1 Approaches to Teach Foreign language Culture

The teaching of a foreign language implies necessarily the teaching of its culture, this process is generally achieved through foreign language textbooks that fall into two main categories: the global or international textbooks and the locally produced textbooks, and can be performed through many approaches. (Rizager,1998 in Abbaspour, 2012:22) described four different approaches for culture instruction:

- 1- Intercultural approach, where focus is on the target language culture but the aim of the approach is to highlight differences and similarities between the second language learner's own culture and the foreign culture.
- 2- The multicultural approach, where the curriculum is expected to provide information on the target language ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity under the belief that in every culture there are subcultures.
- 3- The Trans-cultural approach, which is based on the conviction that thanks to globalization and mass media, the cultural contact between different people resulted in an international culture, hence there's no need to relate the foreign language to a particular culture.

Arslan and Arslan (2012:35-36) present five other approaches that focus, using the cultural information, on developing the SL learners' skills. These are:

- 1- The theme based Approach: the cultural information is presented under themes like liberty, the art of living, education .
- 2- the topic based approach: Here, focus is put on more general issues, the purpose of which, is to motivate learners to take part in discussions, arguefor an opinion. (Wisnieswska and Brogouska, 2004)
- 3- The problem oriented Approach that urges the learners to make research on issues of the target language culture.
- 4- The Skill Centered Approach is more practical, it develops the learners' skills to avoid miscommunication with the target language speaking communities. This approach fits individuals who seek living abroad.
- 5- The Task based Approach is learner centered; the SL learners are required to work in groups and develop tasks out of their research.

Cortazzi and Jin, (1999:204-210) divide the foreign language textbooks into three categories on the basis of their focus on culture; textbooks may vary between:

1. Presenting the local culture: teaching the learner to speak about his own culture using the foreign language.
2. Presenting the target language culture: the textbook portrays the target language culture through the material used and the different tasks.
3. Presenting international culture: it focuses neither on the learner's culture nor the target language culture. It presents different cultures of countries where the target language is used.

All in all, there are three main traditions to include the foreign language cultural content as presented in the following table:

First Tradition	Second tradition	Third tradition
<p>The target language culture is taught through:</p> <p>1-Statistical information:knowledge of and facts.</p> <p>2-Highbrow information: classics of literature and arts in general.</p> <p>3-Lowbrow information: food and everyday folklore.</p>	<p>Interpretive Perspective/Trans-cultural information:</p> <p>Using universal categories of human behavior and the learner is provided with a key to interpret phenomena with the local culture.</p> <p>The cultural differences are not explicitly addressed. But, passive learners can not integrate the cultural knowledge with their own cultural allegiance.</p>	<p>Sets a dialogic approach that addresses language, culture and the self on philosophical basis. Bakhtin (1986)</p> <p>1-Based on dialogues:</p> <p>2-language is taught with the historical situated language users and meaning makers.</p> <p>3-language is a social Dialogic process.</p>

Table 7: *Traditions of teaching culture in the foreign language classrooms*

Adapted from Yacine (2012:77-80)

3.6.1.2 Textbook Cultural Content Evaluation

Many scholars investigated the adequacy of school English textbooks in Algeria in terms of design methods, meeting the teaching goals and fitting the syllabus projected for our pupils in middle and high schools such as lakhal Ayat, (2008) The evaluation of textbooks focuses on the units organization, skills balance, illustrations number and appropriacy, texts readability, subject knowledge and the content of the material taught

and tries to relate these criteria to the program and the learner needs. Textbooks in Algeria had undergone considerable change after the last educational reform (starting from 2002). Textbook evaluation had been defined by many scholars among them, Rea-Dichens and Germaine (1992) as: ‘Evaluation is the principled and systematic collection of information for purposes of decision making’ or as defined by McDonald, (1973:1-2)

Evaluation is the process of conceiving, obtaining and communicating information for the guidance of educational decision making with regard to a specific program.

Textbook evaluation may be:

1. A pre-use evaluation: is a predictive evaluation of the implementation results.
2. An in-use evaluation: the results of evaluation can be used for the improvement of materials use.
3. Post use evaluation: It determines the actual effectiveness of the textbook and its influence on the users.

The textbook’s evaluation checklists are instruments that assist teachers to select the appropriate teaching materials and help practitioners of EFL to choose the textbook that meets their learners specificities and needs. Byrd (2001:427) states that the evaluation seeks primarily to check the fit between the textbook and the curriculum; “fits the pedagogical objectives and SLA philosophy of the program/course”. A review of the literature on ELT material evaluation checklists as far as the textbook’s cultural content evaluation is concerned, entailed four models as shown in the following table:

Skiero's Model: 1991	Byram and Escarte-Sarries' model	Sercu's Model:	Cortazzi and Jin's Model 1999
<p>The degree of cultural content integration in the foreign language teaching material taking into consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Giving accurate information. 2. Avoiding stereotypes. 3. Draws realistic image of the society. 4. Not ideologically loaded. 5. Presents single or contextualized situations. 	<p>Whether the textbook reflects the complex reality of the foreign culture at the following levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Micro social level. 2. Macro social level. 3. Intercultural level. 4. Author's position. 	<p>Evaluation the foreign cultural content from the following dimensions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representativeness and realism. 2. Characters depiction. 3. Linguistic content. 4. Type of cultural content. 	<p>The evaluation focuses on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Type of cultural content. 2. The effectiveness of the cultural content in developing the cultural skills.

Table: 8 Models of Textbook Cultural Content Evaluation: Checklists

Adapted from (Garrido, 2007 :06)

On the basis of this classification, and following the aim of the study, we opted for using the Cortazzi and Jin (1999) checklist to consider both the type of cultural content implemented in the foreign language coursebook and whether or not this type of cultural content develops the learners' cultural skills.

3.7 The Relevance of Critical Thinking in Second Language Learning

Recent studies on the link between language and culture carry the assumption that culture and language are intertwined. For Kaikkonen (1997: 47-51), the teaching should constitute a unity through which the SL learner conception of his world that he develops by his own culture, is extended by his conception of other cultures. If the second language culture is not taught, teaching the second language is “inaccurate and incomplete”. As can be understood in the following statement by Pulverness (2003:435):

The primary objective can be clearly to develop critical thinking about cultural issues, resisting the tendency of the materials to use content only to contextualize the presentation and practice of language items.

Integrating cultural information in a SL program constitutes a significant concern for program designers, Lantolf and Thorne (2006:477-480). Studies by Byram (1989) shed light on the similarities between the SL culture and the learner’s culture. Moreover, Savignon (2005) affirms that teaching foreign languages is related to national ideologies and influenced by the social, educational policy and politics:

language teaching is inextricably tied to language policy... Diverse sociopolitical contexts mandate not only a diverse set of language learning goals, but a diverse set of teaching strategies. Savingnon (2005:637)

Thus, the teaching of a second language has cultural and sociopolitical dimensions that influence the strategies of teaching the second language and consequently guide the target language program content and form designers on the basis of the teaching objectives.

Critical thinking was defined by Paul (1992) as “the art of thinking about your thinking while you are thinking in order to make your thinking better: more clear, more accurate and more defensible”, while Lipman (1988:39) considers that critical thinking is skillful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because it relies upon criteria, is self correcting and is sensitive to context. the closeness of critical thinking to intercultural competence can be noted in the following definition by Willingham (2007:8 in Lai, 2011:8)

Seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, deducing and inferring conclusions from available facts, solving problems, and so forth.

The definition assumes that critical thinking entails balancing positive and negative aspects of issues, avoiding to jump to conclusions emotionally, rely on tangible facts and solving problems which are all determinants of intercultural competence. The relevance of critical reflection in second and foreign language teaching is advocated by many scholars as Norton and Toohey (2004 in Benites 2012:77) who state that the implementation of the critical pedagogy in teaching SL is necessary under the continuous social change and the different socio-economic stratifications; language is then considered as a social tool that enables the learner to understand his surroundings. Another view by Fairclough (1992) emphasizes that “acquiring mechanical skills of coding and decoding of linguistic structures without a critical element that discusses how the message attains different meanings in social functions deceives the learner. (Ibid p)

Thus, the need for critical reflection in teaching SL is not only a requirement for developing intercultural competence as advanced by Deardoff (2006, 2009), but it is also

a necessity for assisting learners and train them to evaluate, judge, argue, make a decision or an action.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we had to consider in the first place, the theoretical assumptions on the significance of prior knowledge in general which contributes in the later information processing and influences learners' as well as teachers achievement. Hence, it could be noticed that the educational system in Algeria, since 1962, its reconstruction and arabisation constitute an important part of the nowadays foreign language learner's background. For the English language, the last reforms (After 2001) gave it a noticeable consideration as the language of development, up to date resources and scientific research. The combination of language and culture in teaching has been the concern of many scholars who agree on the fact that no separation is possible between the language teaching and its culture advancing various approaches to include the foreign language culture in the FL curricular. Accordingly, we highlighted the significance of textbooks' cultural content; its implementation approaches as well its evaluation models which provided us with the principles and checklists of cultural textbooks analysis.

Chapter Four

Research Design and Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents the basic research aim and population, unfolding the research method and instruments. It explains the methodological procedure used in this research with a description of the design and administration of the three research instruments implemented. It also presents the analysis of the data obtained through administering the questionnaire and the language proficiency test and the plan we followed to gather data and analyze it.

4.1 Research Design

4.1.1 Research Aims and Instruments

As mentioned in the general introduction, the present study was conducted to determine factors behind the lack of intercultural competence in university EFL classes

in Biskra University and check whether or not the learners educational background and cultural differences constitute part of these factors. Taking into consideration the learners' attitude towards the target language speaking communities as the first component of the intercultural competence (Byram and Zarate, 1997) and that motivation plays a predominant role in learners' performance in Second /foreign language learning Gardner (1985,2007), We sought, first to gather data about our learners' willingness to learn English as a foreign language learning which carries usually a foreign culture . Second, a language aptitude test is administered to determine learners' proficiency level in the foreign language . Finally, through middle and high school textbook analysis, we attempted to obtain data about the method used to introduce the learner to the target language culture and check the presence of drills and tasks which enhance learners autonomy of analysis.

4.1.2 Population

The study was conducted on first year English learners at Biskra university. The sample constitutes 1/3 of the total number of the 480 registered students. This population has a specific attitude to foreign languages, compared to big cities like Algiers, Constantine, Oran and many others, the east-southern cities are assumed to be relatively conservative.

The proficiency test was administered to the same sample population in reading and writing tests. However, for technical reasons in terms of the availability of laboratories, it was unavoidable to divide the 153 students into smaller groups (20

students in each group) to test listening and speaking, we could proceed in that test five times, reaching the number of 96 students. This number of students constitutes the fifth of the population.

4.1.3 Description and Administration of Research Instruments

In the present study, in order to check our hypotheses, three techniques were used; a questionnaire, a proficiency test and textbooks analysis.

4.1.3.1 The Questionnaire

To check the hypotheses of the present study, a questionnaire was designed to obtain data on first year learners' motives to choose learning English at university as layed out by Alansari and Lori (1999:34-35), their perception of the importance of learning English for academic and professional carrier, the status of the foreign culture in the curriculum taught at university and their attitude towards the English culture. This questionnaire was above all elaborated to provide data about learners' overall motivation to learn English and its culture.

4.1.3.1.2 Questionnaire Description

The questionnaire consisted of nineteen (19) questions (see appendix 1) that are presented below in four main parts:

Part One

It consisted of seven (07) questions positively worded through which we cited the following motives:

1-English is a worldwide language.

2-English is used in scientific research.

3-English is a means to have different friends from various nationalities.

4-It is socially appreciated to know foreign languages.

5-It is the language used to communicate with all people abroad.

6-English will probably be useful in their future professional life.

7-They want to know about the culture of English native speakers.

Part Two

The second part of the questionnaire is made of five (05) positively worded questions through which we layed out some aspects of usefulness of the English language:

1-If we want to interact with English native speakers.

2-Being in touch with English native speakers can be useful for Algeria.

3-the experts who talk in English took part in our nation's development.

4-Algerian scientists and industrialists should interact with English native speakers.

Part Three

I consisted of four (04) positively worded questions are asked to check whether the learners think that the mastery of a foreign language requires learning about its culture.

1-that university curricular should contain information about the native speakers.

2-Learning a foreign language implies necessarily the learning of its culture.

3-Being aware of the foreign language culture helps in enriching students' knowledge about this language.

5-Learning the foreign language means the mastery of grammar, spelling and language sciences.

Part Four

Through this last part of the questionnaire, we addressed the student attitude towards the foreign culture giving him the opportunity to answer freely the following questions:

- 1- Is the learner's culture different from the foreign language culture ?
- 2- Would the student prefer to study in a European or an Arab nation ?
- 3- What does benefit from a foreign culture mean to him ?
- 4- To what extent can learning a foreign culture change one's thinking ?

4.1.3.1.2 Pilot Administration

Since we opted for administering the questionnaire in class, we found it necessary to administer it first to a few learners in order to have an idea about the time needed to answer the questions and also to check its clarity. We chose one student from each group to whom we addressed the questions; we sought to be sure that the respondents would answer individually the questionnaire. The pilot administration was satisfactory for the majority of the questions but some questions in part four were reformulated.

4.1.3.1.3 Questionnaire Administration

The designed questionnaire was administered in class. By doing so, we sought to be sure that all the respondents would answer and give back the questionnaire. The operation took about an hour and a half. We explained to the informants the nature and the aim of the study as well as the necessity of answering the question frankly and individually.

4.1.3.1.4 Analysis Process

Every question's answers were gathered in a separate table; in that way, calculating percentages of answers (yes/no/ maybe) could be possible. For the open questions, we recorded all learners' answers to classify them according to common comments. As the aim of the questionnaire is to gather data about learners' attitude to English as a foreign language carrying a foreign culture, respondents' answers were classified into categories of answers.

4.1.3.2 The Language Proficiency Test

The Aptitude test is a means to measure the degree of aptitude to learn a foreign language (Dornyei 2005), in different institutions like:

- Foreign service officers
- university students
- high school students
- military personnel

Since aptitude is a fixed trait in human beings (Carroll 1981), it does not change over time. Nonetheless, there are some factors that may influence the candidate achievement like fatigue or anxiety but in general little consideration is paid to them.

4.1.3.2.1 Description of the Proficiency Test

In order to evaluate the learners' linguistic competence and measure their knowledge in English along with identifying the areas where they present a deficiency, we opted for using an aptitude test. It is a sum of activities in the four skills: Reading,

Writing, Listening and speaking. The test was designed on the example of the Cambridge Certificate Tests for English learners at university entry.

While designing the test we took into consideration time factor since in the Cambridge university tests' activities are relatively long and require more time (Three hours for each skill). Thus, we had to adjust the four activities to a maximum of two hours considering that the LMD schedule is overloaded. Furthermore, the Cambridge Certificate Test is administered to native and non native speakers targeting high requirement from the candidates.

4.1.3.2.1.1 The Reading Comprehension Test

Students were given a text and asked to answer the reading comprehension questions. To answer these questions, the respondent was supposed to choose the right answer among four options. At this first step of the test, learners were not expected to focus on formulating any sentences but only concentrate on understanding the text and making choices/guesses.

4.1.3.2.1.2 The Writing Test

It is composed of three (03) exercises:

A-Use of English activity: Students were asked to fill the gaps in a text by choosing the right term from a list of four (04) words for each of the twelve (12) gaps. The learners had to choose sometimes among synonyms and sometimes among totally

different words. This activity could give us an idea about the students' richness of vocabulary and their ability to distinguish the proper meaning from the text context.

B-Grammar: We designed several activities focusing on the English grammar areas where learners faced some difficulties.

- 1-Present continuous use.
- 2-Simple tense : imperative and present.
- 3-the use of“as good as”
- 4-the use of comparatives.
- 5-the use of perfect tenses.
- 6-The use of possessive forms.
- 7-The use of conjunctions.
- 8-The use of auxiliaries.
- 9-Detection of ungrammatical expressions.

c- Written Expression

In this part of the test, the learners were asked to write twenty lines about their future career and present the reasons that pushed them to choose that specific domain. We expected to have through their writing an overall idea about their ability to organize their ideas, argue for their choice using the right structure and respecting norms of writing such as spelling, punctuation and grammatical rules.

4.1.3.2.1.3 The Listening Test

Considering that language learning basically starts with listening, as an input skill and that listening plays a crucial role in the language proficiency development since

language is acquired through receiving the language sounds we hear (Krashen, 1985), the listening task was mainly designed to measure the learners' ability to comprehend native speakers pronunciation through listening to audio tapes in both accents: American and British English. We took into consideration that learners' exposure to the target language authentic material is only through media.

We designed the following task:

The candidates listened for five (05) times to a tape (in British English pronunciation) on hearing, they had to fill the gaps:

- It is commonthat we all have the same auditory experience.
- The sound takes the form of a as it travels to the inner ear.
- Only when a sound reaches thedo we register that we have heard it.
- An Australian biologist is sure that men can identify the of an animal better than women.
- He suggests that this skill evolved when men was primarily a.....
- The biologist think that women can hear shrill sounds so that they can recognize..... in a child's cry.
- Differences in hearing between males and females have been detected immediately after.....
- Some people in Manchester have been disturbed by an irritating noise similar to.....

4.1.3.2.1.4 The Speaking Test

The speaking test is a complex thought system that requires a good deal of shared experience and conversation. For Rowe (1986:45-46), "it is in talking about what we have done and observed, and in arguing about what we make of our

experiences, that ideas, multiply, become refined and finally produce new questions and further explanations”while Kramersch (1993:1) believes that every time we speak, we perform a cultural act. In this study, the speaking test was designed for two different objectives which combine both scholars’ views mentioned above.

1- To obtain data about students’ oral proficiency, through observing their oral production deficiencies in terms of pronunciation correctness, conformity to syntactic rules and richness of vocabulary. These are the criteria by which the oral proficiency is measured.

2- Following our aim to detect students’ ability to relate and interpret/analyze issues embedding foreign culture concepts in discussion, the speaking test can provide data on students’ use of analytical and critical strategies in argueing and judging cultural differences between their own culture and the English speaking communities culture (see chapter two). The topics chosen in this test are either of general interest (“criteria of a good friend” and “third World countries characteristics”) or carry a cultural conflictual concept (comparing “women in the English speaking communities and Muslim women” and the “benefits of the aesthetic surgery”. The choice of the four topics is based on the following considerations:

➤ **Topic one**

“The good friend criteria”: is enhanced through the following question: If you have an opportunity to choose a close friend on what characteristics do you base your choice? The topic treats a relative issue since every individual view of the good friend is shaped by the individual’s needs and character; discussing this topic would provide data on whether the learner uses the generally accepted criteria of a good friend or specific criteria according his own opinion using argumentation.

➤ **Topic Two**

“Third world characteristics”. It is opened through the following question: In what way can you describe a Third World country? This issue is discussed through media, where focus is usually put on the negative features such as underdevelopment, ignorance and many other criteria. The purpose in this case is to provide an idea on learners’ ability to analyze the issue, deliver positive and negative aspects of third world countries according to their own viewpoints : do they use statistics, refer to historical facts, give arguments to support their opinions.

➤ **Topic Three**

“Comparing Western non Muslim women and Muslim women.” The topic is enhanced through the following question: if your sister decides to move to an English speaking country and is suspicious about interacting with foreign non Muslim women there, what would you tell her? This issue is deliberately implemented in order to check learners’ ability to compare and draw conclusions from the comparison, as far as religion is concerned. The topic tackles the cultural differences between the Muslim and non Muslim occidental women that is portrayed through media in terms of behavior and appearance, considering religion as one of the main components of the individual’s culture. (Atran and Norenzayan, 2004:713).

➤ **Topic Four**

“The role of aesthetic surgery in improving people’s life.” The topic is enhanced through the question: If your friend decides to undergo an aesthetic surgery, what would you advise him/her ? The aesthetic surgery constitutes a debatable subject in many countries from a religious point of view. The learners who discuss this topic have to

express their viewpoint toward the issue and argue for it. The choice of this question aims basically at urging the learners to express a personal opinion referring to their culture using critical or analysis strategies.

The analysis process takes into consideration the learner's choice of topic, which determines the willingness of the learner to tackle cultural differences or not, Berry et al (1997) and the use of interpretation, comparison, argumentation and analysis in discussion, which are intercultural competence indicators.

4.1.3.2.2 The pilot study

The writing and reading tests were compared to several English tests of the baccalaureate exam and we noticed that little difference could be found thus we opted for designing a pilot study in the Listening speaking tests. It was a listening task of a native speaker speech for about 10 minutes. The text is characterized by its shortness and simplicity, there are no difficult terms, the sentences are short and simple and the speakers intonation is supportive, the received pronunciation is used and the utterances were relativey slow. The text was a description of weather in Great Britain, at this level learners were asked only to:

-Answer some questions about the passage.

-Summarize the general idea and pick up some places names and functional words like verbs and nouns.

The activity could provide us with the overall level of the learners in listening and would give us guidelines to choose the appropriate material. We took into consideration that in the high school as in the middle school our students were not

introduced to native speakers recordings and their acquaintance with native speakers speech is mainly provided by TV shows and programs. The pilot study showed that 34% of the group could obtain the average score.

4.1.3.2.3 Administration of the Proficiency Test

The writing and reading tests were both administered, on the same day, in 03 hours. The speaking and listening tests were programmed in separate oral expression sessions, however, group administration was hard to achieve because learners learners showed hesitation to take such tests. To relieve this hesitation, we explained to them thoroughly the benefits of research for the teaching/ learning process improvement but in no way, students accepted the camera presence so, it was impossible to film the listening speaking sessions.

4.1.3.2.4 Analysis Procedure

The proficiency test is used to measure learners language aptitude in language performance. The analysis of the proficiency test aims first to determine learners' aptitude; namely their scores in the four skills tests to find out the areas where their deficiencies are noteworthy. The findings will be taken from the correlation of the following:

- ✓ Learners' attitude to the foreign language and to its culture.
- ✓ Learners' scores in the three proficiency tests: writing, reading comprehension and the listening speaking tests.

- ✓ The type of cultural content implemented in the middle and high school textbooks and its efficiency in promoting learners intercultural competence and mainly in two of its skills: the attitude towards the target language speaking communities and the ability to interpret and relate cultural issues, in addition to the presence of analysis and interpretation tasks as part of the textbooks' drills. Furthermore, the prominence and interpretation of cultural tasks will be taken into account.

4.1.3.3 Textbooks' Analysis

Following our aim to determine the relationship between first year students performance at university with their educational and cultural background we found it necessary to analyze the way the students were introduced to the English speaking communities culture and check whether the textbook drills develop student ability to analyze cultural issues and elaborate objective value judgement.

4.1.3.3.1 Analyzed Textbooks

We assume that the coursebook is not the only source by which our learners had shaped their convictions and attitude towards the foreign culture since there are many other informal sources like TV programs, internet interractional cites, magazines and many others. We chose two textbooks from each level:

- Second and third Year Middle School Cousebooks.
- Second and third Year High School Coursebooks.

The choice of textbooks took into account the following criteria:

-The number of textbooks is 4/7 which constitutes more than 50% of the taught program at these levels.

-We avoided first year middle school textbooks because sample population entered middle school in 2002 which means they were taught with the previous textbooks until 2004.

4.1.3.3.2 Analysis Model: Cortazzi and Jin (1999)

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) framework is in favor of the inclusion of a cultural content in EFL coursebooks taking into consideration that culture helps in raising the learners awareness of intercultural issues (See table 8, p 101). This model proposes three sources of cultural content:

- Source Culture: the learners own culture.
- Target Culture: the target language culture. In this study, English is the target/ foreign language.
- International target cultures: the culture of English speaking communities in the world even if English in these communities is not a first or second language.

The presentation of source culture, target culture and international culture will enable the learner to learn culture-specific and culture- general information of values. In the Cortazzi and Jin Model, the EFL textbook evaluation focuses on:

1. The type of cultural content.
2. The effectiveness of the cultural content in developing learners' intercultural competence.

The only challenge in this model is that the learner, when introduced to non-specific cultural information, is expected to interpret, recognize and evaluate the cultural differences individually otherwise, he will learn much information without learning any

specific cultural element. The learner is expected, then, to possess a cultural critical awareness to prevent any generalization or associating the negative or positive characteristics/ behavior of some members of the target language culture with the whole speaking community.

4.1.4 Limitations of the study

The present research tools (questionnaire and proficiency test) were administered to approximately 1/3 of the population; namely first year students. On one hand, this number of informants seems representative enough of the population. On the other hand we encountered some difficulties in administering the speaking/ listening tests because of technical constraints which resulted in the reduction of the number of students in the sample to 93 students among the 489 registered students.

Learners' responses to the questionnaire questions were obtained in comfortable conditions, we can assume that their answers reflect the way they perceive the English language position and their attitude towards its culture. The speaking and listening tests made it clear for us that there is more than a declared attitude to be checked but no contradiction exists between these two research tools.

Finally, we assume that the students' level in English is the result of their former education in middle and high schools while their conceptualization of the English speaking communities culture is not shaped via their former education but also the result of the unlimited information access through media. This led us to think that when evaluating the coursebook designed to first year at middle school level, considering the pupils age (12 years), we believe that the way cultural concepts provided by the coursebook was prior to the pupils contact with later informal means of media.

4.2 Data Analysis

4.2.1 The questionnaire

The questionnaire is addressed to the sample of population of first year students in the department of Foreign Languages (English classes) at Biskra University to gather data about their attitude to English as their choice, their learning perspectives and the way they see its usefulness in a professional life on one hand and on the other, the way they perceive the foreign culture embedded in that language.

The motivation and attitude toward learning a second language are considered in the literature (See Chapter One), as complex constructs as layed out by Dornyei et al (2004) and Gardner (2001) because of the complexity of language which is socially overloaded. Thus, the collected data gave us insights about the overall motivation of these respondents taking as indicators; the motives that justify their choice of learning English at university and ending by their readiness to assimilate the target language culture. Data description and interpretation and the proficiency test results and interpretation are presented in this section.

4.2.1.1 Background Information

The informants to whom the questionnaire was addressed can be divided according to their gender as follows:

Male Students	Female Students
41	112

Table 09: Students Gender.

According to their Baccalaureat streams they are divided as follows:

Baccalaureat Stream	Students Number	Percentage
Literary Streams	83	54.24%
Sciences	38	24.45%
Maths	05	03.67%
Literature and languages	23	15.03%
Management and Economics	04	02.61%
	153	100%

Table 10: Students' Baccalaureat Stream.

4.2.1.2 Question Item 1

“I chose to learn English because it is a worldwide language.”(see appendix 1)

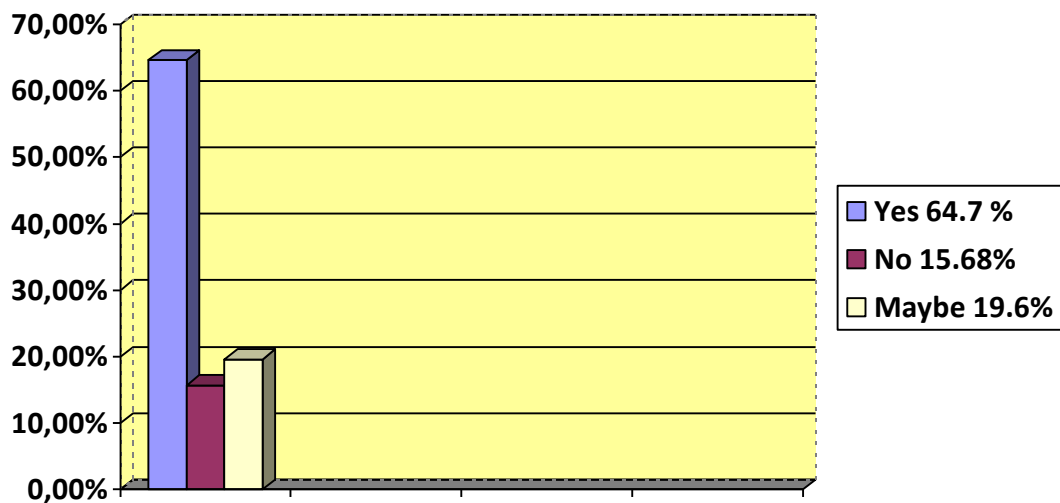


Figure 04: Students' answers distribution to Question 1

This question investigates students awareness of the spread of English in the world. To this first heading, the respondents answer “Yes” shows that the status of English as a worldwide language is recognized by our English learners. The media and the web play in that a major role.

4.2.1.3 Question Item 2

“I chose to learn English because it is used in scientific research”

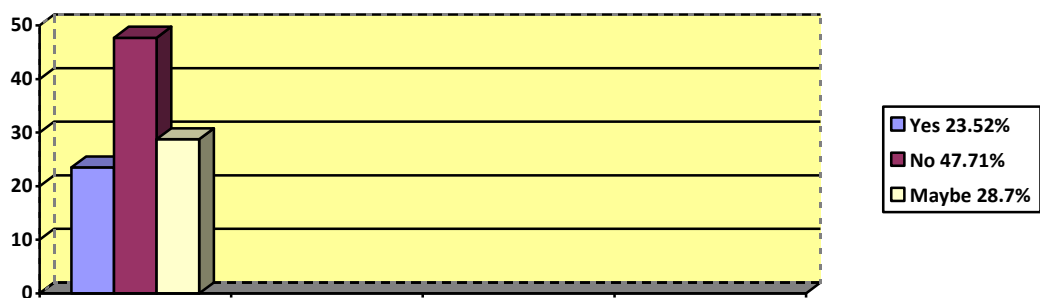


Figure 05: Students' answers distribution to Question 2

The students answer “No” to this question underlies their recognition of the role of foreign languages being used in the field of literature and human sciences rather than in scientific domains in addition to the fact that so far they were not exposed to scientific documents written in English as we could expect since the majority of them (54,24%) were in a literary stream in high school. We can understand that students at this age and before being at university have little chance to make research in a scientific domain in the middle and high school;

4.2.1.4 Question Item 3

“I chose to learn English to have different friends from various nationalities.”

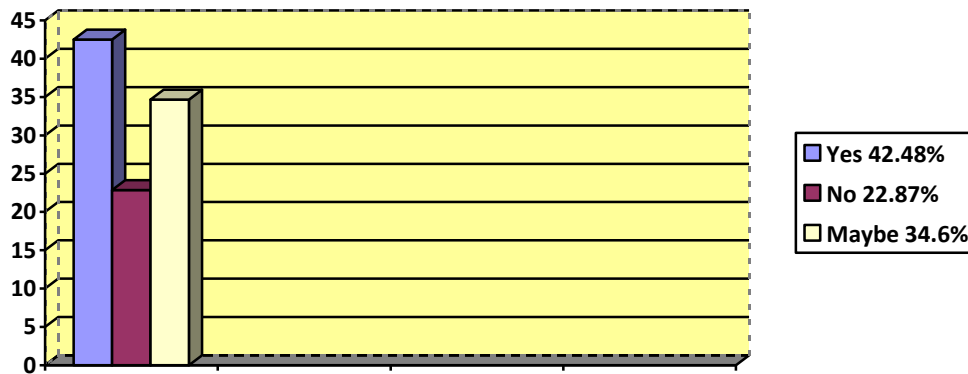


Figure :06 Students' answers distribution to Question 3

The students' awareness of the fact that English enables them to be in contact with many friends from various nationalities indicates that they already practice through "the chat" where they can deduce that whatever is the contact's nationality, English eases communication; for Dornyei (1996b) and Schuman (1978, 1986), this function of English led to stereotyping English as an easy to learn and use language and hence, motivates the students to learn it at university.

4.2.1.5 Question Item 4

"I chose to learn English because it is socially appreciated to know foreign languages".

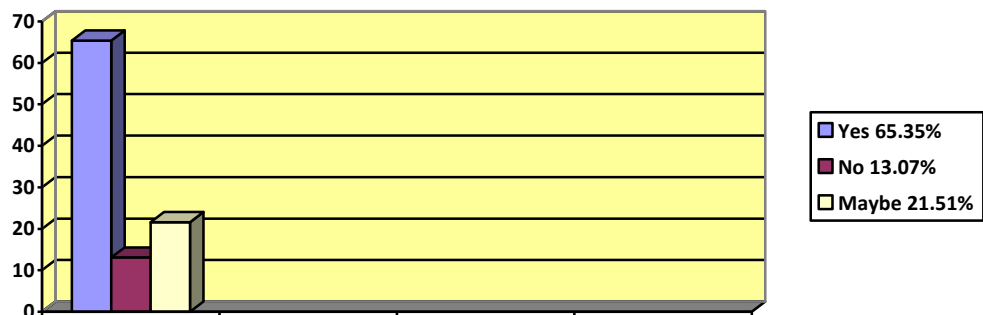


Figure07: Students' answers distribution to Question 4

This question was formulated to check how, according to the learners, English is used and perceived in their community. Learners response “yes” denotes their awareness of the foreign languages as a communicative social value. But it denotes also that they did not really understand the question because in our society English is not used outside the academic institutions unlike French for example, in Algiers and many other big cities in Algeria the use of French is socially appreciated.

4.2.1.6 Question Item 5

“I chose to learn English because it is the language used to communicate with all people abroad”.



Figure:08 Students' answers distribution to Question 5

A high percentage (76.47%) of the respondents answered positively this question referring to the image of English that is presented through media as a worldwide language since this question can be answered actually by people who live abroad or had travelled to many countries. We assume that learners' experience and contact with English is shaped not necessarily by their personal experience but also by their general knowledge.

4.2.1.7 Question Item 6

“ I chose to learn English Because I expect it to be useful for me in my professional life.”

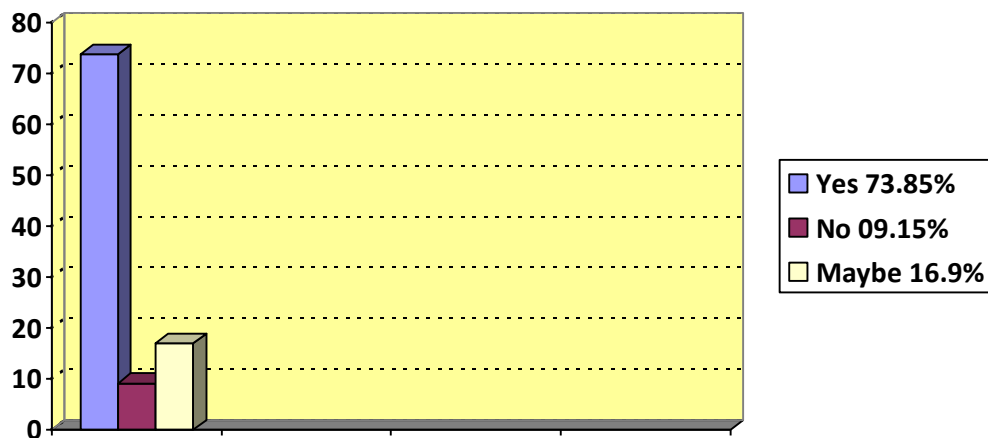


Figure 09: Students' answers distribution to Question 6

Here, the results show, on one hand, that students awareness of the role of English in the professional life or goal oriented, (Dornyei, 1996b) is a reflection of a stereotype they developed from their social environment. On the other hand, we could also see through the essay they produced in the written proficiency test that over 94% of the sample foresee themselves as English teachers (to be considered later in section 4.2). Learners want to learn English carrying the assumption that they have a very limited scope of professional options. However, they are not motivated to learn English because it opens wide doors to other professional opportunities, it can be deduced that learners' motivation is more integrative than instrumental.

4.2.1.8 Question Item 7

I chose to learn English because I want to know about the culture of English native speakers.

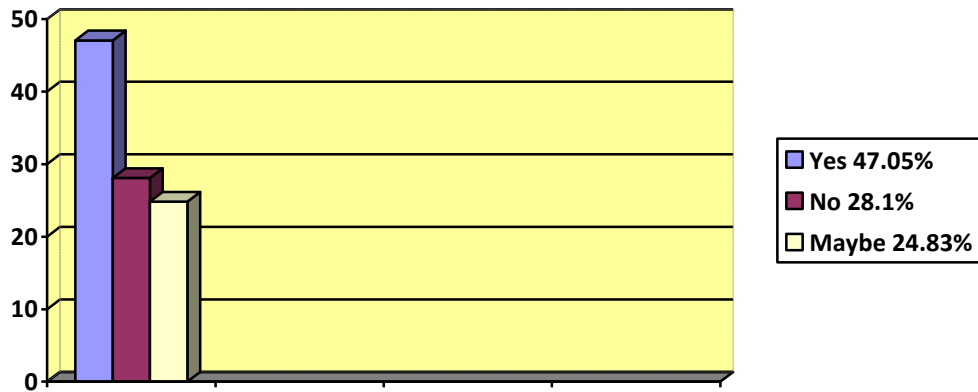


Figure : 10 Students' answers distribution to Question 7

This question investigates the students' perception of culture. According to their positive answers (47.05%), we can consider that they do not deny or reject the presence of the English culture in their studies but since the question of disappointing cultural aspects did not appear in middle and high school programs as stated by Lakhal Ayat (2008), we can deduce that they have information about the target language culture from other sources and expect to obtain more information at university.

4.2.1.9 Question Item 8

“We should learn English if we want to interact with English native speakers”.

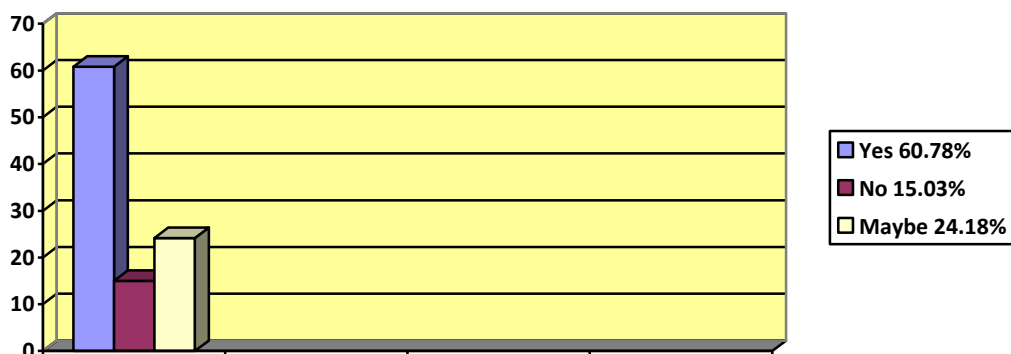


Figure 11: Students' answers distribution to Question 8

This question was designed for two objectives; first to have an idea about students' attitude to English speakers and second, to emphasize the role of English outside the academic borders. The positive answer (60.78%) leads us to think that learners may be in favour of travelling abroad for work or tourism opportunities.

4.2.1.10 Question Item 9

“Being in touch with English native speakers may be useful to Algeria.”

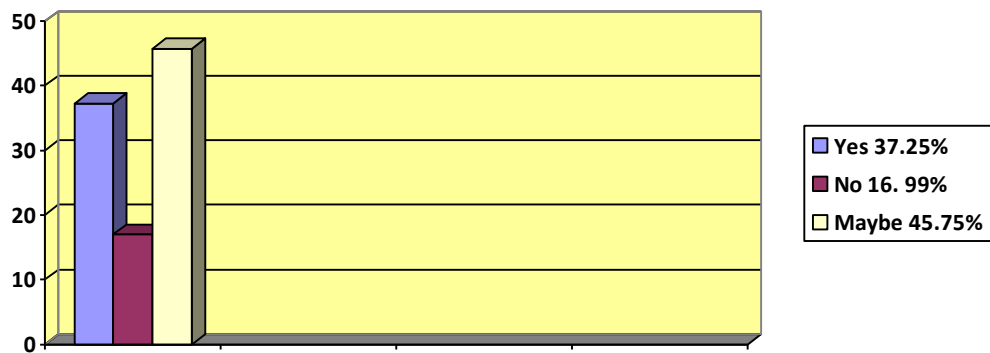


Figure 12: Students' answers distribution to Question 9

In this question, and the next as well, we opted for giving to English learning a wider dimension so that our learners see gradually how learning English may be useful and may open future opportunities not just for them as individuals but also as members of a community. Here also, the results show that the students who live in Biskra or coming from Msila have no or very little contact with the foreign labour that we may encounter in Hassi messaoud or in big cities like Algiers, Oran or Constantine. The answer “Maybe” is in fact the result of being unable to answer the question for lack of information and experience in such situations.

4.2.1.11 Question Item 10

“The experts who speak English took part in our nation’s development”.

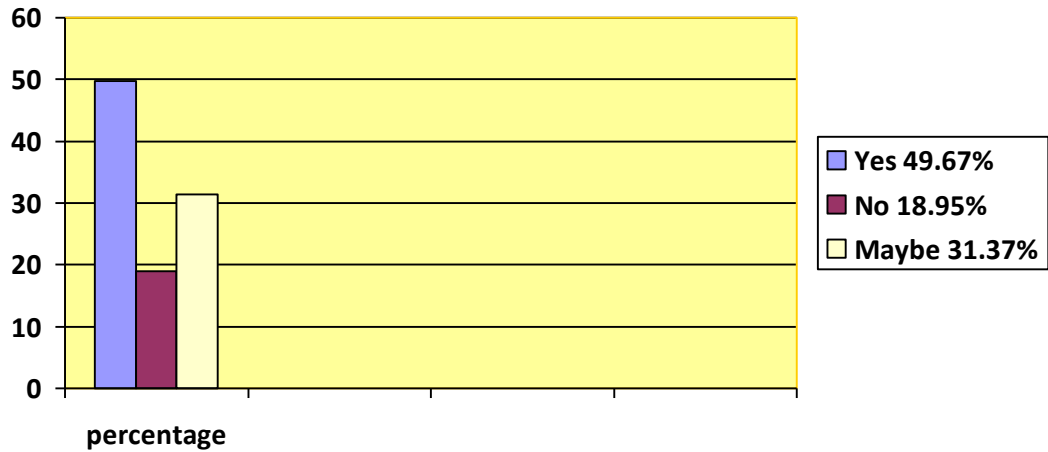


Figure 13: Students’ answers distribution to Question 10

No big difference can be noticed between the three answers percentage; the respondents were not sure about their attitude to relate development and English use. we consider the fact that in Biskra, unlike the big or economic cities like Algiers and Hassi Messaoud, the presence of foreign experts is not clearly noticeable.

4.2.1.12 Question Item 11

Algerian Scientists and industrialists should interact with English native speakers.

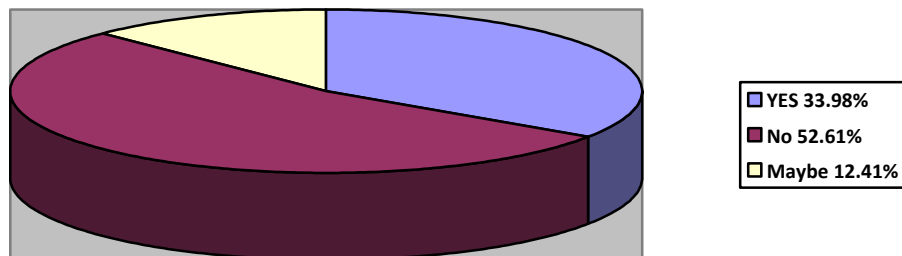


Figure 14 Students’ answers distribution to Question 11

Through this item, we wanted to have an idea about learner' attitude towards interaction with English native speakers as a necessity for our nation's development. We expected while designing the questionnaire, that considering the age of our informants, their awareness of the importance of foreign languages for economy would be already present but their answers show that they have not reached that phase yet. In answering this question, the students showed a difficulty to understand the reason why we excluded other languages like French or German if we are relating the foreign language to development in science and industry. Thus, they were not really sure of their attitude.

4.2.1.13 Question Item 12

“ Interacting with English native speakers makes communication with them an easy task”.

Only 111 students to that question.

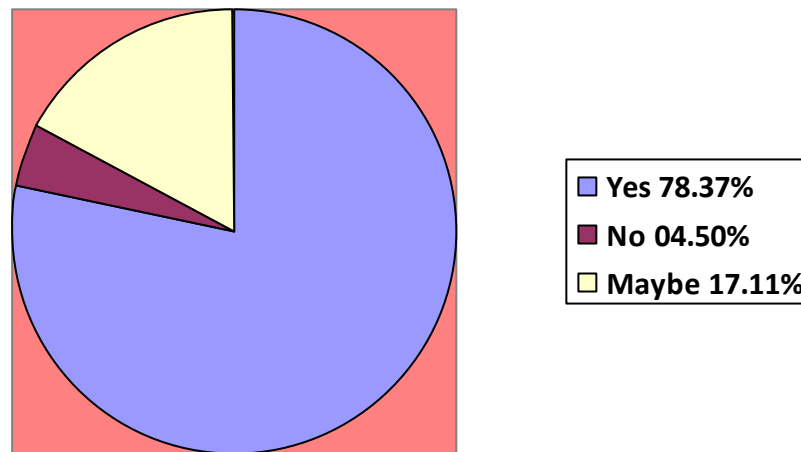


Figure 15: Students' answers distribution to Question 12

This question was also designed to check again respondents' experience with native speakers (through internet for example). We can expect from a student who already

communicated with native speakers to see how useful is the English language but in general the results above show that the majority of the students who answered positively.

4.2.1.14 Question Item 13

“University English Teaching curricula should contain aspects of the native speakers culture.”

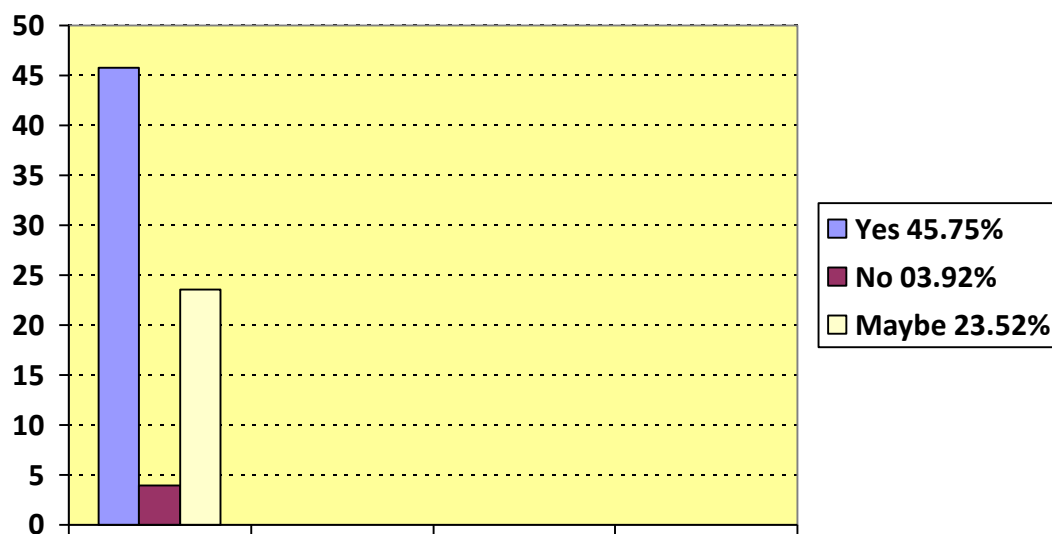


Figure 16: Students' answers distribution to Question 13

This is a question where the majority of students failed to relate culture and language. Many questions were asked about how aspects of culture are taught but in general our first year students knew nothing about the university curricula and the same thing can be said of the following question.

4.2.1.15 Question Item 14

Learning a foreign language implies necessarily the learning of its culture.

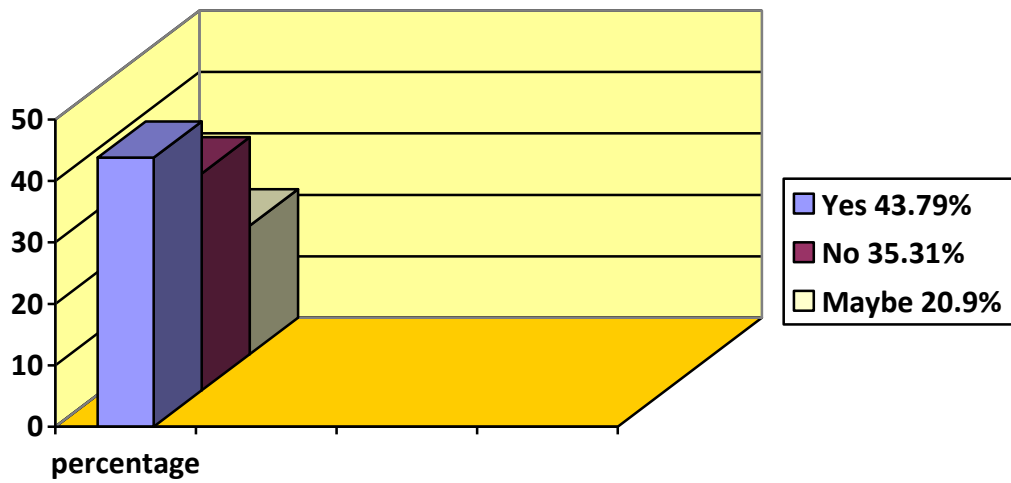


Figure17: Students' answers distribution to Question 14

In this question we wanted to specify the relation between the target language learning and learning its culture clearly to the respondents to avoid any misunderstanding but the answers show that the cultural information inclusion in the foreign language programs is not yet clear since little difference is seen between the three answers' percentages.

4.2.1.16 Question Item 15

“Being aware of the foreign language culture helps enriching students knowledge about that language.”

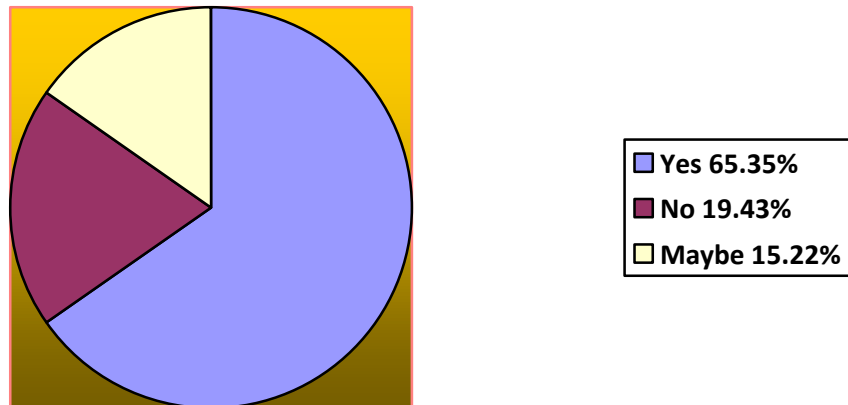


Figure 18: Students' answers distribution to Question 15

Here, the majority of our respondents answered positively when we reformulated question 13. They could probably understand better that all information about the English native speakers can be useful rather than using the word “necessarily” in question 14 or “curricula” in question 13.

4.2.1.17 Question Item 16

“Learning the foreign language means the mastery of grammar, spelling and language sciences”.

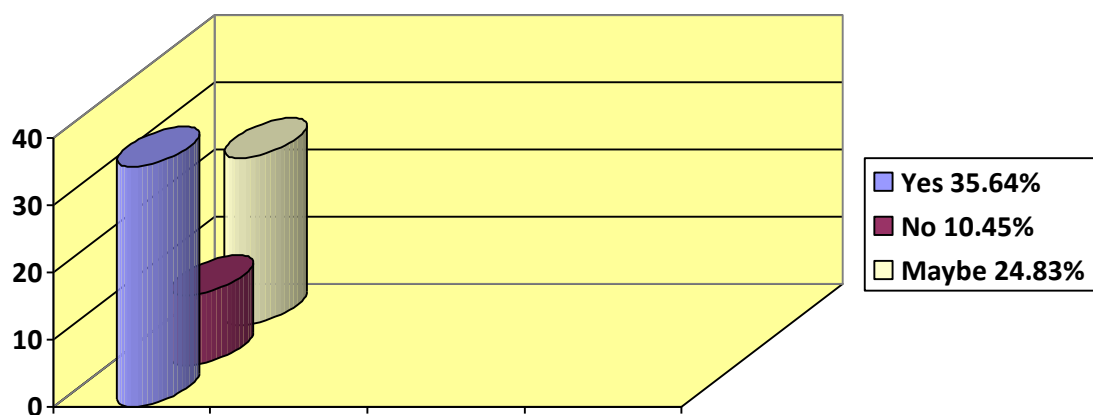


Figure 19: Students' answers distribution to Question 16

Here, as mentioned above (in figure13) the students seem to have no idea about how university curricula are designed or what is their content about. They simply referred to what they were taught in the high school. Their answers fastened our conviction that they are not able yet to answer this kind of question because of a lack of information.

4.2.1.18 Question Item 17

Do you think that the English culture and the Algerian culture are:

- Totally different. (T.D)
- Partially different. (P.D)
- Alike.

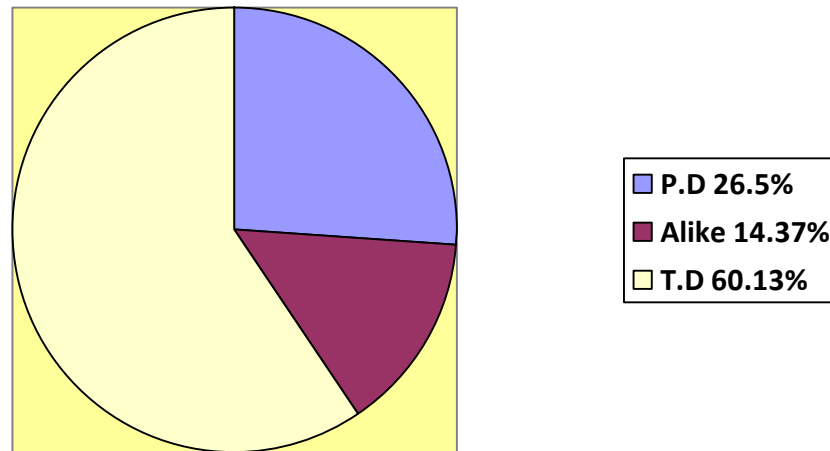


Figure 20: Students' answers distribution to Question 17

Through this direct question we could arrive with the respondents to understand their standpoint to the English culture; 60.13% of the students believe that their culture is totally different from English culture.

4.2.1.19 Question Item 18

In case you have the occasion to study abroad, would you prefer: a European English speaking country or an Arab country.



Figure 21: Students' answers distribution to Question 18

As we can see, the students show eagerness for moving to a European country for studies. Considering their age and relatively short experience, we may explain their curiosity and willingness to study and get prepared for a professional life abroad either because they think that living in an English speaking European country provides more contact with native speakers and practice of the target language or because they still have the stereotype of finding better opportunities in the labour market in European countries.

4.2.1.20 Question Item 19

“ To what extent do you think one's thinking can change when introduced to a new culture?”

The respondents gave us the following answers:

Answers	Main answers	Number of respondents	Percentage
Answer 01	If one has a strong personality there will be little change.	2	1.30%
Answer 02	It will change but not completely.	18	11.76%
Answer 03	No change.	97	63.39%
Answer 04	It can change.	8	05.22%
Answer 05	It can not change.	6	03.92%
Answer 06	We can filter.	13	08.49%
Answer 07	When we like the culture we change.	4	02.61%
Answer 08	No answer.	5	03.26%
	Total	153	100%

Table 11: *Students Answers to Question 19*

As the table shows, the majority of the respondents think that there cannot be any influence of the foreign culture on them while learning a foreign language which denotes that they have no predisposition to assimilate the foreign culture while some of them consider that change is possible if they like the new culture. The answers reflect learners' awareness of the noteworthy difference that exists between their culture and the English speaking communities' cultures on the one hand, and on the other, their ability to differentiate between learning about and assimilating foreign language values. The target language culture though still an unclear term for them since they do not know yet how it can be included in a taught program, it evokes a negative attitude within them.

The administration of the questionnaire gave us considerable data about the learners' motivation, perspectives and reasons to opt for studying English at university in addition to the way they consider the target language culture. On one hand, the respondents are highly motivated to learn English according to the number of motives they cited to choose English studies at university though they are aware of the rare possibilities of work for an English B.A holder. On the other hand, the worldwide spread of the English language gives them a certainty that whatever is the profession they may embrace, their knowledge will be useful. For these students, English is the language spoken in countries known by their scientific and economic development as they could see in the English textbooks that present the English speaking communities as developed nations.

The second result we could note out of the respondents' answers was their belief that the target language culture is different from their culture; we have to note here that their prior knowledge about the English speaking communities culture is not the result of their schooling years but also through an informal source of information being the media.

4.2.2 The Language Proficiency Test

The foreign language proficiency test is designed to measure learners' linguistic aptitude in a foreign language. (Robinson, 2002). According to the aim of the study, the test is used to define the effect of first year educational and cultural background on second language learning and to check the hypothesis that English learners' intercultural incompetence, visible through a low achievement in literature at university level may be caused by learners weakness in one or more of the foreign language skills.

The use of a proficiency test in this research aims basically at obtaining data about the overall level of the students and identify the areas where they have deficiencies in reference to a test that is used in a well known university such as Cambridge where success in such a test is a compulsory requirement for students intending to study English at university; it tests the English learners' linguistic competence in the four skills unlike the local English tests that do not give importance to the speaking and listening tests. It is a reliable test that is internationally recognized and used

The students to whom this test was administered (96) entered middle school in 2002, which implies that they were formed since their second year by the new textbooks. In presenting students achievement in this test we follow the quantitative analysis procedure:

- 1- We will present data about their performance in each skill separately.
- 2- We will present data about their overall performance in the test: Success/ failure rates.
- 3- We will discuss their cultural knowledge and behavior in terms of their oral discussion about the topics used.

As far as the speaking test is concerned, the tasks planned have a double function; first, to measure learners' oral proficiency by recording their pronunciation, and vocabulary use deficiencies; and second, as a cultural test, through raising issues that carry cultural concepts. We projected to detect learners' discussion strategies

implemented to discuss cultural differences and mainly critically analyzing and comparing conflictual concepts.

The language proficiency test total score is of 30 marks divided in the following way: Reading comprehension part (06 marks), speaking (04 marks). . listening: (04 marks) and Writing: 16 marks : (Use of English: 06 marks. . Syntax: 06 marks and Essay writing: 04 marks).

4.2.2.1 Reading Comprehension

The reading comprehension activity is designed in high school English examinations in the same way it is presented in the Baccalaureat exam; in almost all examinations, students are generally introduced to a topic that they may know nothing about and required to answer comprehension questions. According to Fuhong, (2004: 3), ESL/EFL students have different schemata and for the majority, they show a difficulty to process knowledge comprehension in the target language:

The proficient readers are able to activate the prior knowledge stored in memory to integrate new linguistic data with the comprehension process. Therefore, under schema theory, reading classes should utilize pre-reading activities to activate prior knowledge and teachers should provide minimal background knowledge when students do not have sufficient prior knowledge especially due to cultural differences.

In examinations, learners can not benefit from such a help from their teachers which leaves our students to rely completely on their stored knowledge. In the present case, the text we chose for the reading comprehension test was about the emergence of English language grammar. At the lexicon level, the vocabulary is not difficult with the

exception of some names and terms such as: the “Cherokee”, ethnicities, Atlantic slave trade, circumlocution, pidgin, creole that the student is expected to guess the meaning from the general context. (See appendix 2). The questions asked are ordered following paragraphs order; question one is about paragraph one, question two is on paragraph two.

4.2.2.1.1 Question One

In the first question students are required to determine the reason why the text author mentioned “The Cherokee language”. We gave them four optional answers:

- 1- To show how simple, traditional cultures can have complicated grammar structures.
- 2- To show how English grammar differs from Cherokee grammar.
- 3- To prove that complex grammar structures were invented by the Cherokees.
- 4- To demonstrate how difficult it is to learn the Cherokee language.

The term Cherokee is mentioned only in the first paragraph which assisted the student to focus only on the first lines to find out the answer. 60 students (62,5 %) of the learners answered correctly this question. The answer of this question is totally dependant on how the student can understand the meaning of “Clever structure” that precedes the word “Cherokee” which is not a difficult concept for these students as we will lay out in our analysis of their secondary school third year textbook (Chapter Five)

4.2.2.1.2 Question Two

In the second question students are asked to find out in paragraph 2 the meaning of the phrasal verb Make-shift among the following:

- 1- Complicated and expressive.
- 2- Simple and temporary.
- 3- Extensive and diverse.
- 4- Private and personal.

In this question, we tended not to test the students' English vocabulary knowledge but rather to test their understanding of the whole paragraph. We noticed that only 21 students (22.8%) could answer correctly this question.

4.2.2.1.3 Question Three

This question tests the students' scanning ability in the final paragraph: The four options given are different ideas which are mentioned in the last paragraph

- 1-English was once a creole.
- 2-The English past tense system is inaccurate, and;
- 3-Linguists had proven that English was created by children.

Only 08 students (09%) of the learners answered correctly this question.

4.2.2.1.4 Question Four

proposed four optional words for "Consistent grammar": Natural. 2-Predictable. 3-imaginable. 4- uniform.

The objective of this question is to test students' ability to exclude meanings that can in no way fit the term grammar which is well known to them. In this question, only 07 students (08.2 %) of the sample chose answer 4 which denotes a low performance in that question. All in all, students' achievement in this first skill is presented in the

following two tables, in the first, according to the learners' achievement in every question, and in the second, according to the number of correct answers:

Questions	Number of high achievers	Percentage of high achievers
1	60	62.5%
2	21	22.8%
3	08	09%
4	07	08,2%
Total	96	100%

Table 12: *Students' Correct Answers Distribution Reading Comprehension test (High achievement percentage in each question)*

Number of correct answers	Number of Students	Students Percentage
01	18	18.60%
02	33	34.88%
03	33	34.88%
04	12	11.62%
Total	96	100%

Table 13: *Students' Correct Answers Distribution Reading Comprehension test (Number of correct answers)*

4.2.2.2 The Writing Test

The writing test consists of three activities, the first activity tests students' mastery of the English vocabulary, the second, measures their syntactic knowledge and the third tests their ability to express an idea in words. (see appendix 2)

As far as the first activity is concerned, we used both "the exact answer" and the "accepted answer" criteria. For the second activity, a varied set of questions is used where only the correct answer is accepted. In the third one, evaluating the candidates productions was mainly evaluating their ability to express coherently the idea in question "what career to following the future", the correctness of words spelling, tense correctness and the sentence structure.

4.2.2.2.1 Use of English

Students are given a text from which we omitted 12 content and functional words. For each gap we provided the candidate with 04 options to choose from the appropriate term. The options were mainly synonyms as far as content words are concerned. Students' correct answers number was from 1 to 8. The results of this activity are presented in the following table:

Number of correct answers	Students Percentage	Students' number
12	0	0
11	0	0
10	0	0
09	0	0
08	13.66%	13
07	9.09%	09
06	15.90%	16
05	13.66%	13
04	9.09%	09
03	11.36%	10
02	04.54%	04
01	06.81%	07
00	15.89%	15
Total	100%	96

Table 14: *Students Correct Answers Distribution. Use of English Test*

As can be seen in the table, only 13.66% of the sample reached eight (08) correct answers which shows that the students' achievement in this activity is low if we take into account that both the correct and accepted answers are accounted for. One of the reasons that can be traced as a cause of this low achievement is the high number of optional words for each gap that are very close in meaning; in addition, the low achievement can

also be due to the absence of this activity type in the middle and high school textbooks as will be explained in the next chapter.

4.2.2.2.2 Grammar: Students are expected to answer 09 questions to test their knowledge about:

- Present continuous use.
- Simple tense : imperative and present.
- The use of “as good as”
- The use of comparatives.
- The use of perfect tenses.
- The use of possessive forms.
- The use of conjunctions.
- The use of auxiliaries.
- Detection of ungrammatical expressions. (see appendix 2)

Students’ achievement in the nine questions is presented in the following table:

Question	Students achievement
Present continuous use.	78.125%
Simple tense : imperative and present	87.5%
the use of ‘as good as’	40.625%
the use of comparatives	15.62%
the use of perfect tenses.	31.25%
The use of possessive forms.	46.87%
The use of conjunctions.	78.125%
The use of auxiliaries.	50%
Detection of ungrammatical expressions.	54%

Table 15: *Students Correct Answers Distribution: Grammar Test.*

Students mastery of grammatical rules is better seen through their written production than in exercises such as those designed in the present test; nonetheless, these exercises can reflect where exactly the flaws lie. As we can see, the students’ performance is high in some areas like the use of conjunctions, simple tense, present continuous and very low in the use of comparatives but medium in the other areas.

4.2.2.2.3 Written Expression

In this part of the writing skill test, the learners are asked to formulate in a paragraph their future career providing arguments for their choice. (see appendix 2) It can be noted that 94% of the candidates chose to be teachers. Out of the learners’ writing performance, we could pick up 50 sentences containing errors, choose the most frequent

errors and classify them in 03 tables according to three categories: Spelling, Syntax and Lexicon.

Spelling Errors	Error source
Behand (behind), Choise (choice), capasseties (capacities), abelity (ability), palote (pilot), especialy (especially), thier (their), to relize (to realize) heigh (high), futur (future), alwaysze (always), posibilities (possibilities).	Target language Knowledge

Table 16: *Students Spelling Errors.*

The learners' most common spelling errors are presented in the above table, however, the candidates produced a piece of writing in the test which leaves little space to reflect all the spelling errors they may make in longer paragraphs.

<i>Syntactic Errors</i>	<i>Errors source</i>
I wanna to teach them(I want to teach them)	<i>Foreign language rules</i>
Those people who write their names in history (wrote)	<i>Foreign language rules</i>
Because you are teach a whole students in many levels.	<i>Foreign languagerules</i>
To feel you are finish your message	<i>Foreign language rules</i>
Imagine myself as if a teacher	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>
It's vey perfect profession.	<i>Foreign language rules</i>
I love this language I feel is express what I feel	<i>Foreign language rules</i>
I am trying to work hardly	<i>Foreign language rules</i>
I wish what I can be	<i>Foreign language rules</i>
I have a dream and I want to realize it	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>

Table 17: *Learners' Syntactic Errors.*

The majority of the syntactic errors are due to learners' low mastery of the foreign language rather than mother tongue interference.

<i>Lexicon Errors</i>	<i>Errors source</i>
You finish your message(mission/ duty)	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>
Other people always say (People say)	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>
The teaching is something feeling how to graduate another generation	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>
I wanted to be many things at once	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>
When I grow up.	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>
The misses they teach in heigh school (Double subject)	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>
In this life all the people have dreams.	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>
I have many reasons that can help me to contain it	<i>English</i>
I hope to complete my studying	<i>English</i>
I can balance between my work and my home	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>
Who helped me a more	<i>English</i>
After my succeed	<i>English</i>
Every one of us has career inside him	<i>Mother tongue interference</i>
I wish to be a good style in way of teaching	<i>English</i>

Table: 18 *Learners' Errors in Lexicon*

4.2.2.3 The Listening Test

After the candidates listened 05 times to a radio program (in British English pronunciation), they had to fill in the gaps.

- It is commonthat we all have the same auditory experience. (misconception)
- The sound takes the form of a as it travels to the inner ear. (wave)
- Only when a sound reaches thedo we register that we have heard it. (brain)

- An Australian biologist is sure that men can identify the of an animal better than women. (location)
- He suggests that this skill evolved when men was primarily a.....(hunter)
- The biologist thinks that women can hear shrill sounds so that they can recognize..... in a child's cry. (if there is)
- Differences in hearing between males and females have been detected immediately after.....(the moment of birth)
- Some people in Manchester have been disturbed by an irritating noise similar to..... (the washing machine), every one of the(claims) Received had been from women.

As a listening comprehension task, (see appendix 2) we had to play the audio tapes up to ten times instead of the planned number (05 times) and after the task was over we asked the students about the way they proceeded to fill in the gaps to obtain data on their listening learning strategy if they have a habit of listening the English audio authentic materials:

- 1- Is it by focusing on the speaker's pronunciation of the missing words or
- 2- by guessing the word through the general context.

The majority of the candidates opted for the second process; their answers show that they can understand the overall meaning of a sentence only when assisted by visual aids on TV, otherwise, their listening comprehension without the TV pictures and translation is very feeble: 13 students (14,23 %) of the sample filled 06 gaps with correct terms, 58 students (60,52 %) could fill the gaps with two correct words and 25 students (25,24 %) provided no answer.

As we can see, and considering the low achievement in this part of the test we can say that listening comprehension had been ignored in the middle and high school

curricula though the listening skill is considered as the fundamental language skill, the medium through which learners gain a large portion of their education.

4.2.2.4 The Speaking Test (see appendix 2)

As explained in Research design, the administration of the listening and speaking tests could be possible only through dividing the sample into subgroups of 20 students. As a consequence, the collection of data took place after the 96 students sat for these tests. We could first record our observations about each group and about the whole sample. Following our aim to detect students' ability to discuss topics embedding foreign culture concepts and check their abilities in issues discussion along with detecting their speaking errors, we designed a speaking test to obtain data about both aspects. Nonetheless, their proficiency in oral expression as part of the proficiency test was measured by considering their pronunciation, syntactic and lexicon errors only.

The test was composed of four issues, among which the twenty learners had to opt for a topic to discuss; then, according to individual topic choice, we divided the group into four subgroups, so that each group will discuss an issue. The students had to choose a topic among the following:

- **Topic One:** The good friend
- **Topic Two:** The role of aesthetic surgery in improving people's life.
- **Topic Three:** Third World characteristics
- **Topic Four:** Comparing Western non Muslim women with Muslim women

Enhancing discussion was performed through one /two questions on the topic.

Topic One: If you have an opportunity to choose a close friend, on what characteristics do you base your choice?

Topic Two: If your friend decides to undergo an aesthetic surgery, what would you advice him/her?

Topic Three: In what way can you describe a Third World country?

Topic Four: If your sister decides to move to an English speaking country and is suspicious about interacting with foreign non Muslim women there, what would you tell her?

The speaking test results are treated as follows:

- 1- Oral proficiency performance to measure the speaking proficiency where we consider their pronunciation flaws, syntactic errors, and lexicon.
- 2- Topic choice and discussion strategy to check students strategy of discussion; using analysis, argueing, critical comparison providing value judgement use in topics carrying cultural differences, and their ability to analyze general issues using statistics, pointing at negative and positive aspects of the issue and defending an opinion.

4.2.2.4.1 Students' Oral Performance

The discussion was poor if we consider students low motivation and their stingy participation in class. In each group of 20 students, we could find 4-7 candidates predisposed to take part in the discussion but we explained to them that the discussion is a means to find out the results of their former education on their performance at university which relatively motivated them to speak.

As far as pronunciation is concerned, we noticed that the learners do not have the same pronunciation of English possibly because of the difference of teachers they had

before and the fact that they were not exposed to the received pronunciation through English native speakers. On the one hand, some learners pronounced clearly while others did not. On the other hand some learners leaned towards the American pronunciation but not properly.

For the use of vocabulary, we noticed that these learners use a limited number of words. All in all, they have a little experience in conversation turn taking and facing an audience to convey an idea or explain an issue. The following table presents the areas where our learners' common difficulties lie:

Pronunciation flaws	Syntactic errors	Lexicon misuse
<p>1-“The” before the words starting with a vowel/ consonant has the same pronunciation.</p> <p>2-Weak and strong forms are not known to the students:</p> <p>Learners do not know the sound /a:/</p> <p>“d” pronunciations into /t/ and /d/</p>	<p>1-Use of double subject.</p> <p>2-The overuse of perfect tenses instead of simple tenses.</p> <p>3-The interchangeable use of conjunctions: to vs for.</p> <p>4-Incomplete sentences ending with or....</p>	<p>The use of some terms that reflect mother tongue interference such as:</p> <p>1-the word “Work” is used for: achievement as well as effort and job</p> <p>2-Opened: to mean open minded</p> <p>3-His thinking to mean the way of thinking</p> <p>4-A message , to mean a mission.</p> <p>5-To think more and more, to mean to think over again.</p> <p>6-Without control, to mean free.</p>

Table 19: Learners' Speaking Errors.

4.2.2.4.2 Topic Choice and Discussion

As previously explained (See section : **4.1.2.3.4**), the speaking test was administered to detect learners' discussion abilities in terms of expressing their opinions, using argumentation, analysis in debatable issues in general and, particularly, in topics carrying cultural issues. The results of the 96 students' performance in the speaking test show that:

- 41 students (43.37 %) of the sample chose topic one (the good friend)
- 35 students (37.36%) Chose topic 02 (characteristics of Third World countries).
- 16 students (16.94 %) chose topic 03 (the benefits of the easthetic surgery)
- 10 students (11.23 %) of the sample chose to discuss topic 4 (comparing women in the Western World with Muslim women).
- 06 students (06.28%) did not intervene at all

As we can see , the candidates opted more for topics where they do not have to use or to clearly discuss the knowledge they have about the English speaking communities culture. We gathered our observations about learners interventions, we simply report their comments on the topics they chose to discuss as follows:

Topic One

- 1- Learners started directly citing qualifications of a good friend.
- 2- The qualifications are not ordered in terms of importance.
- 3- No mention of the relativity of "being a good friend"

- 4- Learners cited qualifications that are seen as positive, we noticed that they provided almost the same qualifications, for instance: helpful, kind, honest.

Topic Two The aesthetic surgery benefits:

- 1- Learners gave different definitions of the aesthetic surgery.
- 2- Emphasized the fact that they do not have a friend who may undergo such a surgery.
- 3- Gave examples of countries where the aesthetic surgery is well spread like Lebanon and Egypt unlike Algeria.
- 4- None of the students referred to the religious standpoint concerning aesthetic surgery.
- 5 –They advanced the following argument: this type of surgery is not trustworthy in terms of results and side effects.

Topic Three

- 1- The students qualified the Third World countries as underdeveloped, overcrowded and possessing natural resources.
- 2- Algeria is considered as one of the best third world countries.
- 3- The interventions focused on comparing the third world countries with developed ones in terms of economic and scientific progress referring to news and TV programs.
- 4- The total absence of expressions like “ in my opinion”, “according to me”, “I think”

Topic Four

- 1- Students gave characteristics of the western women as free in behavior and not sticking to religion.
- 2- Algerian women are described as religious women .
- 3- Western non Muslim women do not have the same priorities as the Muslim women.
- 4- We should be careful while interacting with western non Muslim women.

We can say that our respondents have little experience in discussion; they use a limited vocabulary, do not know how to present their opinion in a discussion, do not have an idea of balancing between positive and negative aspects of the issue discussed, do not use argumentation tools and most importantly, escape expressing frankly their opinion about foreign culture concepts by not referring to their culture to reject them. Nonetheless, the number of discussions' participants is to be accounted for.

4.2.2.5 Overall Performance in the Proficiency Test

From the overall performance of the learners, we can say that those who sat for the test achieved better in the reading comprehension and writing tests than they did in the speaking and listening tests. 43 students (44.08%) of the 96 students who sat for the language aptitude test passed; this percentage is relatively high when we consider that in high school the speaking listening skills are not given the same importance paid to the reading and writing skills.

The language proficiency test showed that the students come to university with a linguistic knowledge in the reading and writing skills of the English language, the flaw in the listening and speaking skills is visible. The subjects are familiar with the way written tests are designed in the examinations, the type of questions asked and the required answers which shows undoubtedly that the general education prepares the students to:

- 1- Answer a written test.
- 2- Produce the least of free writing.
- 3- Accumulate a limited number of vocabulary that fits more the written expression than the oral one.

We have to mention here that as far as giving options for answers in the reading comprehension and the vocabulary use tasks, we can not ignore the fact that many students may choose haphazardly the correct answer. The Proficiency test results showed that at the linguistic level, the first year students rate of success is acceptable, have a good mastery of grammatical rules and vocabulary knowledge. However, the first remark we could make about their performance in the proficiency test is learners low achievement in the speaking and listening skills. Their performance in the listening test, is due to the absence of authentic materials in listening tasks in the middle and high school syllabi. For the speaking test we can consider that this activity was rather a pronunciation drill rather than classroom group discussion. This can explain :

- 1- The unwillingness of our participants to take part in discussion.
- 2- The various types of pronunciation we noticed within learners.

3- The number of mistakes we could note.

As we designed the speaking test to check learners strategies of discussion; their ability to analyze general and cultural concepts, we can note that they do not use analysis or express a clear point of view, instead we noticed that:

1. Learners' preference to discuss topics where no cultural differences are raised denotes their attempt to avoid tackling these topics.
2. They advance separate facts and general information about the issue discussed.
3. They have no clear order of ideas.
4. The cultural differences are not addressed explicitly.
5. Learners simply cite what they know about the issue without expressing an opinion.

Hence, the speaking test shows the unfamiliarity of Baccalaureate holders with discussion in general and specifically, analysis which confirms our hypothesis that the respondents have a deficiency in the speaking skill. Finally, as far as the oral performance, we noted the total absence of analysis in the candidates interventions and most importantly their use of cultural conflict avoidance strategies in order not to tackle explicitly a conflictual cultural value and frankly refer to their culture to reject or accept it.

Chapter Five

Textbooks' Cultural Content Analysis

Introduction

Following the research aim and to confirm the hypotheses about the factors that may have entailed the intercultural incompetence within university English learners at Biskra university, we opted for the analysis of the middle and high school textbooks as a major component of student schemata in English. For this purpose, we will apply Cortazzi and Jin model (See chapter IV, section 4.1.3.3.2) in analyzing the coursebooks files/units. The analysis will provide us with data on the type of cultural content of coursebooks and its efficiency in developing learners' intercultural competence as well as the presence of tasks that encourage/train the learners' to interpretation or analysis as an essential requirement for value judgement ability in EFL classes either in middle or high school. Two middle school and high school textbooks will be analyzed. Considering that the intercultural competence is composed of five skills (already mentioned in section 2.9.1), we will be concerned with learners' deficiency in two of the ICC skills,

first, learners' attitude towards the target language culture, and second, their ability to interpret, relate and analyze the foreign language culture concepts. The analysis will focus whether or not the type of cultural content, that the English textbooks carry develops these components and what component is specifically given importance among them.

The textbooks to be analyzed are two textbooks from middle school and two textbooks from secondary school.

In this chapter, as well, we recapitulate and discuss the data obtained from the questionnaire, the proficiency test and the textbooks' analysis to provide a global interpretation of the study findings.

5.1 Spotlight on English: Book Two. (2005)

Spotlight on English Book Two was authorized starting from: 31/07/2004

5.1.1 Textbook Presentation and Structure

According to its authors, The textbook Two is designed for the second year middle school learners and is supposed to fulfill four objectives presented in the first page through a word addressed to the learners. The authors express their wish that the book be a useful learning instrument as a guide along with the teacher's assistance. The first page of the course book cites the following objectives Merazga et al (2005:01)

- 1- To be the pivot of the educational orientation.
- 2- To introduce the pupil to a brief overview of the foreign language cultural concepts and help the pupil to make research on.
- 3- Help the pupil to make his own choices.

4- Train the pupil to assess his knowledge in English.

The course book contains five (05) topical files, and each file is composed of three (03) sequences.

The sequence carries the following tasks:

1. Pronunciation and Spelling: which is an oral activity to improve the pupil's pronunciation and intonation patterns.
2. Listen and Speak : A short illustrated document for listening(said by the teacher) to train the pupils in listening and speaking at a simple level.
3. Practice: an oral or written activity to re-use what the pupil has just learnt.
4. Go forward: a document for listening or for reading illustrated with pictures, photos or with another support to follow up the work on the language and to train him/her to understand a text he/she has heard or read.
5. Discover the language: a short reading text with questions that will guide him/her discover the rules of English vocabulary, spelling and grammar.
6. Reminder: This section is meant to remind the pupil of the key elements encountered through each sequence.
7. Practice: A series of exercises related to the lesson.
8. Learn about the culture: short pieces of writing and activities to explore texts related to cultural topics.
9. Listening Scripts : dialogues and conversations for the pupil to listen to.
10. Check: a set of exercises to choose from, proposed to check the pupil's acquisition.

11. Help: a section that suggests strategies to assist the pupil to get through difficulties.
12. Self Assessment: a grid that the pupil uses to evaluate his/her knowledge.
13. Project: A research training and re-use of pupils' knowledge in English in other subjects like Science and Geography.

5.1.2 Textbook Cultural Content

As we can see, the number of activities and tasks is high, but, as far as culture is concerned, we notice that only one task is dedicated to learning about the English speaking communities cultural issues although, , we could notice tha the text carries cultural information.

In File One, 'A person's Profile' : Music celebrities from Algeria, France, England.

In File Two, 'Language Games': Edinbrough , the capital of Scotland is presented as a touristic sight.

In File Three, 'Health': Home healing recipes (no mention of their origin) and the relation between colours and health)

In File Four, 'Cartoons'. The pupil is introduced to different cartoons and their designers.

Finally, in File Five: 'Theatre'. The pupils are introduced to the play elements such as plot and some records from different countries: England, and playwrights and theatre actors.(no mention of their nationality). Among the five files that the textbook contains three files were chosen at random for analysis, which are:

- 1- File One entitled A person's profile.

2- File Four : Cartoons.

3- File Five: Theatre.

5.1.3 File One Analysis

File One is, according to the textbook authors, designed for the following purposes:
Merazga et al (2005: 08)

- 1- Describe a person's physical appearance.
- 2- Revise the present simple.
- 3- Use adjectives to describe a person.
- 4- Discriminate between the final sounds: /s/, /z/ and /iz/
- 5- Use the dictionary.

A- Sequence One

The first sequence presents five celebrities from different nationalities. The star of today is an Algerian monologist we can see three pictures of:

- 1- An Algerian actress
- 2- A monologist from Morocco.
- 3- An American actor.

The pupil is required, on the one hand, to write a dialogue on the Algerian monologist and, on the other hand, to recognize the celebrities and imagine that he/she with a partner are making an interview with them. The activity puts at work the pupil's general knowledge of celebrities without focusing on the English speaking communities.

B- Sequence Two

This sequence is designed to train pupils to report a person's life details. Pupils are introduced to another group of local and foreign celebrities. The difference is that in this sequence there is an apparent focus on the English speaking communities as well as non speaking communities: Great Britain, The United States, Jamaica, France, Lebanon and Senegal.

C. Sequence Three

The third sequence in file one carries information about international celebrities among which we can find: Novelists, Movie Producers, Painters and singers. The tasks provides a relatively high number of names the majority of which are not cotemporary figures.

In “Learn about Culture” activity, the learners are introduced to short written pieces about different musical kinds starting from:

- 1- Chaabi music definition.
- 2- Rap music origin.
- 3- Classical music (Beethoven as an example)
- 4- Rhythm and Blues.
- 5- Hip Hop music.

From the cultural content of this file, the pupil is expected to build up an extensive image of universal arts : musicians, painters, actors, writers and singers from Algeria, Arabic African and western countries even where English is neither a first nor a second language. It is definitely an overloaded cultural information in one file to be grasped by pupils.

5.1.3.1 Type of Cultural Content

In this file, the textbook authors are presenting a non specific cultural content. The pupils are introduced to many celebrities from different nations where English is not necessarily spoken as a first or second language.

5.1.3.2 Efficiency of the Cultural content in Intercultural Competence Development

The content of this file presents authentic cultural information and highlights cultural similarities rather than differences. The authors choice of some foreign celebrities can not be clearly explained considering the age of the pupils; since the pupil's recognition of the famous figures is essential to grasp the target cultural concept. Thus, we can say that in file one, cultural similarity is sought but if the coursebook does not explicitly highlight the difference/similarity among the celebrities, the pupil will not understand the cultural concept conveyed. Considering that the method applied in designing the program is learner centered, we can deduce that this interpretive perspective in implementing the cultural content does not fulfill its objective with a passive learner; interpretation from the part of the learner is needed.

5.1.3.3 Analysis/interpretation Training Tasks

As mentioned before, the file comprises three sequences with a relatively big number of tasks. As far as the analysis/interpretation training tasks are concerned, we remarked that among the 26 activities of the file, the student's only space for personal free effort is through a group work in the "Project" since all the other activities aim at linguistic rules retention or practice. In the project, the pupil is required to write with a team of his classmates a list of famous artists and their biographies and famous works with illustrations. In this task, we could distinguish a requirement for the pupil to coordinate with his team members and evaluate his individual work: positive and negative points, an criticism is encouraged through this requirement.

5.1.4 File Two Analysis

This file is entitled: Cartoons. The coursebook authors projected through this file to revise:

1. Vocabulary on leisure activities.
2. Time expressions.
3. Prepositions like: "to", "at" and "for".
4. Making invitations.
5. Using expressions: "yes", "I would", "yes", "I'd love to"....

A. Sequence One

The use of cartoons is a positive aspect in this file; it is motivating and entails a degree of familiarity within the pupil but no cultural content is seen in this sequence because Cartoons are used only for portraying conversations.

B. Sequence Two

The sequence does not tackle a clear cultural content, as was the case of file one, with the exception of some statements that are either proper to the western culture or the local culture, illustrated through cartoons such as:

1. “ take his dog for a walk” and “play baseball” (page 79)

In the next page, the learners can read about some Algerian touristic spots in the south: “Bathe in the natural lake of Zelfrane in Ghardaia”, “go to lake Temacine in Touggourt” and “visit the Kourdane place in Laghouat”

C. Sequence Three

In “Learn about the Culture” task, the pupil is introduced to the first seven cartoon albums whose creators are from Algeria, Belgium, The United States, France and Latin America.

5.1.4.1 Type of Cultural Content

The file presents a non specific cultural content through attractive means since cartoons constituted learners’ favorite programs. The presence of pictures and colors is also a positive aspect of the information presentation at this age.

5.1.4.2 Efficiency of the Cultural content in Intercultural Competence Development

Compared to File One, this file’s cultural information is very humble; cartoons could be a very efficient motivating instructive tool if they are used in order to convey a cultural concept through jokes or an anecdote that needs interpretation.

5.1.4.3 Analysis/ interpretation Training Tasks

The designed tasks do not urge the pupils to analysis or the expression of individual perceptions. The speaking tasks are specifically designed for pronunciation. In this file, the tasks first and major objective is to develop the linguistic knowledge and the cultural one.

5.1.5 File Three Analysis

File three is entitled: Theatre. Through this file, the authors planned to:

- 1- Consolidate the previously learnt vocabulary.
- 2- Consolidate prepositions of location.
- 3- Consolidate adverbs of frequency.
- 4- Use the Wh questions. (P 96)

A-Sequence One

introduces the pupil to a Hollywood actor who lived between 1892- 1957.

Here, the learners are required to make research on terms like: Plot, playwright, theatre, comedians....

B-Sequence Two

In this sequence, the learners are required to search the Arabic terms meaning: “musical”, “tickets”, “performance” and “play”. The textbook introduces learners to a text about Djeha on which they have to answer comprehension questions.

C-Sequence Three

It presents again a number of local and foreign artists about whom the pupil is required to ask questions in addition to an activity where information about theatrical genres and a list of drama records are provided.

5.1.5.1 Type of Cultural Content

File Three presents a non specific cultural content about Theatre; focus is put on foreign artists while the local culture is given a very small space in the example of Djeha.

5.1.5.2 Efficiency of the Cultural Content in Intercultural Competence Development

The pupil who is acquiring information about Western or local artists especially those of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is exposed to too much information without learning any precise cultural element.

5.1.5.3 Analysis / interpretation Training Tasks

The textbook exercises, tasks and questions do not urge consistently the learner to interpret or analyze any of the notions contained; the big number of tasks is designed rather to enable learners to intensively practice the grammatical rules and the use of vocabulary through the written production. We noted that the learners are required to translate some terms (in sequence 2) into the Arabic language, which can be a first exercise to relate the international cultures to the local culture.

5.2 “Spotlight on English” Book Three (2007)

5.2.1 Textbook Presentation and Structure

The textbook is addressed to the middle school third year pupils, it does not differ much from the previous coursebook in the approach and method used to design it. In the first, second, third and fourth pages of the coursebook, the authors lay out the innovations contained by this coursebook being a completion to “Spotlight on English” Book Two: . Arab et al (2007: 5-6)

1. The inclusion of authentic texts.
2. The cultural component.
3. The addition of some tasks.
4. Grammar

There are Four projects in the coursebook that unfold in parallel with four files and each file is divided into three sequences. These sequences are followed by three sections:

1. Snapshots of Culture.
2. Activate your English.
3. Where Do we Stand Now? Which is further divided into:
 - A. Language Summary.
 - B. Test Yourself.
 - C. Learning Log.

The textbook also, contains: listening scripts, electronic messaging, phonetic symbols and irregular verbs and spelling rules.

The form and structure of Book Three do not differ from Book Two, though as far as the cultural content is concerned, we noticed an overall focus on the American and British cultural aspects as we are going to see over the analysis of two file out of the four files designed in Book Three.

5.2.2 Textbook Cultural Content

As mentioned above, Book three is a revision continuity of Book two according to the following remarks:

In File One, 'Communication' the learner is exposed to the same structures building in "A person's Profile". The use of names, places and examples denotes focus on the target language culture assisted by pictures taken from American movies. The local culture presence is minimal.

In file two entitled: 'Travel', the third year pupil can learn much information about the local as well as foreign (mainly American and British) touristic sights.

In File Three: 'Work and Play', the pupil is introduced to Herman Melville's "Moby Dick" and souvenirs from Egypt, France, The United States and Great Britain but most importantly to the British schools.

In the last file: ‘Around the World’, the first page, presents ten different monuments and wonders around the world as the textbook authors sought balance between the local and target language culture.

We provide below the analysis of two files: ‘Work and Play’ and ‘Around the World’

5.2.3 File One Analysis

The file is entitled: Work and Play

A- Sequence One: What’s Happened.?

This sequence presents information on a novel by Herman Melville and a short text where the authors explain the danger that whales are put in because of excessive hunting. The summary of the novel is used as an introduction. The text is followed by four different activities on the same issue; the whole sequence resembles a reading comprehension exercise. Nothing is mentioned about the writer except for his nationality.

B-Sequence Two “Have You Ever?”

This sequence is composed of different short activities on listening and speaking training and an activity that introduces the pupil to international monuments and souvenirs. The pupil is required to find out the origin of each of them and write a question/ answer about them. The last activity of the sequence presents a letter from an Algerian pupil explaining the rules of the Algerian schools to a foreign friend.

C-Sequence Three “I Was Walking”

This sequence introduces the pupil to Comprehensive schools in Great Britain. The pupil is then asked to compare schools in Algeria with British schools. It is noteworthy, here, that the authors used as example of schools in Britain: Harry Potter’ school.

5.2.3.1 Type of Cultural Content

The cultural content in this file is delimited into the introduction of schools in Great Britain; it is a cultural specific content taken from the target language culture.

5.2.3.2 The Efficiency of the Cultural Content in Intercultural Competence Development

The information presented in this file is undoubtedly important but it is given a relatively small space if we consider the extremely high number of tasks and activities contained in the file. We consider, on one hand, that it is hard for the pupil to remember the cultural information since it is not implemented in many activities. On the other hand, we think that the authors are no longer following the interpretive perspective in portraying the English speaking communities’ culture as we notice that pupils are asked to compare the British schools with the Algerian schools. Arab et al (2007: 111). We can determine here, that cultural differences are directly addressed and that this type of cultural content is positive in two ways: First, The pupil will know one specific information about the British culture and, Second, the explicit and clear comparison raises within the learner the use of an experience knowledge and urges him /her to think critically.

5.2.3.3 Analysis / interpretation Training Tasks

The speaking , listening, reading comprehension and writing skills are given a major importance and time in this file; there's no task that may be considered as aiming at enhancing pupils' ability to analyze or think critically except for the above mentioned "comparison" which, according to Byram and Planet (2000: 189): "Comparison makes the strange, the other familiar, and makes the self strange- and therefore, easier to reconsider"

5.2.4 File Two Analysis "Around the World".

A. Sequence One "This is my Land"

As the title indicates, the sequence sheds light on Algeria where the pupil is required to compare his country's geographical dimensions, climate and population with other countries. The text included in this sequence is entitled: "The United Kingdom"; It introduces the pupil to Great Britain's geographical location, constituents, population, area, density and weather. The final part of the sequence presents brief information about five (5) other countries where English is spoken (colonization/ independence). The notions of colonization and independence refer basically to a universal cultural concept; the Algerian pupil, whatever his age, can understand and relate the existing similarity between his own culture and these countries' cultures as far as the two notions are concerned.

B. Sequence Two 'New York, New York'

This sequence introduces the pupil to different information and aspects of Manhattan; demographic and location information. The text included is entitled: “Washington.D.C” where we can find specific information about the American federal capital, its establishment in the eighteenth century and its historical background.

C.Sequence Three: ‘What a Wonderful World!’:

This sequence provides a description of ancient and contemporary classification of wonders, presents a text on the Giza pyramids (Egypt) and their historical background, and introduces the pupil to the English speaking communities ordered in terms of the inhabitants’ number. The file project consists of a tourist brochure about a country’s natural and historical sights to visit.

5.2.4.1 Type of Cultural Content

The file is indeed very rich of knowledge; the authors’s focus is almost equally put on the pupils culture and the target language culture though differences are not clearly addressed, in addition to the available historical information about the other countries such as Egypt, Canada and Austraia where English is spoken. This leads us to think that the authors are adopting the interpretive approach in cultural content implementation by:

- 1- Presenting the local culture and the target language cultures, Algeria and the United States (statistics, geography, dimensions and historical information).
- 2- Presenting information about other countries like Egypt, Canada and Australia where English is spoken.

5.2.4.2 Efficiency of the Cultural Content in Intercultural Competence Development

The first criterion we can note in this file is, as mentioned before, the considerable amount of cultural information. The balance between the local and the foreign culture is sought by the authors but not adequately performed in terms of the type of information that presents the local culture; namely , statistics (geographical information, distance and dimensions) while the target language cultural information is given more space and focuses on historical information.

In the absence of clear comparison to highlight differences between the target language culture and the local culture, the pupil learns so many things about both cultures but draws no conclusions of what to keep in mind. The recapitulation tasks focus on the language functional rules rather than on cultural elements.

5.2.4.3 Analysis / interpretation Training Tasks

Through this file, the third year pupils may learn much information about countries and wonders, in addition to a rich vocabulary used in the informative texts that do not raise any speculative issue. They can also learn how to talk about distances and describe places by referring to their historical background, For this reason, we could note in none of the tasks designed a training of analysis except for the comparison task (in file one). The majority of tasks encourage the use of description within learners taking the example of the included texts mentioned before.

The main remark we could draw about the present textbook is the use of an interpretive approach in cultural content implementation without designing the activities that train learners to interpret and analyze concepts and cultural issues.

5.3 “Getting Through” Secondary School Year 2 (2006)

Getting Through was issued by the Ministry of National Education in December 2005 for secondary school pupils (Year 2)

5.3.1 Textbook Presentation and Structure

According to the textbook authors, Getting Through is designed to fulfill the following pedagogical purposes:

- 1- To stimulate and develop individual competencies.
- 2- To help the student consolidate his knowledge of functional English in terms of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.
- 3- To Provide activities that aim at developing the four language skills as well as methodological abilities.

Getting Through contains eight units layed out on 203 pages, each unit is divided into three parts:

1. Discovering Language: Grammar, Pronunciation and vocabulary.
2. Developing Skills: Functions, reading, listening, discussing and writing.
3. A project. The number of tasks presented in each unit varies between 24 and 30.

5.3.2 Textbook Cultural Content

Through the textbook files, the pupil is introduced to eight different themes:

- 1- Signs of the Time.
- 2- Make Peace.
- 3- Waste Not, Want Not.
- 4- Budding Scientists.
- 5- News and Tales.
- 6- No Man is an Island.
- 7- Science or Fiction.
- 8- Business is Business.

In Unit One, “ Signs of the time”, the pupils are introduced to local lifestyle, food habits, clothing and mainly professions in terms of how the lifestyle changes over time.

In Unit Two, “Make peace”, the textbook authors present information on the League of Nations and its role in preserving world wide peace, in addition to some figures such as Elbaradai and Martin Luther King. The unit emphasizes the individual role in international relations as well as in close relationships (relieving a friend’s anger or helping him/her to solve his/her problems).

In Unit Three, “Waste Not, Want Not”, the main cultural information concerns the necessity to preserve the human resources, world’s natural richness, prevent health deterioration risks and encourage energy saving.

In Unit Four, “Budding Scientist”, the pupils are exposed to the Arab science golden Age, the property Buoyancy and some scientific tricks.

In unit Five, “News and Tales”, the pupils are introduced to occidental fairy tales and examples of issues covered by media, namely in the news, such as the Tsunami disaster and road accidents.

In Unit Six, No Man is an Island, the textbook authors present the issue defining the role of young citizens in social assistance, especially in the case of disasters. Some solidarity institutions are highlighted.

In Unit Seven, “Science or Fiction?” emphasis is on imaginary scientific, technological and futuristic themes as portrayed through cinema movies.

Finally, Unit Eight, “Business is Business”, sheds light on some criteria of the professions and business dealings, companies’ organization charts and replying to customers’ orders. The unit presents, as well, information on American women first step in outside work starting from the Second World War. Unlike the previous textbook, a first reading of “Getting Through” shows that the authors had chosen general topics rather than topics of special reference to the local or the target language culture. The units chosen for analysis are:

- 1- Signs of the time
- 2- Science or Fiction.
- 3- No Man is Island

5.3.3 Unit One Analysis “Signs of the Time”

A. Discovering the Language

The pupils are introduced to the meaning of “lifestyles” through different tasks. This can be noted in four informative texts about the daily activities of individuals holding different professions and the lifestyle change. In these texts, Places and Individuals’s names belong to the local culture.

B. Developing Skills

In this section of the unit, the eating and clothing habits in some areas of the world (North Africa, North European countries, America and Algeria) are highlighted.

C.Project: ‘Making a profile about lifestyle’. The pupil is required to compare the lifestyle in Algeria and abroad; there is no specifications about the country he has to use to draw the comparison.

5.3.3.1 Type of Cultural Content

As the textbook authors are giving the local culture a large space, we can hardly see notions of the target language culture; there is bias towards information about universal and local lifestyles where specification is not given any importance. We can consider, here, that a “theme based” approach is adopted to implement the cultural content.

5.3.3.2 Efficiency of the Cultural Content in Intercultural Competence Development

Through this unit, pupils can store more knowledge about the lifestyles in Algeria, with the superficial information available about the lifestyle in other countries which are

not necessarily English speaking communities. Once more, the cultural differences are not directly addressed through the project which is the pupils' part of work because the comparison is between "Algeria" and "Abroad"!!!

5.3.3.3 Analysis /interpretation Training Tasks

Although, there is a large number of tasks in that unit, we could not encounter a task that can encourage pupils' analysis or interpretation skill.

5.3.4 Unit Two Analysis " Science or fiction?"

The textbooks designers in this unit have taken many examples of the science fiction science books, movies or series either through pictures or texts and gave an overview of scientific research benefits in the domain of medicine. We provide, below a description of the unit's sections:

A. Discovering Language

In this part of the unit, the reading comprehension activity, grammatical structures use and writing paragraphs are given a large scope. Pupils are introduced to the meaning of science fiction, examples are nineteenth and early twentieth century writings such as "Frankenstein" and "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde". For grammar tasks the authors chose a dialogue about Martians and an activity where there is a speculation about the inventors of medicines, the light bulb and nuclear physics.

B. Developing Skills

Here, the pupils can read three texts; the first about how inventions took place by accident; “buoyancy” and the “gravity law” are given as examples. The second, introduces the reader to “Frankenstein” and the third to flying saucers.

C. The Project

A fact File. Given the needed information, pupils are required to develop a file about the possibilities of a volcano eruption in the United States.

5.3.4.1 Type of Cultural Content

The three sections described above, present science and science fiction as aspects that are totally foreign. We note an absolute absence of any mention of the local culture in this unit in terms of names, places, incidents and inventors mentioned. The theme-based approach is maintained.

5.3.4.2 Efficiency of the Cultural Content in Intercultural Competence Development

The cultural content in this unit serves mainly to shape a stereotype around science as a feature that is absolutely foreign to learners’ culture. In addition, there is a contradiction that can be noted between the nature of the topic, supposedly a contemporary issue and the authors’ choice of examples from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This choice does not serve the pupils interaction with the taught material but the noteworthy element here is the presence of pictures that refer to American series or movies in relation to the topic which leads us to think that the snapshots of culture in this textbook are illustrated with visual aids.

5.3.4.3 Analysis/interpretation Training Tasks

The designed activities, in this unit, aim at enforcing learners use of grammatical rules and retention of the new taught vocabulary; the informative texts used as well as the reading comprehension questions do not assist learners' interpretation and analysis skills.

5.3.5 Unit Three Analysis "No Man is an Island."

The unit treats charity and solidarity in natural disasters and some institutions that undertake these missions. It introduces the pupil to the Red Cross main principles and the role of youth in emergencies. The learners learn also about two research tools; the "questionnaire" and the "survey" making.

A- Discovering Language

The reading comprehension task opens through a text entitled: How Charitable are our Youth? The text deals with the little concern nowadays youth show towards emergencies and natural disasters but it does not refer to a specific community. The following material is an interview with an American computer programmer: Bill Gates being elected "Man of the Year 2005"

A. Developing Skills

In this part of the unit, we can see four texts :

1. Boumerdes Earthquake that showed the best of its people' solidarity.

2. A statement at the Civil Defence World Conference.
3. A text on the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent.
4. A text on Charities in the United States and Britain.

B. **The Project** The pupil is required to make a survey.

5.3.5.1 Type of Cultural Content

The varied cultural information contained in this unit is remarkable; the textbook authors are projecting the issue through different angles and cultures as they present a universal culture including the target language and the local cultures. This leads us to consider that the interpretive approach is used.

5.3.5.2 Efficiency of the Cultural Content in Intercultural Competence Development

In this unit, the second year pupils are learning much knowledge about the right to be helped and the duty to help others in emergencies according one's culture and to universal cultures but still the difference is not hidden when the foreign cultures social role is portrayed through institutions while the local culture presents an image of individual initiatives; (with only one carrying on the arm the red cross symbol) the presentation is badly portraying the local culture as far as this concept is concerned.

5.3.5.3 Analysis /interpretation Training Tasks

The tasks in this unit are oriented to the mastery of the target language linguistic rules and research methodology (questionnaire design and survey making) without activities where the analysis /interpretation training is visible since the above mentioned

texts are all informative. For example, the comprehension questions that follow the first text: “How Charitable are our youth?” concentrate only on language proficiency and information.

- 1- What is the report about?
- 2- In which paragraph does the author speak about the findings/results and in which one does he give an interpretation?
- 3- Why does the reporter use “Interestingly in the second paragraph?
- 4- Does the report confirm the older generation’s worry about society or not? Why?
(Riche et al, 2006:120)

As we can see, the four designed questions draw the pupils’ attention to the text where they are required to find the questions’ answers and none of the questions appeals to their experience or opinion though, they are concerned by the issue tackled in the text. Here, again, it can be noted that in “Getting Through” , the interpretive perspective is applied but the learners’ skills of interpretation or analysis are not encouraged.

5.4 “New Prospects” (2007) Secondary School Year 3

New Prospects is the textbook designed for third year secondary school. It was issued to comply with the new English syllabus for secondary students Year Three as laid out by the National Curriculum Committee of the National Education in March 2006.

5.4.2 Textbook Organization and Structure

In the first four pages of the textbook, the authors explain the considerations, structure and objectives of the syllabus laid out through the book’s 270 pages. It is noteworthy, here, that six units are designed but only four among them are mandatory. A

book map is presented where we can read the following outcomes sought by the coursebook authors: (Arab et al, 2007: 08-13)

1. Language outcomes: functions, grammar, vocabulary and sound systems.
2. Skills and strategies outcomes: Listening, speaking, reading and writing.
3. Learner's outcomes.
4. Intercultural Outcomes.
5. The Project.

Among the main objectives mentioned, we can depict the authors focus on learners' preparation for the Baccalaureat exam in terms of the coursebook tasks and shape. A first reading of the textbook shows that it is cognitively overloaded though it deals with recurrent language functions that the learner had already seen in the previous year. The authors equally mention the learner's outcomes and intercultural outcomes as being "part and parcel" of the foreign language teaching/learning process through a typology of activities (Arab et al, 2007:06). The textbook contains the following units.

1. Exploring the past.
2. Ill gotten gains never prosper.
3. Schools different and alike.
4. Safety first.
5. It's a giant leap for mankind.
6. We are a family.

Our analysis will take into consideration three units among the ones designed in the textbook that are:

1. Schools: Different and Alike.
2. Exploring the Past.
3. We are a Family.

5.4.2 Textbook Cultural Content

In the first unit entitled ‘Exploring the Past’, third year learners are exposed to information about ancient civilizations around the world: Greek, Chinese, Egyptian, Sumerian, Phoenicians and Romans and the Indus Valley civilization,. The unit gives also an overview of the merits of Arabs and the strategic position of Algeria at the crossroads of civilizations.

The second unit entitled ‘Ill Gotten Gains Never Prosper’, took Fraud fighting as a main topic where learners are introduced to concepts such as “ethics”, “safety regulations” “exploitation”.....

In Unit Three, ‘Schools: Different and Alike’, the pupils are exposed to the educational system in Great Britain and the United States. Detailed reports about the nature and development of the schooling order and its political dimensions are provided.

In Unit Four, ‘Safety First’, as a general topic, is treated with no reference to any community. The unit gives insights on the importance of adequate and balanced food diet and energy in addition to the role of advertisement in the citizen’s consumption choices.

In unit Five, ‘It’s a Giant Leap for Mankind’, the solar system and its giant planets are layed out with details on dimensions and position. The texts give an overview about the creation of the world and the possibilities of collision with comets.

Unit Six, ‘We are a Family’, presents keys to happiness and comfort. The unit treats the difference between the American and British people ways of showing their feelings. The learner is also introduced to the biography of Princess Diana Spencer.

The textbook program is designed on the theme -based approach as was the case of “Getting Through”, carrying new and varied themes. Nonetheless, the choice of cultural information in Unit Six that can not be justified, especially the biography of Princess Diana, in terms of behavior, personal relationships, traditions and social norms breaking.

5.4.3 Unit One Analysis “ Sckools Different and Alike.”

The unit’s structure is layed out around two texts; the first of which is entitled: “Education in Britain” where we can read about the British schooling system and its political and popular dimensions. The second, with no title is unfolding the American educational system and the governmental role and achievements in terms of making this system succesful. The unit is enhanced by different grammatical tasks, career choice and future professional perspectives are the main topics used. For example, the career of artists is presented through a local stereotype:

- A. If he went to an Art School there’d be no guarantee that he could get a job afterwards.
- B. He wouldn’t be a teacher even if it were the last job on earth.

- A. I wouldn’t be a teacher myself if I’d my way.

B. If he wants to be an artist, he will have to decide what sort of artist he wants to be.
Arab et al (2007:76)

The same career “Artist” is reconsidered in another activity as shown below:

- . He has set his heart on becoming an artist.
- . He ought to take up something more secure.

(ibid: p79)

As we can see, the example of the authors stresses the stereotype of artists as being a non lucrative career.

After reading the first text, entitled: Education in Britain, the learner is required to compare the British academic degrees with the Algerian degrees as well as to find out the equivalent of Lycée in Britain but the questions asked do not refer directly to the Algerian schooling system.

5.4.3.1 Type of Cultural Content

The learner is exposed to a model of the American and British schooling systems, which focuses on these English speaking communities. The type of cultural content is definitely the target language culture since the local or international cultures are absent. We have to note here, that the same issue is presented in the third year middle school textbook.

5.4.3.2 Efficiency of the Cultural Content in Intercultural Competence Development

Unit One presents a cultural content that does not develop the learner’s ability to relate the target language culture referring to his own; it excludes the local educational

system as, an example, and uses only one comparison task that could be better devoted to compare the local educational system with the British/American schooling hierarchy and the degrees of both systems.

5.4.3.3 Analysis/interpretation Training Tasks

The activities and exercises designed in Unit One are elaborated to train and prepare extensively pupils for the Baccalaureat exam. Apart from the degrees comparison, of the ‘degrees’ Comparison, we did not find tasks that encourage learners to analyze concepts; there is focus on stereotypes rather than critical thinking development. Comparison is undoubtedly, one of the tasks that develop SL learners’ critical thinking and cultural awareness as advanced by Byram (1991:20) Figure 01, but in the present case, the task could be better exploited if the comparison subject concerned the schooling system as a whole including the diplomas comparison, it could be better for the learners who had performed a comparison of the local and the British schools in the middle school second year (See section 5.1.2.3.2).

5.4.4 Unit Two Analysis “Exploring the Past”

The unit’s two texts expose the learners to relate tasks and much information about the ancient civilizations. The first text, entitled “Algeria at the Crossroads of Civilizations” presents the Algerian territory privileged position of being open to many civilizations, a detailed account of the successive invasions that occupied Algeria, and the merits of this country that attracted them. The second text, with no title, deals with

the ancient nation Egypt as an example of one of the oldest civilizations with its symbols, achievements and development at that time.

The nature of information that learners can store out of these two texts is totally different; the text about Algeria shows the importance of the country only in terms of its strategic location and natural resources while the text about Egypt highlights the nation's development and superiority as a civilization. The comparison that learners would infer is definitely not in favour of his own civilization since the Egyptian civilization would be considered as productive and flourishing, while the Algerian civilization would be considered as passive and unproductive and most importantly, submissive to other civilizations.

5.4.4.1 Type of Cultural Content

The knowledge implemented in this unit is culture non specific; the authors mentioned other civilizations in various activities (the Sumerians and the Greeks) but no details are provided about them. Pupils can keep in mind what the term 'civilization' means but referring most to the Egyptian culture rather than to their own culture because the explanation of the term "civilization" provided in this unit (Grammar Activity) is as follows:

"For me, civilization is synonymus with refinement in architecture, in law and in the lifestyles. The culture and the literature of a society also contribute to the flourishing of its civilization"
(Arab et al, 2007:17)

Considering the first text content about Algeria as a naturally privileged nation where different invasions took place, on one hand, and on the other ahnd, taking into

account the Egyptian population achievements that built their civilization and referring to the above definition of “civilization”, the learner will definitely wonder about what civilization means actually for his country. Such concepts need fair explanation from the teacher to avoid leaving incorrect assumptions in the learner’s mind through designing the appropriate material or urging the learners to conduct research on the Algerian civilization in terms of achievements.

5.4.4.2 Efficiency of the Cultural Content in Intercultural Competence Development

As mentioned above, the cultural information of this unit results in the learners’ comparison between the local civilization with the Egyptian civilization but on totally different bases provoking a negative impression on his consideration of the local culture, especially in the absence of the analysis training tasks.

5.4.4.3 Analysis / interpretation Training Tasks

Among the 30 questions and exercises contained in this unit, none of them can be taken as an analysis or interpretation training task for the reasons already presented in the previous section .

5.4.5 Unit Three Analysis “We are a Family”

The first text in this unit is entitled “Feelings”; the author compares the ways British and American people show their feelings in their communities. It portrays the British people as reserved while the Americans as flexible and spontaneous people. The second text, with no title, is a brief biography of princess Diana Spencer, presenting her life,

death and the sympathy people had for her tragic life. The two texts are informative and provide no real cultural discussion in the classroom; the pupil is encouraged to read the text in order to answer the grammar tasks following each text. The third text, by Bertrand Russell, evokes the best feelings a man can live with and for; emotions like feeling pity for the suffering of others and the search of affection and knowledge can make life worth living according to the author. This human affective factor is not properly exploited to make learners share it with others. There are no activities which invite the learners to express their feelings toward human sufferings.

5.4.5.1 Type of Cultural Content

The unit underlies a culture specific content namely of the target language speaking communities (Great Britain and the United States of America), featuring some figures/personalities lives', feelings and emotions.

5.4.5.2 Efficiency of the Cultural Content in Intercultural Competence Development

As the unit is presenting a topic that has cultural universal dimensions of mankind in general but presented through the British and American communities, we think that the learner is tracing comparisons especially that the textbook recommends it through the following task:

Stranger- Acquaintance- Good friend- Close friend. Best/ Closest friend.

- A- Are the degrees of friendship in English culture the same as those in your culture?
Are there any equivalents of the words above in your language?
- B- It is often said that 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'. To what extent is this true for you Why?

- C- Do you make friends easily or with difficulty? Why?
- D- What qualities do you expect to find in your friend?
- E- Have you ever fallen out with a friend? Why?

(Arab et al, 2007:183)

In designing the above questions and creating an opinion gap, the textbook authors can urge the learner to check, using his own view on “friendship”, the similarities and differences between his culture and the target language speaking communities’ cultures. Involving the learner through this type of questions that deals with feelings exploits his experience, knowledge as well as viewpoint to friendship and results in obtaining a personally built opinion. The task includes comparison and an opinion gap activity.

5.4.5.3 Analysis/ interpretation Training Tasks

With the exception of a note worthy comparison and opinion gap task on friendship, we could not find other tasks that might encourage pupils to analyze or criticize any of the cultural concepts in the unit. Considering the elevated number of tasks and questions that vary between 26 -30, we opted for considering their minimum number (26) to relate the drills that develop SL learners’ interpretation and analysis skills. Out of the 286 (26 x 11) questions and tasks contained in the 11 units/files analyzed, only 03 tasks of comparison are designed. As a summary of the findings that resulted from the analysis of the four textbooks, a cultural content evaluation is provided in table 20, below.

Texbook	File/unit	Local Culture	Target language Culture	International Culture	Cultural content type	interpr/analysis activities and tasks
Spotlight on English Book 2	A person's profile	+	+	+	Non specific	0
	Cartoons	-	+	+	Non specific	0
	Theatre	+	+	+	Non specific	0
Spotlight On English Book Three	Work and Play	+	+	-	Specific	1
	Around the world	+	+	+	Non specific	0
Getting Through (2AS)	Signs of the time	+	-	+	Non Specific	0
	Science or fiction	-	+	+	Non Specific	0
	No man is an island	+	+	-	Non specific	0
New Prospects (3AS)	Exploring the Past	+	-	+	Non specific	0
	Schools different and alike	-	+	+	Specific	1
	We are a family	-	+	-	Specific	1
					Total	3

Table 20: Cultural Content Evaluation Checklist of Algerian Textbooks.

Notes and Conclusion

Middle and high school textbooks constitute the formal source of information in learning English as a foreign language at these levels. The curricular designed in these coursebooks were analyzed in our study for the following reasons:

1. To confirm the hypothesis about the adequacy of the type of cultural content implemented in these programs for developing learners' intercultural competence.
2. To check the presence of tasks that can enhance learners ability of analysis and interpretation.

Following Cortazzi and Jin model of the type of cultural content in EFL textbooks and its efficiency in promoting learners' intercultural competence, we proceeded into: first, a general account of the cultural content of the textbook and, second, the analysis of cultural content type and efficiency in selected units from each textbook for a closer look. Third, we could check the presence/ absence of tasks that can enhance learners' ability of analysis. Our first remark about the four new coursebooks is their richness of linguistic knowledge, attractiveness in terms of themes choice, and the use of pictures, illustrations and colours which is extremely positive.

In middle school textbook Two, the authors present a non specific cultural content through an interpretive approach which is a new tradition of cultural content implementation in EFL textbooks. The cultural information is highbrow and the local culture is given almost equal space as the international cultures. In Book Three we could see that the authors are in some units using a culture specific information concerning the target language speaking communities and the local culture institutions and statistics, which takes us again to the first tradition of cultural content implementation where cultural differences are directly addressed and learners are required to highlight the cultural differences through comparison.

As for the efficiency and adequacy of non specific cultural knowledge in developing learners cultural awareness, and considering its richness, we appreciated such effort to give the learner a wider view of cultures in general. But, as mentioned before, we expected to see the learner trained to interpret and deduce for himself and draws his own conclusions. We can also note here, that with the relatively high number of grammatical and vocabulary use tasks in the two textbooks, the learner will be focusing on language tasks and ignoring cultural ones.

In Secondary School Textbooks, “Getting Through” S2 and “New Prospects” S3 authors opted for a non specific cultural information through international topics and basically informative texts that do not raise questions of debate. As for the middle school textbooks, the cultural content is highly rich, the local culture is given considerable space but still not suitable for a passive learner. We can also note here that the target language speaking communities superiority is prominent as we illustrated in the analysis. This issue raises the question of efficiency of this type of cultural content for raising learners’ cultural awareness in the absence of analysis training tasks that enable the learner to avoid stereotyping and generalizations. In general we can say that there is little importance attributed to the speaking skill which is presented as a pronunciation exercise that gives no opportunity for learners to comment or ask questions about the cultural values, concepts or notions presented in the textbook and deprives teachers to from discussing them with their learners. The priority is undoubtedly given to the writing skill to prepare learners for examinations. Furthermore, there is absence of tasks that train pupils in the two levels to interpret and to analyze the taught information about culture which are necessary

for balancing the positive and negative aspects of all issues, developing learners attitudes, evaluating cultural values, expressing their opinions and searching explanations.

Chapter Six

Results Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

The present study was conducted to check three hypotheses, developed to determine factors behind the lack of intercultural competence in university EFL classes in Biskra University and check whether or not our learners educational background and cultural differences constitute part of these factors. The study can explain the first year English learners' low achievement and demotivation in learning literature as a subject that appeals to the learners' imagination and openness to understand the concepts conveyed, in addition to their linguistic knowledge. So, in this chapter we will reconsider the hypotheses, the research instruments and findings in order to discuss the results. The former will serve for the discussion and the latter (results) will provide some implications and recommendations.

6.1 Discussion of Results

The study hypotheses, are:

1- First year English students have a negative attitude towards the English learning and the subjects taught in this stream.

2- First year students do not have the necessary linguistic knowledge that enables them to understand the concepts and thoughts that literary texts carry, or have a deficiency in one or more of the foreign language skills.

3- The approach used in portraying the target language culture in the English textbooks does not develop learners' intercultural competence in terms of assisting the learner to critically form his attitude towards the target language and its speaking communities.

Three research instruments were used to check the above hypotheses, which are respectively, the questionnaire, to measure learners' attitude to the target language and its culture, a language proficiency test to detect the learners' deficiency in the foreign language skills, and, finally, middle and high school textbooks analysis to check the approach (es) used to implement the target language culture and the existence of tasks that develop learners' intercultural competence.

In this discussion of the study results, we will present a detailed account of the findings and relate them to the suggested hypotheses in an attempt to give answers to the research questions.

6.1.1 Hypothesis One

English learners' low achievement and demotivation in learning literature is due to their negative attitude towards the English stream subjects in general or towards the TL culture. The questionnaire results show that 54.24% followed literary streams in secondary school which implies that their exposure to the foreign languages (French and English) was relatively high.

6.1.1.1 Learners' Choice Motives

The Students were required to answer seven questions carrying different motives to learn English; their positive answers is an indication that they refer to the English language spread than to their personal knowledge or experience as can be noted in questions: 4, 5 and 6

Motive	Positive Answer
Q4) English is socially appreciated	65.35%
Q5) English is the language used to communicate with people abroad	76.47%
Q6) It will be used in the professional life	73.85%

Table 21: Learners' positive answers to questions: 4, 5 and 6

In question four, though in Algeria, English is not spoken outside the educational institutions (middle school, secondary school and university), the students agree on considering English as a socially appreciated language.

In question Five, and considering learners' age and the little opportunities that 76.47% among them might have travelled abroad, the positive answer is a reflection of the image of the TL presented by the general education English textbooks as will be explained later, in addition to media.

In question Six, it can be noted that 94% of the students opted for becoming a teacher as a future career (see chapter IV section 5.2.2.3.3). The students have a limited scope of the professional perspectives where English can be useful.

The three mentioned reasons confirm the idea that the learners did not form their positive attitude from a personal viewpoint or experience but from their former education and social environment.

6.1.1.2 Learners' Attitude to the English Speaking Communities

In questions 08 to 11, where we attempted to detect the first year students' attitude to the English speaking communities and the necessity of interacting with them, students answers are s follows:

Question	Yes	No	Maybe
Q08) We should learn English to interact with English native speakers.	60.78%	15.03%	24.18%
Q09) Being in touch with English native speakers may be useful for Algeria.	37.25%	16.99%	45.75%
Q10) The experts who talk in English took part in our nation's development.	49.67%	18.95%	31.37%
Q11) Algerian scientists and industrialists should interact with English native speakers.	33.98%	52.61%	12.41%

Table 22: Students answers distribution to questions: 8, 9, 10 and 11

As can be noted, the students' attitude towards the English speaking communities, presented here through scientists, industrialists and experts is paradoxical. On the one hand, 60.78% of the learners agree on the necessity of interacting with the English native speakers (Q 8) and 49.67% consider that the English speaking experts took part in our nation's development (Q10). But, on the other hand, 52.61% among the students do not agree on the necessity of interacting with English native speakers as far as Algerian

scientists and industrialists are concerned (Q11). This leads us to consider that the learners' motivation to learn English is for integrative purposes rather than intrinsic objectives since the students' understanding of the pragmatic outcomes of learning a foreign language is still restricted to the verbal communication, friendship, chatting and TV programs. This type of motivation can urge the EFL learners to focus on the communicative competence as explained by Shuman (1986) rather than making effort to learn the language profoundly as is the case in literature.

6.1.1.3 Learners' Perception of the Target Language Culture

In questions 13 to 16, the learners answers were as follows:

Question	Yes	No	Maybe
Q13) University English Teaching curricula should contain aspects of the native speakers' culture.	45.75%	03.92%	23.52%
Q14) Learning a foreign language implies necessarily the learning of its culture.	43.79%	35.31%	20.9%
Q15) Being aware of the foreign language culture helps enriching students knowledge about that language.	65.35%	19.43%	15.22%
Q16) Learning a foreign language means the mastery of grammar, spelling and language sciences.	35.64%	10.45%	24.83%

Table 23: Students' answers to questions 13, 14, 15 and 16

The above percentages unfold three basic ideas:

- ✓ First, the learners consider that the foreign language programs contain cultural information about the target language speaking communities' culture and that this cultural content enriches the second/foreign language learning (Q13 and Q15).

- ✓ Second, the number of students who believe that learning the second/ foreign language culture is a necessity is not that far from the number of students who do not agree on this necessity (Q14).
- ✓ Third, the number of students (35.64%) who answered “yes” about considering the learning of a foreign language as only the mastery of grammar, spelling and language sciences almost equals the number of students (35, 31%) who answered “No” in considering the learning of culture as a necessity in learning the foreign language.

Thus, though the learners are aware of the inclusion of culture in the foreign/second language teaching curricula, they do not understand its necessity but as an additional knowledge to enrich the target language learning.

As far as questions 17, 18 and 19, the results showed that in question 17, 60.13% believe that the local culture and the English culture are totally different. In question 18, 78.7% preferred to study English in a European country and finally, in question 19, 63.3% of the learners are convinced that they do not change when introduced to a new culture.

The above mentioned results are indicators of the students’ belief that they are learning a foreign language of a totally different culture, they refuse to assimilate this culture. Opting for studying in a European country is the outcome of the image they might have about opportunities in the studies and/or employment.

Through the first year students’ answers to the questionnaire, we could elaborate a general view about their attitude towards learning English as a foreign language at university, being aware that learning the language implies learning about a culture that is

to a large extent different from their own culture. First year students arrive at university with an image of the English language as the language used in developed countries that can ease communication with any people abroad. Their general knowledge about English is shaped by media, since for the majority, reading scientific books which actually reflects the spread of English in international documentation is absent. Considering their age, and the little chances that these learners might have to travel, their answers reflect a limited scope of the target language culture presence in the teaching programs which may be due to the general education; middle and high school textbook and the approach used to implement the English speaking communities culture in the taught syllabi.

We also could understand that, on one hand, their choice to be English learners is the outcome of the following factors:

- The image of English speaking communities, the aspects of their culture reflected by media.
- The availability of materials like English songs, Television programs (translated into French or Arabic) provided some easiness for them to be able to watch them making no effort to understand the authentic script; the popularity of American series is a noteworthy example.
- The relationship that is clearly built between the developed countries and their language.

On the other hand we could clearly see that :

- The English culture inclusion in the curriculum is still a clumsy idea for the students population.
- The learners know that a big difference exists between their culture and the English culture and refuse to assimilate new values and way of thinking.

In concluding terms, the questionnaire results nullified the first hypothesis about first year English learners' negative attitude towards learning English. As noted in the results' discussion, the students are highly motivated to learn English for integrative purposes.

6.1.2 Hypothesis Two

To check the second hypothesis about learners' deficiencies in foreign language skills, a language proficiency test was administered following the Cambridge Certificate tests. The success rate in the language proficiency test is 44.08% among the 96 informants who sat for the test. The first year students' achievement in the test is presented below:

6.1.2.1 Reading Comprehension

The learners were required to answer four (4) comprehension questions, the results showed that:

- Only 11.62% answered the four questions correctly
- 33.88% could answer two questions correctly
- 33.88% could answers three questions correctly.

- 18.60% answered one question correctly.

The students' achievement was low, if we consider that the candidates are familiar with the text's main topic and vocabulary. The text is about the English grammar (See Appendix 2), the vocabulary used is simple and contains some new terms like 'the Cherokee', Atlantic slave trade, ethnicities, pidgin, circumlocution and creole that were either defined in the text or made explicit through the context. In addition, the questions followed the paragraphs' order; the student can focus on one paragraph to find the required answer. The questions were basically of two types: searching the meaning of a phrasal verb/word or extracting an idea.

It could be noted that the candidates achieved well in question one (60.5%) though the question concerned 'the Cherokee' tribe in the first paragraph; the term, for the first year students, is completely new. As for the second and third questions, they consisted in finding out the meanings of "Make-shift" and "consistent" with which the learners are familiar.

6.1.2.2 The Writing Test

It includes three activities: use of English, Grammar and Written Expression. The students' achievement in the 'use of English activity', where they were required to fill 12 gaps with functional and content words, (see appendix 2), was low if we take into account that none of the candidates filled the gaps with 09 correct words and that only 13.66% of them reached eight (08) correct answers. One of the reasons that might have entailed this result is the high number of gaps if we compare this number to the type of

tasks that the learners are familiar with (noted in the middle and high school textbooks), on one hand, and on the other hand, the high number of optional words for each gap, that are close in meaning.

In the Grammar activity, the candidates were introduced to nine different syntactic areas:

- Present continuous use.
- Simple tense : imperative and present.
- The use of “as good as”
- The use of comparatives.
- The use of perfect tenses.
- The use of possessive forms.
- The use of conjunctions.
- The use of auxiliaries.
- Detection of ungrammatical expressions

The students achievement in this activity (see *Table 15 p*) is considerably high in areas like the simple tenses (87.5%) and present continuous (78.125%), medium in areas like the use of auxiliaries ((50%) and possessive forms (46.87%), but very low in the use of comparatives (15.62%). These results show that the middle and secondary school curricula had emphasized learners’ grammar instruction and rules retention in the areas noted above through typical drills for this purpose. It is noteworthy, here, that the learners’ underachievement in the use of comparatives denotes also that comparatives

were attributed little importance in the absence of comparison in the curricula tasks. All in all, the candidates' mastery of grammatical rules is considerable.

In the written expression activity, the learners expressed their career choice providing one or two arguments to justify their choice. The main flaws noted were more in vocabulary use than in grammar. The majority of errors are due to mother tongue interference (see *Table 18 p 148*).

The writing test results show that the learners' former English instruction focused on typical drills for grammatical rules retention and practice which explains learners' mastery of some areas at the expense of others. Through the analysis of middle and secondary school textbooks, it could be noted that the comparison tasks are minimal which explains the learners' deficiency in using comparatives.

6.1.2.3 The Listening Test

The learners' achievement in the listening comprehension activity shows that this skill was completely ignored in the former education. We could note in the analysis of middle and secondary textbooks that the listening activities were performed by the teacher as a source of speech. The learners are familiar with the authentic American pronunciation more than the British received pronunciation, mainly via TV programs (with translation) and assisted by visual aids. The results show as well that 25.24% of the students provided no answer and only 14.23% filled six (6) gaps correctly, out of the activity's nine gaps. (see appendix 2). Furthermore, the absence of authentic material use

in teaching listening comprehension also, resulted in a variation in the learners' pronunciations as will be discussed below.

6.1.2.4 The Speaking Test and Oral Performance

The speaking test was designed as part of the language proficiency test of the four skills, reflecting learners' syntactic, spelling and lexicon use errors, on one hand, and. On the other hand, the speaking test aimed at reflecting the candidates ability to relate, interpret and evaluate cultural differences as one of the five skills of intercultural competence. (Byram, 2002: 12-13)

The speaking test results showed learners' little experience in facing the audience and oral performance in general. It could be noted that the discussion was poor taking into account the learners little participation; only 4-7 students in each group took part in the discussion. Students's use of vocabulary is limited. The learners' utterances carried many deficiencies: (see Table 19 p 153)

- Pronunciation: the pronunciation of weak and strong forms.
- Syntax: double subject, interchangeable use of conjunctions and incomplete sentences.
- Lexicon use : misuse of vocabulary, mainly caused by mother tongue interference.

6.1.2.4.1 Cultural Issues Discussion

The students' skill of interpreting and analyzing cultural issues where differences are visible among the learner's culture and the target language culture, constitutes a basic

requirement for value judgement ability to form a positive attitude towards the target language culture and its speaking communities, as laid out by Deardoff (2006, 2009) who stresses that the critical reflection is a basic requirement for the individual's ability to evaluate knowledge. The analysis of the learners' interventions took into account the following criteria: the topic choice, the use of interpretation, comparison, analysis and evaluation to form or discuss a value judgement. The obtained results show that the majority of learners opted for general topics as we can see in the following table:

Chosen Topics	Students Percentage
Characteristics of a good friend	43.37%
The role of aesthetic surgery in improving people's life	16.94%
Third World characteristics	37.36%
Comparing Non Muslim women in the Western countries with Muslim women	11.23%
No intervention	06.28%
Total	100%

Table 24: Topics Choice Distribution (Speaking Skill)

The choice of topics as presented in the table, indicates that the learners avoid to take the risk of indulging in a discussion on conflictual cultural differences (as explained in Chapter IV section 4.2.2.5.2) and opted for general topics ('the characteristics of a good friend' and the Third World Characteristics') where the learners do not feel obliged to personally judge a foreign cultural value. Avoiding the cultural issues discussion denotes the absence of the intercultural competence skills described by Byram and Zarate,

(1997a: 7-9) as “Attitude” or “the curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own.”

It could be noted as well that the learners who opted for discussing the cultural differences in topic 2 and topic 4 (The benefits of aesthetic surgery and comparing Muslim women with non-muslim women in Western countries) adopted a cultural conflict avoidance strategy by avoiding to refer to the religious standpoint about the aesthetic surgery (Topic 2) as one of the issue aspects, or the difference/similarity between Islam and the other religions (in topic 4) in terms of behavior and thinking. Instead, the learners gave different definitions of the aesthetic surgery, emphasized the fact that they do not have a friend who may undergo such a surgery, the surgery risks and side effects, and gave examples of other countries where this type of surgery is widely practiced as Lebanon and Egypt unlike Algeria. In topic 4, the learners provided many characteristics of non- Muslim Western women as liberal and having different priorities, while they referred to the Muslim women as an example of “religious” women. Finally, they believe that Muslim women should be careful when interacting with non Muslim Western women. These answers reflect a cultural conflict avoiding strategy (see Chapter One section 2.4.2); the learners avoid completely to raise a religious comparison between the target language speaking community and the local community to escape pointing at their opinion about the other religions.

In concluding terms, we noted common features in the learners’ interventions in the four topics: their answers are confirmative, the issues are not analyzed and the learners do

not present or argue for a personal judgement or viewpoint, they rather report general knowledge.

All in all, the language proficiency test confirmed the second hypothesis; that the English learners' linguistic knowledge carries deficiencies in the speaking and listening skills, that the first year English learners have a considerable deficiency in the speaking and listening and reading comprehension. Their former education focused on grammar rules retention and vocabulary use mainly in writing.

6.1.3 Hypothesis Three

The English learners' intercultural incompetence is due to the approach used in portraying the target language culture in the English textbooks, which does not assist the learner to critically form his/her attitude towards the target language and its speaking communities. (Cortazzi and Jin 1999) The analysis of four English textbooks (two in middle school and two in secondary school) provided the following results:

6.1.3.1 Middle School Textbooks

'Spotlight on English' Book Two presents a cultural content of the target language culture as well as the international cultures in arts in general that can be qualified as highbrow knowledge. Although the textbook authors' main concern is to provide a considerable amount of cultural knowledge however, the space given to the local culture is eclectic; it is considerable in File One while it is hardly seen in File Two and Three. The coursebook designers opted for an interpretive perspective where the foreign language learner is introduced to universal cultures. This perspective relies on the

learners' own interpretation and analysis to draw comparisons, ask questions and relate according to his own culture. Taking into consideration the learners' age and their relatively little experience, we believe that they need to be trained to analyze and evaluate cultural concepts and values to develop their critical ability. The almost absence of tasks that can enhance pupils' skill of analysis is a flaw when designing such a syllabus as stated by Deardoff (2006, 2009). (see Chapter Two, section **2.9.1**). For the specific cultural information used in *Spotlight on English Book three*, the cultural content in some units is a culture specific information about the target language speaking communities and the local culture institutions and statistics where cultural differences are apparent. The cultural information in this textbook can be hardly remembered by students when we consider the extremely high number of tasks and activities designed. It is also noted that the interpretive perspective is most of the time applied if we consider that out of the extremely high number of activities in the textbook units, there's only one comparison activity, the learners are required to compare British schools and local schools. As mentioned in the textbooks' analysis, this type of knowledge is beneficial for our learners in terms of addressing the cultural differences directly and explicitly (see Chapter Two, section **2.7.3**) the students can keep in mind a specific information but at the same time the comparison entails an impression of the target language speaking communities' superiority in various domains.

6.1.3.2 Secondary School Textbooks

Through the analysis of second and third year textbooks, it could be noted that in '*Getting Through*', the learners are introduced to a variety of topics where the cultural

content is hardly distinguished as in Unit 1 and Unit 2 (see section 5.3.2) The textbook authors opted for general topics rather than topics with special reference to the local or the target language cultures; the authors' objective was to enrich the learners' linguistic knowledge and language use at the expense of the intercultural competence. Furthermore, the cultural content in unit 07 "Science or Fiction" presents the topic as completely foreign to the local culture. The learners were introduced as well to the right to be helped and the duty of young people to help others in Unit 3, but the tasks designed did not exploit the issue of involving the learners' experiences or opinions to be directly concerned by the issue. In '*New Prospects*' units, it could be noted that the approach used to implement the cultural content is culture specific; the textbook authors highlight the local culture in some units and the target language culture in other units. In this tradition, the cultural information about history, statistics and institutions is often referred to as Highbrow information. This is a tradition that always seeks to present positively both the local and the target language cultures.

The cultural content in these textbooks neglects religion which is a relevant component in any community's culture that could be well exploited to shed light on human diversity as the other components of culture. Furthermore, the presentation of some cultural concepts as science and civilization as foreign to the local culture, enforces stereotype of these concepts and entails a feeling of inferiority within middle and secondary school learners.

As for the speaking and listening tasks and activities contained in the four textbooks, it can be noted that no authentic materials are implemented, the speaking skill

teaching is limited to pronunciation of single letters, syllables or words and no discussion activities are designed. In sum, the middle and secondary school curricula content is varied and rich, nonetheless, it takes as a priority to develop the learners' writing skill through grammar instruction and vocabulary use and retention drills. The analysis of the four textbooks confirmed the third hypothesis; the first year English learners have a deficiency in the target language skills.

6.2 Pedagogical Recommendations

Considering the the results of the present study that encompass university first year attitudes towards English, their level at university entry and schemata in English culture, we recommend some pedagogical implications in order to improve learners' abilities. As the foreign language textbook constitutes the official background of university English learners in cultural and linguistic knowledge, the English classroom is the first place where these learners can communicate in this language. Thus, the approach used in portraying the English speaking communities in the textbook influences learners's image about the English culture. Hence, when the interpretive perspective is used adequately; respecting the equal space given to the local, the target language and the international cultures can widen learners' view of culture-specific and culture-general view of values.

6.2.1 Developing English Learners' Intercultural Competence

Foreign languages teachers should carry the belief that the objective of teaching a foreign language is to enable learners to understand the target language values and behavior while building a linguistic competence. For non native teachers as well as

learners, it is obvious that possessing a complete intercultural competence is far from being possible because of social norms, continuous change, and most importantly, because no one can determine the amount of cultural knowledge needed to own the intercultural competence. This fact leads us to use our knowledge about the IC components and attempt to develop them in our English classrooms in at all levels of education, including university. These components are:

1. Intercultural Attitude.
2. Knowledge
3. The skill to interpret and relate
4. The skill to discover and interact with the target language people.
5. Critical Cultural Awareness.

6.2.2 Using Speculative texts

In teaching the foreign language, texts are generally the main material that carries cultural information. If the text is informative and contains only accepted notions and ideas, it can not raise the English learners' curiosity or speculation. Speculative texts help raising questions, discussion, argumentation and opinion development.

6.2.3 Comparison, Analysis and Interpretation, and Opinion Gap Tasks

In relation to the intercultural competence skills, the relevance of learners' critical awareness in foreign language classrooms is evident (Deardoff 2006, 2009; Byram, 1991) due to the continuous exposure to foreign values and concepts that raise learners'

curiosity, appreciation as well as disappointment. In all these cases, a foreign language learner is treating the new information in reference to his prior knowledge of his own culture, thus we can guide this information treatment that fits all possible change in cultural knowledge through analysis training. The foreign language curriculum should contain:

- **Comparison** exercises (Byram, 1991) that encourage learners to understand the target language speaking community, which is perceived to have cultural differences and hence, raise learners' cultural awareness.
- **Analysis and interpretation** exercises: when searching positive and negative facets of issues, (Willingham, 2007), the learner searches explanations for the foreign culture values and concepts as well as his own cultural beliefs. These activities can develop learners' critical awareness and understanding.
- **Opinion Gap** exercises: This type of tasks leaves a space for the learner to think critically especially when the task is based on a text where questions are raised even if they does not refer to culture, they may help learners to find answers to and develop their own interpretation and viewpoint.

6.2.4 Giving More Importance to the Speaking Skill

Foreign language learners' group discussions in the classroom provides for a pleasant and encouraging setting to express their ideas, questions and wonderings; it is the only way we can raise cultural issues and correct their views to to the target language culture. Teachers may from time to time free their learners from the unit

theme and engage in a cultural notion of the English language for discussion and debate to correct generalizations and stereotypes.

6.2.5 Using Authentic Materials in Teaching Listening

The use of authentic materials in Foreign language classrooms since an early age makes the learner feel that he is close to the authentic context of the foreign language. Authentic materials represent a unified reference for correct pronunciation, provide original cultural facts and illustrates real life events.

As religion is one of the main pillars of culture, religious issues should not be avoided. It is healthy to urge learners to make research on and to consider that the religious differences are part of universal differences to relief the psychological distance that foreign language learners develop towards religious differences. (Artran and Norenzayan, 2004)

6.2.6 Culture Teaching Perspectives

To conclude, the English language learners perceive the target language culture through their own cultural view. However, if cultural differences are not explicitly addressed and discussed, the learners may keep wrong stereotypes and generalizations about the target language speaking communities which may result in a negative attitude that would certainly affect their achievement in learning the foreign language. In the absence of analysis, interpretation, comparison and opinion gap activities, the learner can not develop the intercultural competence required to judge reasonably and logically the target language culture and to consider his own culture flaws and strengthes.

For this, the local culture must be given due space and importance, the learners' critical awareness of his own culture prepares them to evaluate the target language culture, seeing what is positive and negative in both cultures and in international cultures.

Middle and High school teachers need to understand that the method /approach they implement in training learners' skills of interpretation, analysis and comparison is as important as the amount of information they make them learn; if they do not prepare learners to use the information, the teaching process will turn into "a filling process".

Conclusion

In the present study, three research instruments were used to check three hypotheses, for the purpose to explain the university English learners' intercultural incompetence that affected negatively students' achievement in learning literature. Out of the study findings discussed here, it can be concluded that the first hypothesis on learners' demotivation as being the low achievement cause was nullified; since the learners' answers to the questionnaire were positive as far as their motives to learn English at university. It could be noted also that the learners do not possess enough knowledge about the future professional perspectives of their choice as well as the significance of culture inclusion in the target language curriculum. The second hypothesis was confirmed, since the language proficiency test's results unfolded a considerable deficiency in three skills: reading comprehension, listening and speaking skills. The learners' former education had favored the writing skill; through grammar instruction and vocabulary use, over the other skills. Finally the third hypothesis was also, confirmed: the cultural content inclusion in middle and secondary school textbooks was eclectic, but the main flaws lie, on the one hand, the

type of texts used, which were all informative. The learners' critical reflection is not encouraged with the absence of speculation in the texts which leaves no opportunities for classroom discussions and learners' involvement. On the other hand, the high number of tasks designed in the textbooks' files/units do not train the learners to interpret, compare, analyze the cultural concepts or develop a personal opinion. Hence, this type of tasks does not promote learners' intercultural competence. Consequently, we recommend new alternatives to improve learners' abilities in analyzing, interpreting and comparing cultural information.

General Conclusion

Through the present study, we could highlight one of the major first psychological obstacles that first year English learners at Biskra university encounter. The Intercultural competence deficit affects negatively university English learners' motivation to learn this foreign language whatever are the perspectives and learning objectives they drew before. We often link the drawbacks of our learners to their aptitude and previous linguistic knowledge they acquired in previous educational phases and have the conviction that there is a little match between the level of these learners at their third year secondary school and the needed aptitude for university studies. In fact learners' level is approved not with how much knowledge we implement in their curricular but through the approach used to implement it.

In the present case, the population selected represents a region that can be qualified as conservative as all southern areas in Algeria, where religion is the first and elementary reference of the way people evaluate social norms and behavior. The excessive difference between the English speaking communities and the population culture does not appear clearly until learners are explicitly exposed to the English and American basic cultural specificities in relation to human relations, religious beliefs and behavior in general that we repeatedly encounter in literature.

Learners' attitude towards these differences is visible as a negative motivation towards learning the subject, discussing orally the concepts highlighted in the themes

or criticizing them. The absence of interpretation and analysis constitute another flaw in our EFL classes at Biskra university.

In this study, we used three research instruments; a questionnaire to probe first year English learners' motivation to learn English and their perception of the English culture embedded in that language, a proficiency test to detect the areas of language proficiency where our learners are deficient and finally we proceeded into the analysis of middle and high school English textbooks to obtain data on the type of cultural content implemented in the curricular taught at these levels and its efficiency in developing learners intercultural competence. The three research instruments data provide us with results that can be interpreted according to the research hypotheses and the teaching learning context. The Baccalaureate holders arrive at university carrying assumptions about the English language and its culture but since the cultural differences at this stage remain superficial, as portrayed through their former education curricular, we can assume that their high intrinsic/integrative motivation decreases when learning explicitly about these cultural values that may be seen as excessively different. Second, considering the deficiency they have in discussion in former programs and the absence of analysis training in general, we understand that the intercultural incompetence that we noted while teaching subjects such as literature and civilization is due to a number of factors:

First, learners' little experience in discussion and point of view expression entailed an unwillingness to take part in classroom debate at university level and unfamiliarity with discussion strategies like argumentation and opposition. Second, the middle and high school curricular that favour learners' linguistic competence building oriented

learners' focus and energy to master the grammatical rules and vocabulary use in the written production at the expense of the speaking skill. Third, the informative texts where no speculation is possible and the almost total absence of tasks that train learners to think critically, analyze and interpret the information taught in middle and high school textbooks entailed passive learners who can not evaluate information or draw conclusions about it. Fourth, The interpretive perspective used, as an innovation, in the English textbooks to implement the cultural content in learners' former education, enriches their cultural knowledge but ignored the importance of developing learners' critical awareness in the absence of comparison, analysis, interpretation and opinion gap tasks.

Finally, this study can be further extended by investigating further issues as far as intercultural competence promotion at the level of university, is concerned. Are university teachers aware that Foreign language learning requires intercultural competence promotion? Does the curriculum taught at this level assist learners' cultural awareness? and, how can literature teachers develop motivational strategies to overcome learners' psychological distance in front of excessive cultural differences carried by literary master pieces? Other research perspectives can be opened at this level of experimental applications.

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Appendix 1

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students this is a survey questionnaire to collect data about English learners' attitude towards the foreign language culture. The data obtained is of significant importance for the conduction of Mrs Betka Rezig Nadia Doctorate thesis.

You are kindly requested to answer the questions below. Your answers will be held strict confidence. Put a tick in the appropriate box or fill in the required information where necessary.

Name:

Age:

Gender

Baccalaureat Stream

Literary Sciences Maths

Literature and languages Management and economics

1- I chose to learn English because it is a worldwide language

Yes No Maybe

2- I chose to learn English because it is used in scientific domains

Yes No Maybe

3- I chose to learn English to enable me to have friends from various nationalities

Yes No Maybe

1- I chose to learn English because it is socially appreciated to know foreign

langu
Yes No Maybe

5- I chose to learn English because it is the language used to communicate with all people abroad.

Yes No Maybe

1- I chose to learn English because I expect it to be useful for me in my professional

life.
Yes No May be

7- I chose to learn English because I want to know about the culture of English native speakers.

Yes No May be

8- We should learn English if we want to interact with English native speakers.

Yes No Maybe

9- Being in touch with English native speakers may be useful for Algeria

Yes No Maybe

10- The experts who talk in English took part in our nation's development

Yes No Maybe

11- Algerian Scientists and industrialists should interact with English native speakers

Yes No Maybe

12- Interacting with English native speakers makes communication with them an easy task

Yes No Maybe

13- University English teaching curricula should contain aspects of the native speakers' culture

Yes No Maybe

14- Learning a foreign language implies necessarily the learning of its culture

Yes No Maybe

15- Being aware of the foreign language culture helps in enriching students' knowledge about this language.

Yes No Maybe

16- Learning the foreign language means the mastery of grammar, spelling and language sciences.

Yes No Maybe

17- Do you think that the English culture and the Algerian culture are:

a- Totally different

b- Partially different.

c- Alike.

18- In case you have the occasion to study abroad, would you prefer:

a- A European country.

b- An Arab country.

Give your arguments.

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19- To what extent do you think that one's thinking can change when introduced to a new culture?

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Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix 2

The Language Proficiency Test

Reading Comprehension

No student of a foreign language needs to be told that grammar is complex. By changing word sequences and by adding a range of auxiliary verbs and suffixes, we are able to communicate tiny variations in meaning. We can turn a statement into a question, state whether an action has taken place or is soon to take place, and perform many other word tricks to convey subtle differences in meaning. Nor is this complexity inherent to the English language. All languages, even those of so-called ‘primitive’ tribes have clever grammatical components. The Cherokee pronoun system, for example, can distinguish between ‘you and I’, ‘several other people and I’ and ‘you, another person and I’. At first, it would appear that this question is impossible to answer. To find out how grammar is created, someone needs to be present at the time of a language’s creation, documenting its emergence.

Some of the most recent languages evolved due to the Atlantic slave trade. At that time, slaves from a number of different ethnicities were forced to work together under colonizer’s rule. Since they had no opportunity to learn each other’s languages, they developed a **make-shift** language called a *pidgin*. Pidgins are strings of words copied from the language of the landowner. They have little in the way of grammar, and in many cases it is difficult for a listener to deduce when an event happened, and who did what to whom. **[A]** Speakers need to use circumlocution in order to make their meaning understood. **[B]** Interestingly, however, all it takes for a pidgin to become a complex language is for a group of children to be exposed to it at the time when they learn their mother tongue. **[C]** Slave children did not simply copy the strings of words uttered by their elders, they adapted their words to create a new, expressive language. **[D]** Complex

grammar systems which emerge from pidgins are termed creoles, and they are invented by children.

Further evidence of this can be seen in studying sign languages for the deaf. Sign languages are not simply a series of gestures; they utilise the same grammatical machinery that is found in spoken languages. Moreover, there are many different languages used worldwide. The creation of one such language was documented quite recently in Nicaragua. Previously, all deaf people were isolated from each other, but in 1979 a new government introduced schools for the deaf. Although children were taught speech and lip reading in the classroom, in the playgrounds they began to invent their own sign system, using the gestures that they used at home. It was basically a pidgin. Each child used the signs differently, and there was no consistent grammar. However, children who joined the school later, when this inventive sign system was already around, developed a quite different sign language. Although it was based on the signs of the older children, the younger children's language was more fluid and compact, and it utilised a large range of grammatical devices to clarify meaning. What is more, all the children used the signs in the same way. A new creole was born.

1 In paragraph 1, why does the writer include information about the Cherokee language?

A-To show how simple, traditional cultures can have complicated grammar structures

B-To show how English grammar differs from Cherokee grammar

C-To prove that complex grammar structures were invented by the Cherokees.

D-To demonstrate how difficult it is to learn the Cherokee language

3- 'Make-shift' in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to:

- A- complicated and expressive
- B- simple and temporary

C- extensive and diverse

D- private and personal

9 Which idea is presented in paragraph 3?

- A English was probably once a creole
- B The English past tense system is inaccurate
- C Linguists have proven that English was created by children.
- D Children say English past tenses differently from adults

10 Look at the word 'consistent' in paragraph 3. This word could best be replaced by which of the following?

- A natural
- B predictable
- C imaginable
- D uniform

Use of English

Read the text below and decide which answer, (A , B , C or D) fits each gap.

For Each gap you have Four options : A , B, C or D.

Girls and Technology

If you want your daughter to succeed, buy her a toy construction set. That is the Advice from Britain's ...1..... female engineers and scientists. Marie Noelle Barton, Who heads an Engineering Council campaign to encourage girls into science and engineering, maintains that some of Britain's most successful women have had their careers.....2..... by the toys they played with as children. Even girls who end ...3.....nowhere near a microchip or microscope could benefit from a better.....4..... of science and technology.

It's a5..... of giving them experience and confidence with technology so that when they are6..... with the situation requiring some technical know-how, they feel they can handle it and don't just7..... Defeat immediately, says Mrs Barton.

'I believe that lots of girls feel unsure of themselves when it comes8.....technology and therefore they might be losing out jobs because they are reluctant even to apply for them.

Research recently carried.....9..... suggests that scientific and constructional toys should be.....10..... to girls from an early age, otherwise the result is socialization into stereotypically female.....11....., which may explain why relatively few girls study science and engineering at university in Britain. Only 14 percent of those who have gone for engineering ...12..... at university this year are women, although this figure does represent an improvement on the 7 percent recorded some years ago.

1- A foremost B uppermost C predominant D surpassing.

2- A styled B shaped C built D modelled

3- A in B by C on D up

4- A hold B grasp C insight D realisation

5- A Matter B situation C state D cause

6- A Approached B encountered C presented D offered

7- A Admit B allow C receive D permit

8- A For B to C from D with

9- A Off B through C forward D out

10- A Accessible B feasible C reachable D obtainable

11- A Characters B parts C states D roles

12- A Options B alternatives C selections D

preferences

Part three : Grammar

Select the best answer

1-Jane in the library this morning.

- A. is study
- B. studying.
- C. is studying.
- D. are studying.

2- Alicia..... The windows please. It's too hot in here.

- A. opens.
- B. Open .
- C. Opened.
- D. Will open.

3-The movie wasthe book.

- A. As.
- B. As good
- C. Good as
- D. As good as.

4-Mr Hawkins requests that someone.....the data by fax now.

- A. Sent
- B. Sends
- C. Send
- D. To send

5- James or Henry ?

- A. Tallest.
- B. Tall.
- C. Taller
- D. The tallest.

6-Each of the Olympic athletes..... for months.

- A. Have been training.
- B. Were training.
- C. Has been training.
- D. Been training.

7-The company will upgrade..... Computer information systems next month.

- A. there.
- B. Their
- C. It's
- D. Its

8- James likes apples..... she does not like oranges.

- A. So.
- B. For.
- C. But
- D. Or.

- You wereyour friend before 09 o'clock.

- A. Suppose call.
- B. Supposed to call

- C. Supposed calling
- D. Supposed call

10- Mr Jackrather not agree on such a price..

- A. Has to.
- B. Could
- C. Would
- D. Must.

11- Select the one underlined word or phrase that is *incorrect*.

When their dog got old and could not move, it will sit in the sunshine all day

- A-got
- B- move
- C-will

We were very surprised at the generosity of the offer as it acceded our expectations

- A- at
- B- Acceded.
- C- Expectations.

Writing :

Describe in a few lines the career you want to achieve and the reasons for which you chose that career.

The Listening Test

The candidates listened 05 times to a tape (in British English pronunciation) on Hearning, they had to fill the gaps:

- It is commonthat we all have the same auditory experience.
- The sound takes the form of a as it travels to the inner ear.
- Only when a sound reaches thedo we register that we have heard it.
- An Australian biologist is sure that men can identify the of an animal better than women.
- He suggests that this skill evolved when men was primarily a.....
- The biologist think that women can hear shrill sounds so that they can recognize..... in a child's cry.
- Diffrences in hearing between males and females have been detected immediately after.....
- Some people in Manchester have been disturbed by an irritating noise similar to.....

The Speaking Test

The students had to choose two topics among the following:

Topic One: The good friend

Topic Two: The role of aesthetic surgery in improving people's life.

Topic Three: Third World characteristics

Topic Four: Comparing women in the western countries and in Muslim countries.

Enhancing discussion was performed through one /two questions on the topic.

Topic One:

If you have an opportunity to choose a close friend on what characteristics do you base your choice?

Topic Two:

If your friend decides to undergo an aesthetic surgery, what would you advice him?

Topic Three:

In what way can you describe a Third World country?

Topic Four:

If your sister decides to move to an English speaking country and is suspicious about interacting with non Muslim Western women there, what would tell her? *

Resumé

La présente recherche est une investigation des causes du manque de compétence interculturelle parmi les étudiants d'Anglais à l'université de Biskra. Un manque qui est visible à travers une attitude négative vis-à-vis des concepts culturels de la langue étrangère, spécialement quand ces concepts s'opposent excessivement à la culture des apprenants, mais aussi à travers un handicap d'analyse et d'interprétation dans leurs productions écrites et orales. Dans cette recherche, trois hypothèses ont été élaborées ; l'incompétence interculturelle des apprenants d'Anglais est causée par leur démotivation qui résulte d'une attitude négative vis-à-vis de la culture de cette langue , une faiblesse linguistique dans la langue étrangère ou encore peut être une conséquence de l'approche appliquée dans la présentation de la culture et le type du contenu culturel de la langue Anglaise dans les manuels de l'éducation générale des cycles moyen et secondaire. Trois instruments de recherche ont été utilisés dans ce sens ; un questionnaire pour mesurer la motivation des apprenants de la première année concernant la langue étrangère et sa culture, un test de performance afin de mesurer leurs compétences linguistiques et finalement une analyse de quatre manuels d'Anglais utilisés dans les cycles moyen et secondaire. L'analyse qualitative des résultats démontre que l'absence de la compétence interculturelle est premièrement due au fait que peut d'importance est attribuée au développement de la performance orale à ces niveaux, par conséquent, les apprenants d'Anglais présentent des difficultés dans les discussions et analyses orales. En second lieu, l'étude démontre l'inefficacité de l'approche interprétative par la quelle le contenu culturel de la langue étrangère est présenté dans les manuels dans l'absence de textes spéculatifs et activités et exercices qui développent l'esprit critique des apprenants.

ملخص

هذا البحث يهدف إلى أيجاد أسباب غياب الكفاءة الثقافية في أقسام اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة بسكرة و الذي يظهر جليا من خلال عدم إقبال الطلبة على تقييم المفاهيم الثقافية الأجنبية أو تحليلها سواء شفويا أو كتابيا ، و كذا من خلال نظريتهم السلبية أحيانا لشعوب هذه الثقافات و خاصة عندما تتعارض الثقافة الأجنبية مع جوهر و أصول الثقافة المحلية. رغم إقبال طلبة جامعة بسكرة على دراسة اللغة الانجليزية إلا أن الاختلافات الثقافية تخلق حاجزا نفسيا مما يباعد بين الهدف من دراسة اللغة الأجنبية و المجهود الذي يبذله الطلبة في سبيل ذلك. افترضنا في هذه الدراسة ثلاثة أسباب لغياب الكفاءة الثقافية لدى طلبة اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة بسكرة ، و هي على التوالي ، نقص إقبال الطلبة على دراسة اللغة الأجنبية أو ضعف مستواهم اللغوي أو نوعية المضمون الثقافي للغة الانجليزية و الذي تحتويه الكتب الدراسية للمستوى المتوسط و الثانوي مع غياب التمارين التي تحفز التلميذ على التحليل و التفكير فيما يتلقاه من معلومات. و قد استعملنا ثلاث تقنيات لهذا الهدف و هي الاستجواب ، امتحان المستوى و تحليل الكتب الدراسية للطورين المتوسط و الثانوي. من خلال التحليل النوعي وجدنا أن غياب الكفاءة الثقافية لدى الطلبة يعود إلى عدم إعطاء المناقشة الشفوية حقه في برامج الطورين المتوسط و الثانوي و تقديم المضمون الثقافي للغة الأجنبية من خلال التقنية التأويلية دون مراعاة ضرورة تمرين التلميذ على التأويل و التحليل من خلال النشاطات البيداغوجية التي يحويها الكتاب المدرسي ، مما نتج عنه عدم قدرة الطالب على تقييم المناهج اللغوية الأجنبية على أساس موضوعي من منطلق ثقافتهم أو تكوين رؤية واضحة لهذه الثقافة