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**The Awareness of Culture in Developing Foreign Learners'
Pragmatic Competence**

**The Case of First Year Master Students of English at Mohamed Khider University
of Biskra**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master
Degree in Applied Linguistics

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Dedication

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I dedicate my modest work:

To my dear parents "Hachemi & Nadjete"

To my brothers " Houssam, Zakaria, and I lyes"

To the rest of my family

To my friends

To all who know Nour El Houda

Acknowledgement

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Abstract

The present study aims to show the importance of cultural awareness in improving foreign learners' pragmatic competence. In particular, the consideration is given to the necessity of integrating cultural dimensions on EFL students' pragmatic competence. Having only the linguistic knowledge cannot give foreign learners real insights about the foreign language unless it incorporates the knowledge of socio-cultural factors. That is to say, the importance of teaching culture in foreign language classroom cannot be denied in order to develop EFL learners' communicative competence, especially in pragmatic competence. The present study aims at investigating the relationship between the role of culture and the development of pragmatic competence within foreign language classroom in order to know the reason behind the communication breakdowns. Through this dissertation, we have hypothesized that being aware about the cultural dimension that plays in the process of learning the foreign language will improve EFL learners' pragmatic competence. It is an attempt to make students aware about the significance of knowing the target culture since EFL learners are not able to communicate effectively in accordance to the contextual factors. This work is led through a questionnaire which was administered to First Year Master students at the branch of the English language at Biskra University, which shed lights on their viewpoints and attitudes towards the role that target culture plays in developing communicative competence; and most importantly, in developing pragmatic competence. After the analysis of the collected data and the obtained results from the questionnaire, we arrived to confirm the hypothesis of this research and we tried to put forward some pedagogical recommendations, as how to find appropriate remedies that would help learners to develop their pragmatic competence.

Keywords: cultural awareness, pragmatic competence, contextual factors

List of Abbreviations

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

TC : Target Culture

FL : Foreign Language

SL : Second Language

HC : High- Context

LC : Low- Context

TL : Target Language

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

FLLs: Foreign Language Learners

NSs: Native Speakers

L₂ : Second language

CCP: Cross - Cultural Pragmatics

ILP : Interlanguage Pragmatics

List of Figures

Figure 1: Points of articulation between culture and language.....	11
Figure 2: Interaction among perspectives, practices, and products.....	17
Figure 3: Hall's Cultural Iceberg Model.....	17
Figure 4: The five types of speech act.....	33

List of Diagrams

Diagram 01: Students' gender.....	45
Diagram 02: Students' age.....	45
Diagram 03: Students' choice of studying English.....	46
Diagram 04: Students' opinion about the integration of culture in the classroom.....	46
Diagram 05: Students' opinion about the importance of incorporating culture in the FL classroom.....	47
Diagram 06: Students' viewpoints towards teachers' usage of authentic materials in the FL classroom.....	48
Diagram 07: Students' favorite authentic materials.....	49
Diagram 08: Students' opinion about the reason of learners' communication breakdowns.....	50
Diagram 09: Students' opinion towards the importance of target language cultural awareness in effective communication.....	51
Diagram 10: Students' personal evaluation of their linguistic competence.....	52
Diagram 11: Students' perception towards the importance of linguistic competence.....	53
Diagram 12: Students' ability about effective communication with a native speaker.....	53

Diagram 13: Students' frequency towards their concentration on the pragmatic aspects of the language.....	54
Diagram 14: Students' opinion towards the improvement of pragmatic competence through the integration of socio-cultural knowledge.....	55
Diagram 15: The major type of language features that teachers use while teaching pragmatics.....	56
Diagram 16: Students' opinion towards the crucial element that influence the development of their pragmatic competency.....	57
Diagram 17: Students' opinion about the frequency of using genuine samples of discourse in pragmatics.....	58
Diagram 18: Students' opinion about using language appropriately in accordance to the contextual factors through integrating cultural awareness of the TL.....	59
Diagram 19: Students' opinion towards avoiding serious social implications through the development of pragmatic competence.....	59

	Pages
Table of Content	
Dedication	I
Acknowledgement	II
Abstract	III
List of Abbreviations	IV
List of Figures	V
List of Diagrams	VI
Table of Content	VIII
General Introduction	1
1. Statement of the Problem.....	2
2. Aims of the Study.....	2
3. Research Questions.....	3
4. Hypothesis.....	3
5. Research Methodology.....	3
6. Population.....	4
7. Sampling.....	4
8. Data collection tool.....	4
8.1. Questionnaire.....	4
9. Limitation of the study.....	4

Chapter One: Cultural Awareness

Introduction.....	6
1.1. Definition of culture.....	6
1.1.1. The anthropological definition of culture.....	7
1.1.2. Culture's components.....	8
1.1.2.1. Culture is learned.....	8
1.1.2.2. Culture is transmitted intergenerationally.....	8
1.1.2.3. Culture is symbolic.....	9
1.1.2.4. Culture is dynamic.....	9
1.1.2.5. Culture is ethnocentric.....	9
1.1.3. The relationship between language and culture.....	10
1.1.4. The integration of culture into language learning.....	11
1.1.5. Cultural influence on the four skills and its integration as a fifth skill in the EFL classroom.....	12

1.1.6. Cultural influence on vocabulary.....	14
1.1.7. The importance of culture in EFL learning and teaching.....	14
1.1.7.1. Michael Paige’s dimensions of culture learning model.....	15
1.1.7.1.1. The Self as cultural.....	15
1.1.7.1.2. The elements of culture.....	16
1.1.7.1.3. Intercultural phenomena	18
1.1.7.1.4 Particular cultures.....	18
1.1.7.1.5. Acquiring strategies for culture learning.....	19
1.2. Culture and communication.....	19
1.2.1. The importance of culture in communication.....	19
1.2.2. Intercultural communication.....	20
1.2.2.1. Definition of intercultural communication.....	20
1.2.2.2. Barriers of intercultural communication.....	22
1.2.3. Culture and non-verbal communication.....	23
Conclusion.....	24

Chapter Two: Developing Pragmatic Competence through Integrating Cross - Cultural Awareness

Introduction.....	26
2.1. Definition of pragmatic competence.....	26
2.2. The utility of pragmatic competence.....	28
2.2.1. Doing things with words.....	30
2.2.1.1. Performatives versus constatives.....	30
2.2.1.2. Locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary acts.....	32
2.2.1.3. Direct and indirect speech act.....	34
2.2.2. Being things with words.....	36
2.3. Pragmatics in foreign language contexts.....	37
2.3.1. Teaching and learning culture as pragmatics of interaction.....	38
2.3.2. Cross - Cultural Pragmatics.....	39
2.4. Authentic language materials and pragmatic competence.....	40
Conclusion.....	41

Chapter Three: Field Work (Students' Questionnaire)

Introduction.....	43
3.1. Administration of the Questionnaire.....	43
3.2. Description of the Questionnaire	43
3.3. Analysis of the Results.....	44
3.4. Discussions.....	61
Conclusion.....	62
General Conclusion	64
Recommendations	66
Bibliography	68
Appendix	74
Abstract in Arabic	

General Introduction

Language is developed differently in people's minds and so it is presented in different shapes, and that does not exist in a vacuum. Consequently, language study seems senseless to the learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) if they know nothing about the people who speak the Target language (TL). The fact that, simple mastery of the linguistic skills of a language is insufficient for learners to be considered competent in the target language (Krasner, 1999). It has been approved that understanding a language involves not only linguistic knowledge, but also a certain features and characteristics of the culture. Therefore, to communicate effectively inevitably involves communicating interculturally as well, which probably leads foreign language learners to encounter factors of cultural differences. Such kind of differences exist in every language such as tone of voice, appropriate topic of discourse, and speech act functions (eg: requests, complains, apologies, etc...). Thus, EFL learners should be aware of the context in which the target language is used. That is to say, learning a new language means a lot more than the manipulation of syntax and lexicon, because this latter, could not give learners real insights into the nuances of the daily lives of the people whose language they hope to speak unless it integrates with socio-cultural factors. So, studying the Target culture (TC) and being aware of its dimensions in the FL learning process helps the learners to fortify an authentic feel in their learning efforts; And most importantly, developing the pragmatic competence that breeds an effective communication among foreign learners.

1. Statement of the problem

The importance of teaching culture in EFL context cannot be denied, in order to improve learners' communicative competence and more particularly in pragmatic competence. However, EFL learners at Mohamed Khider University are not adequately competent in communication because of the lack of exposure to the cultural atmosphere of the target language. Consequently, EFL learners should be aware of the target culture that leads to develop the ability to construct and extract meaning; That is to say, the ability to become proficient in using the language. Therefore, it is not just at the level of skill getting but also at the level of skill using and hence, it is a matter of encoding or decoding meaning of appropriateness. So, the fact that culture finds its expression in language, and learning a new language without familiarity with its culture remains incomplete. This research aims at defining culture, its relationship with language, and the role it plays in developing foreign learners' pragmatic competence. That is what EFL learners at Mohamed Khider University should take into account, in order to eliminate the question of misunderstandings and even more serious conflicts in intercultural communication that they are suffering from, especially for those who want to study abroad to continue their education.

2. Aims of the study

The aim of this study is to shed light on the following:

- Clarifying the concept of Culture as a general term and in FL learning.
- Raising target cultural awareness and giving its importance among EFL learners.
- Investigating the relationship between the role of culture and the enhancement of pragmatic competence within the FL classroom.

3. Research questions

Actually, we have more than one research question that requires clarifications during this research path which are the following:

- How is culture incorporated into language learning?
- Why do EFL learners fail to communicate effectively in their classroom?
- What is the role that cultural awareness plays in developing pragmatic competence?

4. Hypothesis

Throughout this dissertation, we hypothesize that:

If EFL learners are aware about the cultural dimension that plays in the process of learning a Foreign language (FL), they will improve their pragmatic competence.

5. Research methodology

This research will be conducted through the descriptive method since we think that is the adequate method for the aim of the research, the type of the data needed, and the population under investigation. This study is divided into three main chapters: chapter one and chapter two are about the literature review that represent the description of the theoretical framework of the proposed topic. The third chapter is for the field work that is concerned with the analysis of the learners' responses to the questionnaire. Since it is considered the most appropriate method for human studies, it is going to give valid results about the role of culture in enhancing EFL learners' pragmatic competence, so that, the ability to communicate effectively in and out of classroom contexts. We have use a qualitative research since it adjusts the description of the research tools that being used in our study.

6. Population

The populations of the study are the 1st year Master students of the English Language in the branch of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.

7. Sampling

Since our objective of the study is not to get all the students' perceptions of the problem and since they are EFL learners with a completely different cultural background than of the target culture that leads us to expect that they will exhibit nearly the same reactions towards the awareness of the TL culture, we used simple random sampling technique; The questionnaire will be managed to 40 students of the First Year Master students chosen randomly.

8. Data collection tools

8.1. Questionnaire

In order to obtain the perception of students, a questionnaire is designed for this population which is used as the main source of data that fits this research because it is quicker to administer in a short period of time. The ultimate goal of using the questionnaire in general is to obtain data about the significance of being aware of the Target culture (TC) for the development of pragmatic competence.

9. Limitation of the study

The major limitation of the study is the time constraints, the long period of time would help us to conduct the experimental study tool which gives a great importance to such a topic, and allows also to adopt a large sample of students at the Department of English at the University of Biskra. This would give our results different dimensions.

Chapter One

Cultural Awareness

Introduction

Students of English as a foreign language (EFL) should be aware of the cultural dimension that plays an integral part in learning a Foreign language (FL). Thus, language proficiency alone is not sufficient in fulfilling effective communication. Therefore, learners have to delve in foreign language socio-cultural parameters in order to not impact negatively learners' ability to function in a FL community. Consequently, the first chapter tends to provide an overview about culture and its influence on language learning and in communication as well.

The most important issues that yield a progress in cultural awareness which will be discussed through presenting various perspectives about the definition of culture, its components, and the role it plays in language learning, particularly, the influence of culture in EFL learning and teaching in which it describes the real dimensions towards considering the others' culture. And last but not least, showing the significance of cultural factors in constructing successful communication through which effective intercultural communication takes place.

1.1. Definition of culture

Culture has many disparate definitions according to different trends and interpretations. "Culture is believed to be one of the most complicated words in the English language and giving a precise definition of it is time-consuming." (Kamal, 2013:59). Kramersch (1998:10) describes culture as "membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings". Brown (2000:177) defines culture as "the ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools that characterize a given group of people in a given period of time", whereas Brooks (1975) refers to culture as the total way of human life.

Lee and Peterson have distinguished culture between two general types: Big "C" culture and little "c" culture (Lee, 2009; Peterson,2004). Lee (2009:78) refers to big "C" culture as "the culture which represents a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society". For Peterson(2004), the term culture is relating to visible themes which are classified under big "C" culture including geography, architecture, classical music, literature, political issues, society's norms in which human beings are able to position themselves vis-à-vis systems of government, core values, history, and cognitive processes.

The little "c" culture encompasses everything as a total way of life of a group of people. For Lee (2009:78), this type of culture is "the invisible and deeper sense of a target culture" including beliefs, attitudes, thought patterns and assumptions. Peterson(2004) defines little "c" culture as the culture of what beneath the surface such as opinions, viewpoints, gestures, and certain knowledge like. Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino and Kohler (2003:45) define culture as:

A complex system of concepts, attitudes, values, beliefs, conventions, behaviors, practices, rituals and lifestyles of the people who make up a cultural group, as well as the artifacts they produce and the institutions they create.

Among all these definitions, we may argue that culture is highly complex, and both broad and deep concept to define.

1.1.1. The anthropological definition of culture

"Goodenough, Hall, Schnelder, Wallace, Geertz and others" (as cited in D'Andrade, 1982:197) proclaim that the concept of culture is rather "a shared knowledge encoded in systems of symbols". And thus, "does not consist of behaviors, or even patterns of behavior". Culture came to be seen as cognitive -

based system, in that it is assimilated on internal representations instead of behavioristic notions 'stimulus – response'. (ibid)

Goodenough (1957, as cited in D'Andrade,1982:198) claims, "A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members". Culture then, from an anthropological sense, defines the group ethnicity.

1.1.2. Culture's components

Despite the challenges which culture faced about providing a precise definition of what culture is and does, there is accord towards the cornerstones that culture depends on (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel ; 2010) , i.e. its major properties in which culture comprised of. Being aware of these characteristics will supply increased understanding of the context, and also, offer view of multifaceted dimensions of the concept, and thence, an understanding of how interaction across cultures operates.

1.1.2.1. Culture is learned

According to Samovar et al. (2010), culture has been taken as a concept in which it is extracted from the external milieu through learning the societal norms that can be internalized easily by interacting with the other, observing, imitating, and acquiring everything related to the culture of specific community, and then, this learning whether conscious or not, executes the issue of how to function properly and effectively.

1.1.2.2. Culture is transmitted intergenerationally

Culture is a knowledge, where traditions, values, norms, and behaviors are inherited among the generations. Learning culture may come from "family members, teachers, peers, books, personal observations, and a host of media sources", in

which culture demands "our link to the past, and through future generations, hope for the future" (Samovar et al. , 2010:12). So that, this equation can be realized through communication which plays as a pivotal operator.

1.1.2.3. Culture is symbolic

Within cultural systems, there are symbols which refer to verbal and non-verbal in form, they used to convey meaning and to transmit specific interpretation of the speech according to specific cultural context; so symbols then, such as gestures, images, and words, have a unique way in making connection among human beings in a way that allow to be engaged in constructing and conveying culture through accumulation of past traditions. (ibid:12)

1.1.2.4. Culture is dynamic

Another characteristic, culture is considered to be dynamic not static, Thus, it can be argued that culture changes all the time within the various manners of expressing one's own culture in subtle and tangible ways that could be transformed or changed across generations which may be caused by friction between cultures which labels as the enculturation. (ibid:12)

1.1.2.5. Culture is ethnocentric

Evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one's own culture provoke feelings of ethnocentrism. In other words, "the tendency to view one's own culture as superior to other cultures" (Samovar et al., 2010:13). It is clear that through enculturation, when facing new and different social values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors which may result a lack of contacting with these norms, ethnocentrism can grow by evaluating those differences negatively simply because they vary from one's own expectations.

Hence, ethnocentric tendency has a negative impact on effective intercultural communication.

1.1.3. The relationship between language and culture

Language and culture have an intricate connection and an interdependent relationship, since language has been described as "more than just a medium for expressing thought" (Hall, 1982:1); but it is rather "a product of the thought and behavior of a society" (Gao, 2006:61). Thus, Mitchell and Myles (2004) argue that language and culture are intertwined, in which the two cannot be separated, so, one has a reflex on the development of the other.

According to Wei (2005:56), language is used both as a means of communication as well as a cultural background, thus, language and culture pave the way in parallel and are inseparable. Otherwise, language becomes meaningless and unthinkable. Similarly, Brown (1994:165) describes the relationship between language and culture as follows: "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven, so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture". Likewise, Tang (1999) also suggests the view that language and culture have an interconnected relationship. He propounds that language has to be thoughtful in order to speak in an adequate manner with a powerful sense.

Hinkel (1999:3) claims that, "because concepts, thoughts, and identities are often expressed through language, culture theory is also concerned with language acquisition and socialization into a group". Therefore, culture sets an influence upon language. Language is affected by the culture's visualization of reality, and thus, different languages incubate different visions (Holme, 2003; In Byram & Grundy,

2003). Liddicoat et al. (2003) state that there is an interaction between language and culture in which culture binds with all aspects or levels of language use and structures (Figure 1).

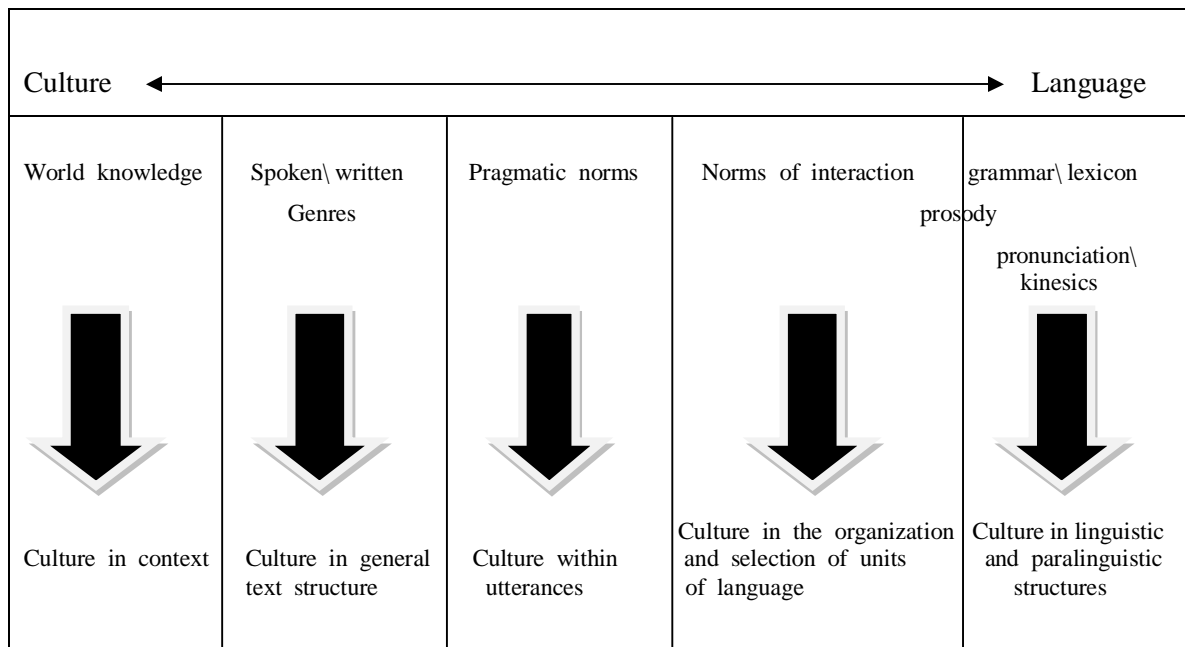


Figure 1: Points of articulation between culture and language (Liddicoat et al., 2003: 9)

1.1.4. The integration of culture into language learning

Among many other researchers, Hymes (1996) asserts that culture should be incorporated into language learning and education. This is due to the crucial influence of culture upon the socio-cultural features that shape the individual's roles in the community including values, norms, beliefs, and everyday interaction. And very often, not following the norms of the common shared knowledge in a community results to social imbalance (Hinkel, 1999). According to Byram and Morgan (1994:5), "culture is subsumed in a range of variables which could affect learning and is interpreted primarily in terms of the affective". Consequently, an ability to grasp and use the cultural tenets appropriately and effectively in terms of

communication, either spoken or written, enables learners to extract options with giving attention to their linguistic, pragmatic, and other behaviors (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Hinkel, 1999).

Culture in language learning, does not exist in a vacuum, but rather ingrained in language learning itself, with keeping linguistic proficiency as an inclusive goal of communicative competence, as Litterwood (1981, as cited in Byram & Morgan, 1994:6) argues:

When we try to adopt new speech patterns, we are to some extent giving up markers of our own identity in order to adopt those of another cultural group. In some respects, too, we are accepting another culture's ways of perceiving the world. If we are agreeable to this process, it can enrich us and liberate us.

Accordingly, language learning involves positive attitudes towards other peoples and cultures that concern social and psychological parameters in which intervene in both the individual and the group (Byram & Morgan, 1994).

1.1.5. Cultural influence on the four skills and its integration as a fifth skill in the EFL classroom

Language learning is a track that inevitably passes through the fundamental pillars so-called the four skills –reading, listening, speaking, and writing –in which they are often divided into receptive and productive skills. Nevertheless, they are seldom separated in real life, since just thinking of a Second language (SL) or a Foreign language (FL) make the learner realizes that most tasks or activities involve more than just one language skill. The language skills then, make little sense when talking about them in isolation. Hinkel (2006:113) points out, " in meaningful communication, people employ incremental language skills not in isolation, but in tandem".

Moreover, the thread that connects culture with language through integrating the norms of culture in language learning processes, inevitably catalyzes the influence of cultural dimensions on the language skills, since Oxford (1990, as cited in Vernier, Barbuzza, Giusti, and Moral; 2008:266) considers that "acquiring a new language necessarily involves developing these four modalities in varying degrees and combinations". Subsequently, being aware of cultural knowledge helps learners to be more fluent and proficient in the four basic linguistic skills.

In recent years, EFL teachers have recognized the significance of the underlying dynamics of culture in a foreign language communication, and the importance of integrating culture and the four traditional language skills into the EFL classroom. According to Brown (2000), giving interest to the authentic language in use and contexts, not just focusing in the usages and accurateness of the language, in order to fulfill the goals of communication (In Vernier et al., 2008: 267). Thus, language learning encompasses and depends upon culture learning, i.e. dealing with language means dealing with a total system of life. That is to say, culture is integrated as a fifth skill along with the four traditional skills, but its function is to interfere and overlap with listening, reading, speaking, and writing in a particular ways, so that culture should not be considered, as Kramersch (1993:1) puts it, an "expandable" fifth skill fixed upon teaching the four skills, but culture:

Is always in the background, right from day one ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. (ibid)

1.1.6. Cultural influence on vocabulary

Recently, lexicon plays a crucial role in language teaching and learning, since vocabulary is considered to be one of the most important components of language. It is crystal clear that having a lack of vocabulary means having deficiency in successful conversation and hence, misunderstanding in communication. As Krashen (1985:155) puts:

vocabulary is basic for communication. If acquirers do not recognize the meaning of the key words by those who address them they will be unable to participate in the conversation. If they wish to express some idea or ask for information they must be able to produce lexical items to convey their meaning.

Consequently, through the culture-based materials, learners can actually learn where to use the words naturally which based on the appropriate context, since words have different connotations from culture to culture.

1.1.7. The importance of culture in EFL learning and teaching

Perhaps learners cannot estimate the magnitude of learning the cultural aspects of communication unless they face the culture of others and experience the obstacles through visiting a foreign country. Knowing that the extent of culture learning "move beyond awareness, understanding, and sympathy and begin to address the ways in which culture learning will be practiced by learners" (Liddicoat et al., 2003: 8), has an extreme significance in EFL learning. In other words, successful language learning that increasingly grow beyond linguistic proficiency, is in which manifests itself in communicative performance. Likewise, culture not only interested in verbal communication, but also may find its manifestations in

paralinguistic features; that is why, Hinkel (1999:9) refers that "[t]he purposes of communication and learning are often derived from cultural frameworks".

For teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), teachers are pretty aware of the effect of integrating socio-cultural factors into their classrooms, since it is the concern of many teachers and scholars because knowing the target culture means knowing how to transmit the notion of its authenticity and, hence, giving real insights about how to teach a Foreign language (FL) in an appropriate context.

1.1.7.1. Michael Paige's dimensions of culture learning model

Although there is a lack of consensus on how to embody cultural knowledge into the classroom, teachers can help students connect to the target culture through considering the approach of Michael Paige's dimensions of culture learning model (as cited in Frank, 2013:2).

Paige classifies culture learning into categories:

- The self as cultural
- The elements of culture
- Intercultural phenomena (culture- general learning)
- Particular culture (culture- specific learning)
- Acquiring strategies for culture learning

1.1.7.1.1. The Self as cultural

Making connections across cultures starts from knowing one's own culture. English teachers can help students activate their cultural knowledge by making them aware of the culture that shape them and the elements that formed this culture. According to Frank (2013:3), teachers may act as guiders, by giving a way to their students to think about what people 'think, make, and do' in their own cultures

through discussing the issues that are related to behaviors, attitudes, values, social factors, and the total way of life in which underpinning their cultures. Therefore, encouraging students to build their own notions of culture, can definitely foster an atmosphere that create an access to other cultures.

1.1.7.1.2. The elements of culture

Elements of culture have some rational relationship to one another since culture refers to the characteristics of a particular group of people. National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project (NSFLEP, 1999), giving attention to the elements of culture by concentrating on the 3P model of culture –perspectives, practices, and products– which are both concrete and abstract (In Frank, 2013:3). The first 'P' that is derived from perspectives (feeling, beliefs, thinking and values that members of a culture share), the second 'P' in which regards for practices (how communication takes place through interaction), and the last 'P' concerning products (the observable things members of a community create, and share like technology, art, music, food and the like). We can consider then, that perspectives as well as practices are difficult to recognize, so that, both are tended to be intangible and profound in a society. Unlike products, which may be easy to realize because they relate to something perceptible or tangible, with something we can often see, touch, or hear. Furthermore, the standards provide a framework to which 3Ps merge with each other as a triangle of interaction (Figure 2), which "the perspectives generated practices and products and the transmutation the latter on the former" (Phillips, 2003: 165).

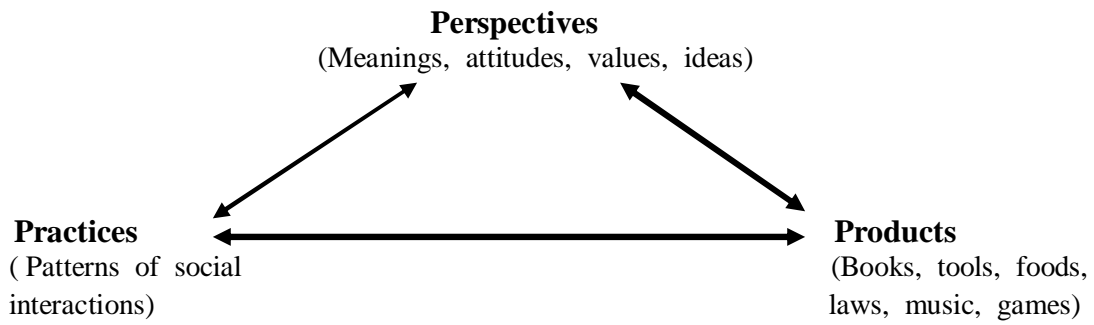


Figure 2: Interaction among Perspectives, Practices, and Products (National Standards, 1996; as cited in Philips, 2003:165)

Similarly, Brooks (1968, 1997) also distinguishes elements of culture between "formal culture" and "deep culture". The former contains observable elements while the latter determines what is deeply rooted among individuals who create a specific culture. Besides that, EFL students can conceptualize the elements of culture as Hall's (1976) "cultural iceberg" analogy (Figure 3). Hall developed the analogy to make a distinction and clarify between what is visible or external and what is beneath the surface or subconscious about culture's parts. Thus, the external parts of culture are explicitly learned, conscious, easily changed, and have objective knowledge, however, the internal parts of culture which are implicitly comprehended, unconscious, difficult to change, and have subjective knowledge.

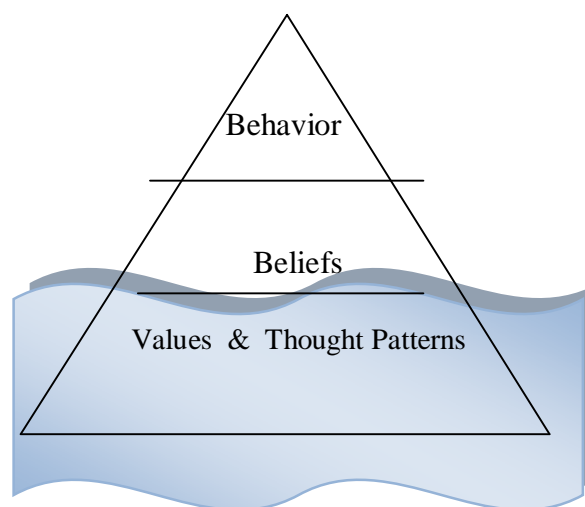


Figure 3: Hall's Cultural Iceberg Model (*The source: www.constantforeigner.com © 2010*)

1.1.7.1.3. Intercultural phenomena

In EFL teaching, intercultural language include evolving an inclusive position, a way of thinking, and perceiving the challenges the learners may meet towards the host culture. The process of merging a new culture alongside one's own culture is called "acculturation". Acculturation, according to Brown (1980:158), has four stages: (1) the period of excitement (the novelty of the surroundings and about being a newcomer), (2) culture shock (perhaps the most difficult stage, in which produces feelings of frustration and hostility towards the unfamiliar culture, when start making unfair comparisons between their host culture and the culture of their own), (3) recovery (the stage of adjustment and being familiar with the new environment in which creates some comfort among individuals toward the new culture), and (4) adaptation (acceptance of the new culture through bridging cultural barriers and adapting the new one). Ultimately, intercultural phenomena are of importance in raising cultural awareness, specifically developing self- awareness of the art of knowing how to deal with other cultures that lead to less stress in the acculturation process.

1.1.7.1.4. Particular cultures

Focusing on the elements of a particular culture means giving the value to the cultural background in which communication takes place, which is a key to Hall's (1976) notion of "context". Hall & Hall (1987:7) define context as "the information that surrounds an event and is inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event". Accordingly, Hall's theory of high- and low- context cultures gives farsightedness about how communication is affected by the particular characteristics of a society. High- Context (HC) cultures tend to give much emphasis on the group agreement over individual achievement; also, meanings are expressed implicitly or

communicated in indirect ways within the speaker's intention. Low- Context (LC) cultures, on the other hand, "tend to be individualistic and goal-oriented" (Frank, 2013:5); which tend to deal with directness and relying upon language precision by being concise. Thus, the context determines how much the individual corresponds to the characteristics of a new culture.

1.1.7.1.5. Acquiring strategies for culture learning

For becoming more culturally competent, there are some specific strategies that have to be acquired. Strategies in which learners possess the ability to learn about a new culture from acquiring set of cultural knowledge, in order to enhance curiosity and openness toward the target culture; So, learning culture then, comes from the natives in order to obtain real insights about the new culture. Learning about culture through authentic materials that are related to that culture, and in which considered to be rich sources, will catalyze and raise the awareness of the target culture such as learning through role plays, culture journals, literature, newspapers, music, popular movies, online sites, magazines and other sources depending on students needs and interests which inevitably develop their cultural observation skills. At last, incorporating cultural strategies in one's own culture is a strong start for being more culturally competent.

1.2. Culture and communication

1.2.1. The importance of culture in communication

According to Hinkel (1999:9), "the purposes of communication and learning are often derived from cultural frameworks that have been in place of centuries and are often assumed to be so basic that they are rarely questioned". Consequently, communication is not a mere transmission and exchange of pure information, but it is going behind the surface, behind words and sentences meanings in order to

appropriately achieve an effective discourse. Thus, cultural insights play as vital role in communication, therefore, Yule (2002:190) believes that, " in many ways, speech is a form of social identity and used, consciously, to indicate membership of different groups or different speech communities". By the same token, Kramsch (1994:4) describes the relation between culture and communication as the "local link", which are hard to be separated because culture makes utterances meaningful in a way that interaction takes place. According to Samovar, Porter, & Jain (1981:24; as cited in Thanasoulas, 2001:8):

Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted... Culture... is the foundation of communication.

Accordingly, cultural competence is essential to grasp the communication process; owing the fact that "when communication takes place within the home culture, individuals are instinctively aware of the context, and less likely to misinterpret the transmitted messages" (Babcock, 1996:19).

1.2.2. Intercultural communication

1.2.2.1. Definition of intercultural communication

The term intercultural usually points out " to the meeting of two cultures or two languages across the political boundaries of nation- states" (Kramsch, 1998:81). It seeks to understand how members from different communities and cultures behave, communicate, and perceive the world around them. Intercultural communication, which is the interactional data from groups of different

backgrounds, should be carried by the "social context" in which varies across cultures (Byram, 1997:31); so that, the ability to understand the cultural context that leads to effective communication in the Target language (TL) due to developing interculturalism, that to some extent, decrease the problem of misunderstanding. Hence, both linguistic and cultural knowledge are leading to successful intercultural communication.

According to Byram (2000), the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), that tellingly plays a key role in foreign language learning, entails five major factors including: Attitudes, Knowledge, Skills of interpreting and relating, Skills of discovery and interaction, and Critical cultural awareness.

1. Attitudes: willingness to delay uncertainty about other cultures and belief about one's own in which curiosity and openness towards the other are involved.
2. Knowledge: includes having information, thus, awareness about social groups, products, and mechanisms of interaction.
3. Skills of interpreting and relating: the ability to understand new cultural contexts, and associate them to contexts from one's own.
4. Skills of discovery and interaction: the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural implementations, and the capacity to execute knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the restriction of real-time communication and interaction.
5. Critical cultural awareness: the ability to assess critically the viewpoints, applications, and outputs of one's own culture and other cultures.

Byram's model of intercultural competence which has effectiveness that tends to be immense, allows the learners of a foreign language to operate adequately

when it comes to language use that must be associated with other culturally appropriate behavior.

1.2.2.2. Barriers of intercultural communication

Examining barriers of intercultural communication will be used when discussing problems that can arise in intercultural encounters, and taking the following common barriers into account will certainly improve EFL students' intercultural communication skills.

1.2.2.2.A. Anxiety

Fear and worries are common among learners, specifically for Foreign Language Learners (FLLs); they often have negative views about their abilities and competences towards academic situations. Therefore, this could be a major barrier to be submitted in communication process when it comes with high anxiety (Keles, 2013:1515).

1.2.2.2.B. Ethnocentrism

Giving powers only to one's own culture and using one's own view in interpreting others' perspectives are the aspects of being ethnocentric, in a way that allows judging the other culture in negative manner according to one's own standards and norms (Keles, 2013:1515); so that, communication breakdown may occur and even more, conflicts can take place across cultures.

1.2.2.2.C. Language

Language is one of the most obvious barriers to intercultural communication. Learners who have the feeling of imperfection about another language, may find obstacles in communicating (Keles, 2013:1517). Linguistic deficiency then, about

other language will definitely realize the possibility of misunderstandings in terms of interaction.

1.2.2.2.D. Interpretation

The way people comprehend and perceive things is also important in intercultural communication. If the speakers' intention differs from one another about one state, this may create what is so-called misinterpretation which tend to be an intercultural barrier.

1.2.2.2.E. Culture shock

All people may experience the case of culture shock when they expose to a new and totally different culture for the first time; it has been defined by Brown (2007:194) as "feelings of estrangement, anger, hostility, indecision, frustration, unhappiness, sadness, loneliness, homesickness, and even physical illness".

1.2.3. Culture and non – verbal communication

It is crystal clear that communication takes place through verbal and non-verbal interactions, where the latter is considered to be a major part and often "overshadows" the former (verbal interaction) by intervening in any communication act (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2010:1). There are many forms of unspoken language, in which all the messages that people exchange beyond the words themselves, that include "any behavioral or expressive channel of communication such as bodily movement, facial expression, vocal tone and pitch" and many other sorts (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1998: 775). Thus, non-verbal communication can be expressed through hand gestures, smile or frown, eye gaze, usage of space, touching someone, the vocal cues such as pitch, speech rate, intonation, and many other expressions. According to Brown (1987:209), non-verbal communication refers to the areas of Proxemics (space and distance between

people or the body distance), Kinesics (body movement, facial expression, and posture gestures), and Paralanguage. Furthermore, the way these kinds of non-verbal communication varies across cultures, thus, successful communication among cross cultures depending upon "the ability to express oneself nonverbally and to understand the nonverbal communication of others" (Burgoon et al. , 2010:1).

Conclusion

The attempt in this chapter was to shed light on how to raise socio-cultural knowledge, which can be difficult to address in the English language classroom, and figuring its effectiveness on language and communication. Furthermore, considering the significance of being aware of the cultural contexts on making the decision carefully and appropriately when it comes to multiculturalism, particularly, from the foreign learners' viewpoint who are striving for acquiring authentic and pragmatic foreign language in order to reduce the difficulties that may encounter in the communication process through confronting the culture of the otherness, that is called interculturalism.

At the end, what is crucial is that intercultural communication leads to cultural tolerance if and only if there is a kind of open-mindedness towards the mechanisms of being pursued by other cultures in which all systems of life are interpreted and performed in disparate ways. Therefore, students cannot be considered to have mastered a FL until they understand what behind linguistic proficiency. Otherwise, it leads to serious social implications through misinterpretations and lack of communication.

Chapter Two

Developing Pragmatic Competence
through Integrating Cross - Cultural
Awareness

Introduction

Linguistic proficiency including grammatical accuracy has occupied the second rank since the adoption of the communicative approach. The focus now is on the mechanisms of how to improve communication through the interactions among the interlocutors when it relates to learning the Target language (TL). Therefore, giving paramount importance to the achievement of functional abilities in the TL, in which the emphasis is centered on understanding and producing language that is appropriate to communicative situations in accordance with specific socio-cultural factors. However, the purpose of learning a foreign language is being able to communicate effectively with foreigners, probably not with the same cultural background. To realize that, linguistic competence alone is not sufficient in giving a real dimension to successful communication. But besides, one needs to have pragmatic knowledge or competence which will help to develop a healthy conversation between the addresser and the addressee, since speech is not just a strings of words that grammatically linked to each other. But rather, the rules of speech differ from one culture to another, differ in the language processing that take place between the interlocutors. Consequently, knowing about pragmatics means knowing about what is meant by what is said, and thus, the way we convey the meaning through the conversation with respect of socio-cultural norms of the TL. So, as a matter of fact that cannot be denied, the development of pragmatic competence goes hand in hand with the incorporation of cultural awareness in order to lessen serious social implications that derive from misunderstanding.

2.1. Definition of pragmatic competence

Pragmatics, which is a subfield of linguistics, is difficult to define, and that due to the myriad of elucidations from different perspectives. The field of pragmatics,

according to Levinson (1983:3), referred to as "the study of language usage". In this respect, Levinson (1983) has embodied pragmatics as deixis, conversational implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and conversational structure. In a common sense, pragmatics involves the capacity to employ or use language in a contextually appropriate fashion. Kasper and Rose (2002) adopt definitions of pragmatics by Mey (1993) and Crystal (1997) which assert the social- interactional aspects of pragmatics: "the societally necessary and consciously interactive dimension of the study of language" (Mey, 1993:315). By the same token, Crystal (1997:301) also offers a compatible definition, but more precise, when he formulates pragmatics as:

The study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication.

This definition analyzes the issue of pragmatics from the perspective of the users. It takes into account the different possibilities that speakers are able to make when using the target language, depending on the socio- cultural contexts that vary from culture to culture. Because of that, the notion of pragmatic competence was seen in opposition to grammatical competence that is defined by Chomsky (1980:224) as "the knowledge of form and meaning".

In social interaction, the essence of pragmatics can be comprehended in a narrow and in a broad sense. In a narrow sense, interaction is defined in discourse analysis, in which at least two interlocutors are co-present and involved in a shared activity, where interaction is specified as 'talk- in- interaction' and thereby far from the text. But in a wider sense, not only orality, but literacy and the many hybrid forms of language use, such as electronic communication, in which social

interaction can usefully be extended to overlap all sorts of written and mixed forms of communication, are included in the perspective view of pragmatics. (Kasper & Rose, 2002:3)

Kasper (1993:3) defined the term as "the study of people's comprehension and production of linguistic action in context". Here, two crucial components of speech acts in language are used including the words 'action' and 'context', in which defines the ability to construct an utterance. Also, giving emphasis on comprehension as well as production, a distinction that EFL learners should take into account.

To sum up, pragmatic competence refers then to the ability to comprehend, construct, and convey meanings with all its nuances in any socio-cultural context which realize success in communication.

2.2. The utility of pragmatic competence

The ability to achieve certain goals that leads to better communication in different appropriate manners refers to one's own pragmatic competency. In other words, grammatical knowledge is not crucial in the process of communication. Since pragmatics deals with the study of communicative act in its socio-cultural contexts, there are circumstances and various situations that surround the process of interaction. The use of pragmatic competence refers to the ability to deal with meaning as communicated by a speaker or writer and interpreted by a listener or reader, and to know the intended meanings, assumptions, purposes or goals, and the kinds of actions (such as apologies, requests) of the Native Speakers (NSs) that they are performing when they speak (Yule, 1996:3-4). Perhaps the real challenge that FL or SL learners face is both the comprehension and the production of

speech acts in which occur through communication. The speech act is in which an utterance served as a functional unit in any conversation that has two kinds of meaning: the literal meaning and the illocutionary or functional meaning (the effect that the utterance or written texts has on the reader or the listener). That is to say, the aspects of language including the knowledge of grammar, phonology, and lexis represent the manifestations of a language in theory, but as language in use, EFL learners need to recognize besides the linguistic proficiency, the speaking rules that govern the social interaction of a language; in order to achieve successful communication.

It is considered to be a difficult task for EFL learners to extract the intended meaning from the speaker's utterance, since it is mostly expressed in indirect ways. So, foreign learners should know how to explicitly or implicitly comprehend and produce the intended messages from a particular utterance. Furthermore, the principle of politeness can also interfere with the degree of the speakers' pragmatic competency. Lakoff (1990; as cited in Yule, 1996:34) claims that "indirectness can function as a form of politeness. Politeness is a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange". And most importantly, communication breakdowns will be reduced.

Consequently, developing foreign learners' pragmatic competence is related to developing their competence in language use and politeness. EFL learners then, need to know how to use the language in the appropriate behavior in order to realize their intentions through communication. Because the relationship between

pragmatics and language learning as Bouton (1996, as cited in Martinez, Usó, & Fernandez, 2003) states:

... pragmatics and language learning are inherently bound together [...] pragmatics provides language teachers and learners with a research- based understanding of the language forms and functions that are appropriate to the many contexts in which a language is used – an understanding that is crucial to a proficient speaker's communicative competence.

From the above instructions, we can precisely identify what can the EFL students do with the pragmatic aspects of a language. In this respect, Fultcher (2003) mentions two different areas when using the pragmatic competence.

2.2.1. Doing things with words

Different languages embrace various ways of doing similar things with words. The study of how we do things with words that is originally developed by Austin (1962) is called speech act theory. Austin has made a distinction between the literal meaning of an utterance and the intended meaning of the speaker, which are rarely coincided together in spoken language (In Fultcher, 2003:42). EFL learners should know how to select an utterance with the intended act; in other words, knowing which utterances to use in order to perform a specific action such as: requesting, apologizing, thanking.

2.2.1.1. Performatives versus constatives

In fact, Austin (1962) has classified speech acts into 'performatives' and 'constatives' in which this division is considered as a branch of his speech act theory. Performatives are in which sentences denote an action, they are formulated under specific conditions not to describe something but to achieve something.

Constatives on the other hand, represent certain utterances which do not denote an action, they are statements of facts which could be right or wrong. EFL learners should be able to differentiate between the performatives and the constatives. As a result, they will be able to use the appropriate statement in the right contexts and in different ways.

These are some examples about performatives and constatives:

(01) a. I apologize for being harsh.

b. I promise to be there.

c. I command you to follow the order.

(02) a. She is my sister.

b. It is raining.

Unlike those in (02), the declarative sentences in (01) are not used to say something true or false, but rather, they are used to perform actions of apologizing in (01,a), of promising in (01,b), of ordering in (01,c).

According to Huang (2007), performatives could be further classified into explicit and implicit. Explicit performatives usually contain a performative verb that clearly shows the kind of act that is being performed in which it makes the utterance performative as in (01). Unlike the explicit performatives, implicit performatives, as Huang (2007:96) claims, are performative utterances that have no performative verb. The only way to understand that the utterance is performative is by realizing the real intention behind that utterance through the contextual factors that play a major role in determining the intended meaning of the interlocutor. Implicit performatives as in (03):

(03) a. It is cold in here.

b. I will be there on time.

The sentences in (03), the performative verbs are not existed; on the other hand, the actions of requesting is being performed in (03,a), of promising is being performed in (03,b).

However, Austin (1962, in Huang,2007:96-101) considers that the distinction between the performatives and the constatives is unclear. They might be overlapped. Thus, Austin shifts to another classification, by distinguishing between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.

2.2.1.2. Locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary acts

Austin (ibid) continued with another classification concerning the three kinds of acts which tend to be the characteristics of most utterances, namely the distinction between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Firstly, locutionary act: the act of producing a meaningful utterance, that is involved in the construction of speech. Secondly, illocutionary act: the act that needs to be achieved through speaking, i.e. what is intended by the speaker. And thirdly, perlocutionary act: the consequence or the effect of the speech act in which the utterance causes on the hearer. (Huang, ibid: 102)

Austin (in Huang 2007:106- 8) classifies speech acts into five main types (figure 4).

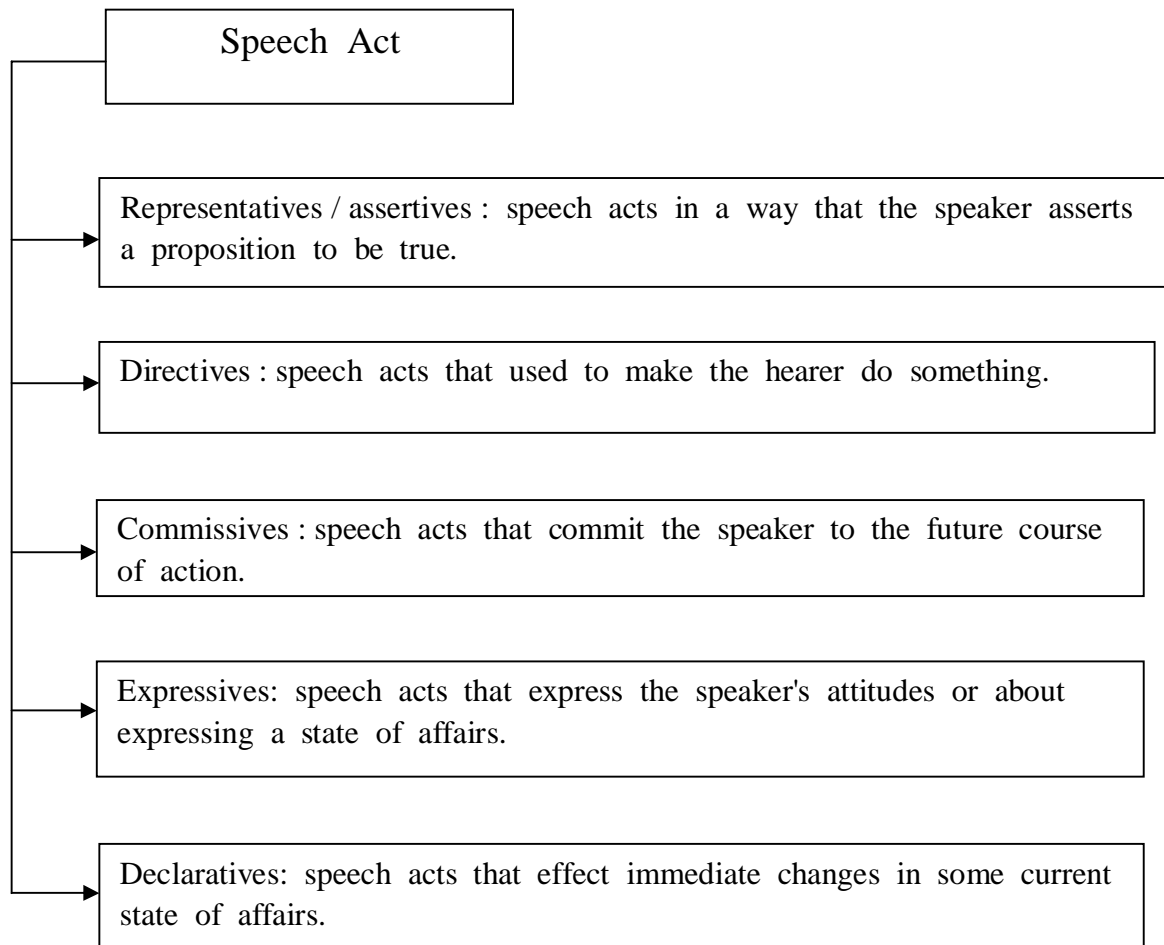


Figure 4: The five types of speech act that presented by Austin (in Huang, 2007: 106-8).

The five types of speech act are respectively exemplified in (04):

(04) a. Chomsky did not write about peanuts.

b. Could you lend me a pen please.

c. I will be back.

d. I am really sorry.

e. I sentence you to death.

2.2.1.3. Direct and indirect speech act

Making a distinction between the types of speech acts, as Yule (1996:54) asserts, may depend on the basis of structure. That is to say, "a fairly simple structural distinction between three general types of speech acts is provided, in English, by the three basic sentence types". In other words, the three main types of sentences in almost all of the languages are: declarative, interrogative, imperative; and the three general communicative functions that stand for the main types of the illocutionary forces are: statement, question, request/command. By this token, Yule (*ibid*) differentiates between the direct and indirect speech act. He suggests that whenever there is a direct relationship between the type of the sentence and the function or the illocutionary force, it is then a direct speech act. Whenever there is no match between the structure and the function, it is certainly an indirect speech act.

(05) a. I request you to close the door.

b. Close the door.

c. Could you close the door?

Explicit performatives are considered as direct speech acts since their performative verb states directly the illocutionary force as in (05.a). The sentence type in (05.b) is imperative and the illocutionary force is a request, so, there is a match between the sentence type and its function; and hence, it is also a direct speech act. Whereas, the sentence type in (05.c) is interrogative and the illocutionary force is a request, there is an indirect relationship between the sentence type and the illocutionary force; and accordingly, it is considered as an indirect speech act.

According to Yule (1996:56), "indirect speech acts are generally associated with greater politeness in English than direct speech acts". Therefore, the more the speech act is indirect the more the utterance is polite.

- (06) a. Pass the salt.
- b. Pass the salt, please.
- c. Can you pass the salt?
- d. Could you pass the salt?

Indeed, there is a typical pattern when asking a question as in the example above, in which (06.d) is more polite than (06.c) which is more polite than (06.b) which is more polite than (06.a).

In fact, among the models that proposed to explain the theory of politeness, there is the face-saving view which is considered to be the most influential and comprehensible politeness model. It was presented by Brown and Levinson (1978) in which they introduce the notion of 'face' in order to conceptualize 'politeness' in the broad sense. Face is defined as "the public self – image of a person. It refers to that emotional and social sense of self and everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize" (Yule,1996:60). That is to say, there are two types of 'face' during interaction: 'positive face' and 'negative face'. According to Yule (ibid:61-62), a person's positive face represents "the need to be accepted, even liked by others", or simply "the need to be connected". On the other side, a person's negative face represents "the need to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not to be imposed on by others". In short, face – saving act is oriented to both positive and negative politeness.

When EFL students recognize how to successfully use speech acts, i.e. how to do things with words, means that they know how to express their intents through using the TL. However, it is not sufficient to make them effective speakers.

2.2.2. Being things with words

Despite of the significance of being aware of the role of rules of speech and speech acts that play in communication, there is still a deficiency in understanding the way speakers speak in particular situations. For this reason, social context should be taken into account. (Fulcher,2003:43)

Labov and Fanshel (1977) argue that the social context of speech is crucial for understanding the spoken rules that could be performed in different manners, in which termed by Fulcher (2003) as 'being things with words'. He believes that " in any particular context the role the speaker is playing will have speaking rights attached to it"(43). Accordingly, the social status and context are essential to understand why speakers do things with words in certain ways. In other words, the interlocutors not only do things with words, but they are things through words, in that they define their status and role through speech. Consequently, the use of language is inevitably associated with the contexts and the social status of the speakers. (ibid)

To conclude, EFL students should know how to do things with words, as well as, to be things with words in order to achieve the goal of being pragmatically competent. In that case, they have to know what, when, where, why, and how to say or perform the different ways of speech acts appropriately.

2.3. Pragmatics in foreign language contexts

As agreed among many researchers, the study of pragmatics examines the ability of language users to bind utterances with contexts, that takes into account the appropriateness in which adapts the interaction between the speakers. The study of pragmatic competence has distinguished linguistic knowledge from social knowledge. Based on the research of Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983), pragmatics has been divided into two aspects: 'pragmalinguistics' and 'sociopragmatics'. According to Alcón and Martínez (2008:3):

[pragmalinguistics] refers to the linguistic resources for conveying communicative acts and interpersonal meanings, whereas [sociopragmatics] refers to the social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative acts.

Accordingly, dealing with pragmatics involves paying attention on the knowledge about the formats and the routines of speech acts (i.e. pragmalinguistic knowledge), and the knowledge of the socio-cultural factors of particular situations (i.e. sociopragmatic knowledge). Regardless to the unbalanced focus on the pragmalinguistic component in processing pragmatic learning, Alcón (2008; in Alcón & Martínez, 2008:4) claims that the components that suggested by Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) should go hand in hand in interaction in which could be realized through the presence of politeness as a pragmatic phenomenon.

Therefore, foreign learners have to be aware that the use of the TL lies in the consistency between the linguistic knowledge and the contextual factors for reaching to successful communication.

2.3.1. Teaching and learning culture as pragmatics of interaction

According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000; as cited in Hinkel, 2014:12), "pragmatics deals very explicitly with the study of relationships holding between linguistic forms and the human beings who use these forms". The authors consider pragmatics, in language learning and use, as the knowledge that linked with the total way of life of a giving community (ibid). Likewise, Hinkel (2014:13) argues that "pragmatic and cultural competence are closely related", and both require learners' use of language with appropriate sociocultural manners. In teaching L₂ or FL pragmatics, one of the intricate concerns is that the socio-cultural factors of the appropriate (or inappropriate) speech can possess a number of formats that vary according to the context. In other words, there can be many pragmatically appropriate ways to perform a speech act. As Hinkel (2014) states:

In pragmatics, various sets of conventionalized, frequently repeated, and routinized expressions are called speech acts. These are typically classified by their pragmatic and communicative functions, such as requests, apologies, compliments, complaints, etc. Speech acts can be direct or indirect, and thus vary in the degree of their politeness or even comprehensibility.

Consequently, pragmatics is intricately interwoven with the socio-cultural norms of politeness and appropriateness in implementing different types of speech acts. Teaching pragmatics in a FL classroom can be presented in linguistic and socio-pragmatic forms as a dual function to scrutinize on routine and coordinate the language use with the appropriate context. The contextual factors, in which foreign learners should take into consideration, that overlap the realization and the interpretation of the speech acts concerning the social status of the interlocutors,

social distance between them, their ages, genders, and the situation where the interaction takes place. (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, *ibid*)

Most crucial, becoming aware of the socio-pragmatic features of interaction of the TL community involves integrating cultural awareness with pragmatics, so as to provide learners with appropriate choices. Otherwise, the mismatch between pragmatics and cultural norms of appropriateness in interactions predominantly leads to pragmatic failure, and most importantly, breakdowns in communication. (Thomas, 1983)

2.3.2. Cross – Cultural Pragmatics

Recently, it came to be as a criticism about the universalism of pragmatics, that claimed particular functions and techniques about pragmatics in order to be universal, in which represents any other language culture. It is evident that the diverse cultures which use different languages, under which their traditions and norms differ from one community to another, will inevitably utilize systems of pragmatics in different ways. Accordingly, a new academic field was created, namely Cross – Cultural Pragmatics (CCP) that deals with "the study of communicative practices in different speech communities" (Kasper & Rose, 2002:73). That is to say, the members of the different cultural societies speak and act differently. As Huhold (2006:24) proclaims:

Such differences are based on different cultural values with the speaking culture which may cause misunderstandings in communication with other cultures. To avoid such misunderstandings, one has to analyse the pragmatic nature of a distinct language by looking at the pragmatic functions which are differently grammaticalized in different languages.

Cross – cultural pragmatics (CCP) is not only significant for comparing different cultures, but also for the whole pragmatics as well. Thus, "general pragmatics is only able to phrase its theories with the help of cross-cultural studies" (24), through which the appropriateness of particular expressions depends on particular contexts which differ from culture to culture. Therefore, the study of Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) is the key to understand the cultural variations among the communities. *ibid*

2.4. Authentic language materials and pragmatic competence

Certainly, when it comes to the study of language in use, there is a field of pragmatics (that is, using speech acts such as requesting, apologizing, and complimenting) that requires the presence of cultural knowledge. Thereby, the pragmatic aspects of language demand the use of authentic materials or genuine samples of spoken discourse to do so. Since pragmatics deals with the study of everyday language, i.e. dealing with the real language, of course there is a need of authentic discourse that leads to the appropriateness of the speech with the contextual factor. According to Kasper & Rose (2002:80), "in interlanguage pragmatics research, authentic spoken discourse data have been collected by taking notes and audio- or videotaping", which have "decisive advantages" for the study of spoken discourse. Thus, providing authentic materials (such as TV shows, interviews, podcasts, videos, and many other sorts) within pragmatic learning, will raise learners' awareness of the native- speaker norms of speech acts, and more importantly, lead to more exposure to authentic target cultural information. "But contrary to the popular perception that 'inauthentic' equals 'invalid', interactions arranged for research purposes can be most useful sources of data if used judiciously" (Kasper & Rose, *ibid*).

Conclusion

From the second chapter, it has been asserted that in order to become more effective, fluent, and successful communicator in L₂ or FL, there should be a knowledge of pragmatics to make EFL learners aware about the use of linguistic resources of the TL. It is important to know that the development of FL pragmatics is related to the extent of the learners' socio-cultural knowledge about the TL, which considered to be the focal objective of effective pragmatics. To this end, EFL learners need to be aware about the effect of the cultural dimensions towards the routinized expressions and behaviors of the foreign community. Because without being exposed towards other language culture that differ from one country to another, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to be interactionally competent in the FL. Consequently, more exposure to the foreign cultural insights leads to more appropriate usages of the foreign language.

Chapter Three

Field Work

(Students' Questionnaire)

Introduction

Field investigation is mainly dealt with this last chapter which is entitled "Students' Questionnaire". It aims to collect data about the students' perceptions towards the role of cultural awareness in developing foreign learners' pragmatic competence.

The third chapter that is concerned with students' questionnaire involves three main subsections. First, administration of the questionnaire that is the first step in which the researcher goes through. Second, description of the questionnaire where there are more details and explanations linked to the questionnaire. Third, an analysis of the results generated by the data collection in accordance with the students' answers to the questionnaire.

3.1. Administration of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to 40 students of First year master degree at the university of Biskra. We used simple random sampling technique since our objective of the research study is not to get all the students' perceptions of the problem, and since they are EFL learners with a completely different cultural background than of the target culture that allows us to expect that they will exhibit nearly the same reactions towards the awareness of the TL culture.

3.2. Description of the questionnaire

An introductory paragraph precedes the 19 items. These items are distributed into sections. Each one is aimed to provide us with specific set of information but with a relative aim. The following is a brief description of each section:

Section One: Background Information (01 →03)

It contains three items or questions designed to obtain general information about the students' gender, age, and their choice of studying English language.

Section Two: Cultural awareness (04 →09)

In this section, there has been six questions that mainly dealt with the importance of having cultural knowledge about the TL and the extent to which plays in the development of communicative competence. The intent behind these questions in this section is to test the students' viewpoints about whether there is a great awareness towards the significance of associating the TL culture with effective communication.

Section Three: Developing pragmatic competence (10 →19)

This section is designed to provide some information to investigate students' understanding and their perceptions towards the role of cultural awareness in developing Foreign Learners' pragmatic competence. It embodies ten questions which tackle several points concerning the ability to improve pragmatics through the merge of socio-cultural factors of the TL to which leads to avoid the notion of misunderstanding.

3.3. Analysis of the results

Data will be treated in pie charts, and information will be presented and analysed in accordance with the order of the items in the questionnaire. All of the forty (40) students' answers will be taken into consideration.

Section One: Background Information (Question item from 01 to 03)

Item 01: Gender

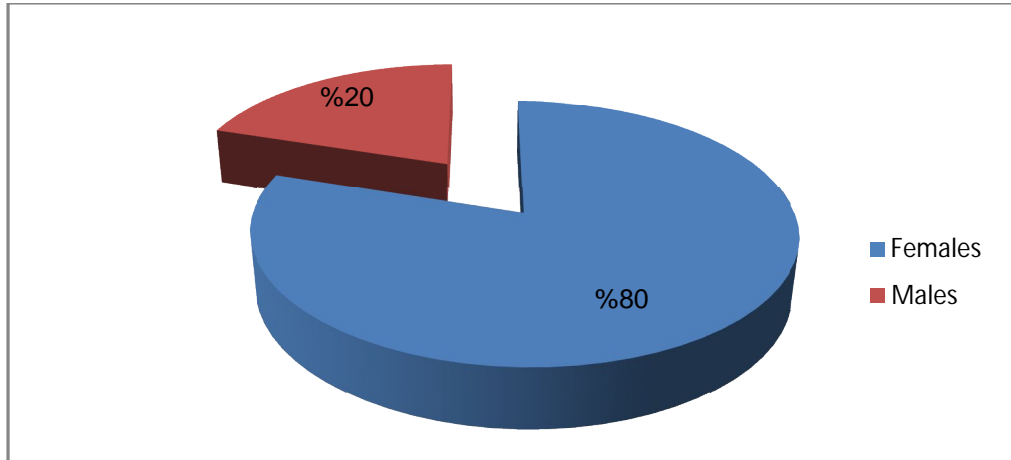


Diagram 01: Students' gender

It is clear from the diagram above that the leading majority are females with thirty two (80%), which largely exceeded males' number whom only represent eight (20%).

Item 02: Age

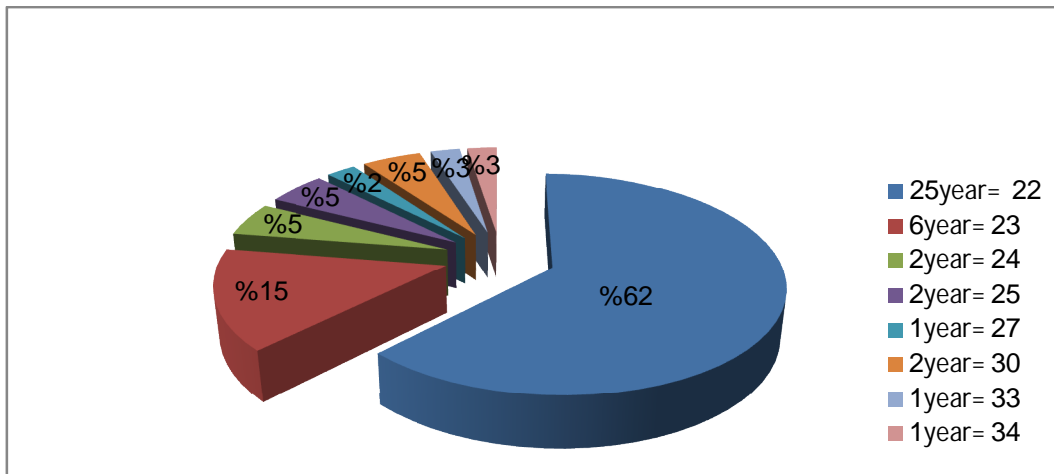


Diagram 02: Students' age

According to Diagram 02, students' age varies between 22 to 34 years; but the majority of them have 22 years old (62%). This reflects a great interest to study the English language by different categories of people.

Item 03: Your choice to study English

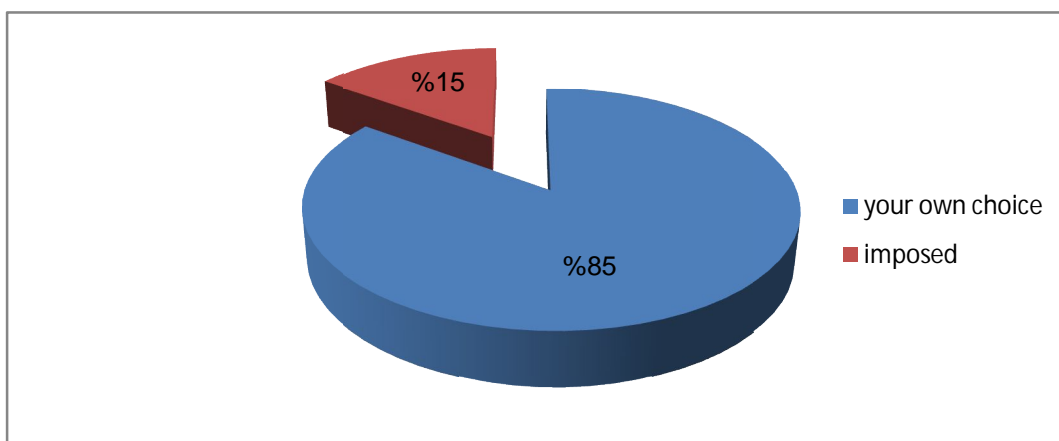


Diagram 03: Students' choice of studying English

From the obtained results, it is clear that the majority of students are studying English language from their own desire to which embodies thirty four (85%), while six (15%) students are imposed to study this language.

Section Two: Cultural awareness (Question item from 04 to 09)

Item 04: In your opinion; Foreign language culture is not integrated enough in the classroom.

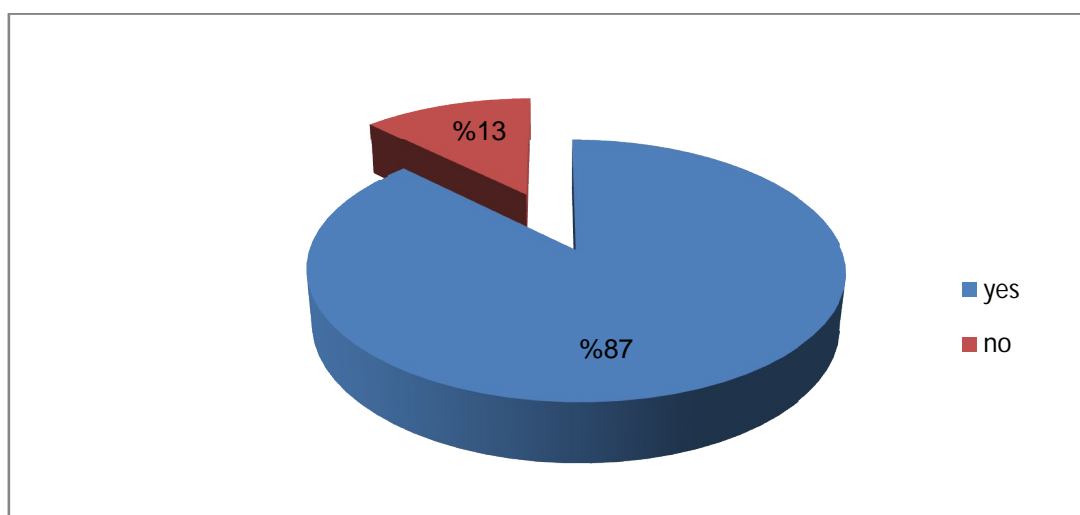


Diagram 04: Students' opinion about the integration of culture in the classroom

From the diagram 04, the vast majority who represent thirty five students out of forty (87%) state that FL culture is not integrated enough in the classroom, five students (13%) state that culture is present in the classroom.

Students' justifications

According to students who state that culture is integrated in the classroom, explained their point of view by claiming that learning a language means learning its culture, thus culture is integrated in the classroom unconsciously.

Item 05: Do you think that incorporating culture in the FL classroom is important?

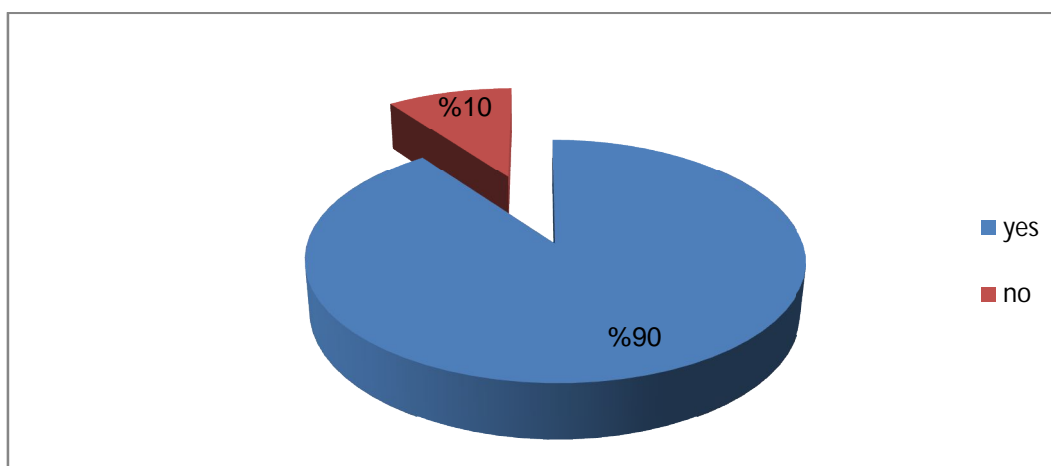


Diagram 05: Students' opinion about the importance of incorporating culture in the FL classroom

Thirty six students (90%) out of 40 think that integrating culture in the classroom is important, whereas only four students (10%) think the opposite.

Students' justifications

According to students who say that incorporating culture in the FL classroom is important, it is because the role it plays in the process of acquiring a language in order to better understand the language and use it properly. They also claim that integrating culture is important because it increases the curiosity, and therefore, raising awareness towards the others' culture. For others, learning about culture in

the classroom has a long term benefits for EFL learners to develop their language skills; and thus, to avoid breakdowns in communication through using the Target language (TL) appropriately in accordance with its contextual factors.

Item 06: Does your teacher use authentic materials to merge FL culture in the classroom?

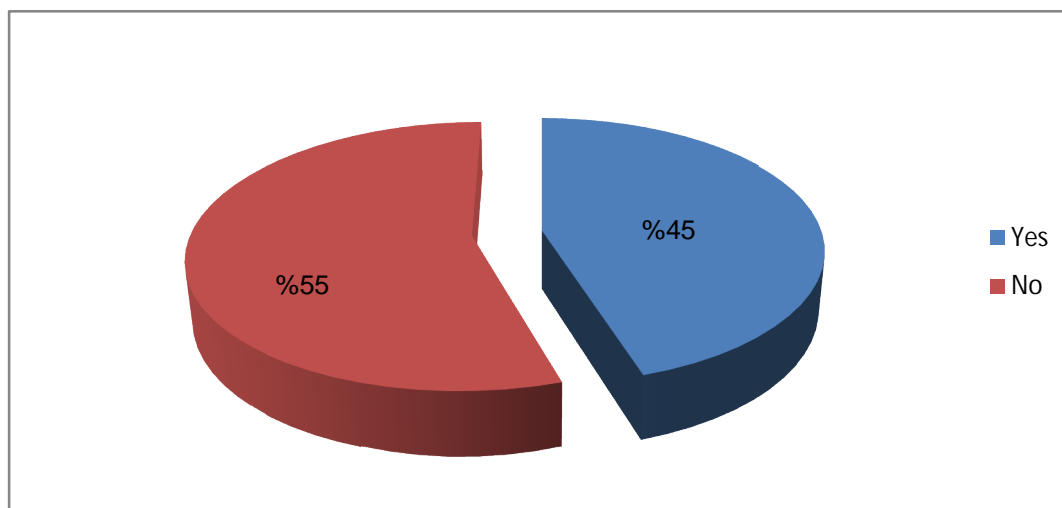


Diagram 06: Students' viewpoints towards teacher's usage of authentic materials in the FL classroom

From the diagram 06, eighteen students who see that their teacher uses authentic materials to merge culture in the FL classroom to which represent 45%, whereas twenty two students (55%) disagree with this idea.

Item 07: What type of authentic materials do you prefer to acquire cultural knowledge?

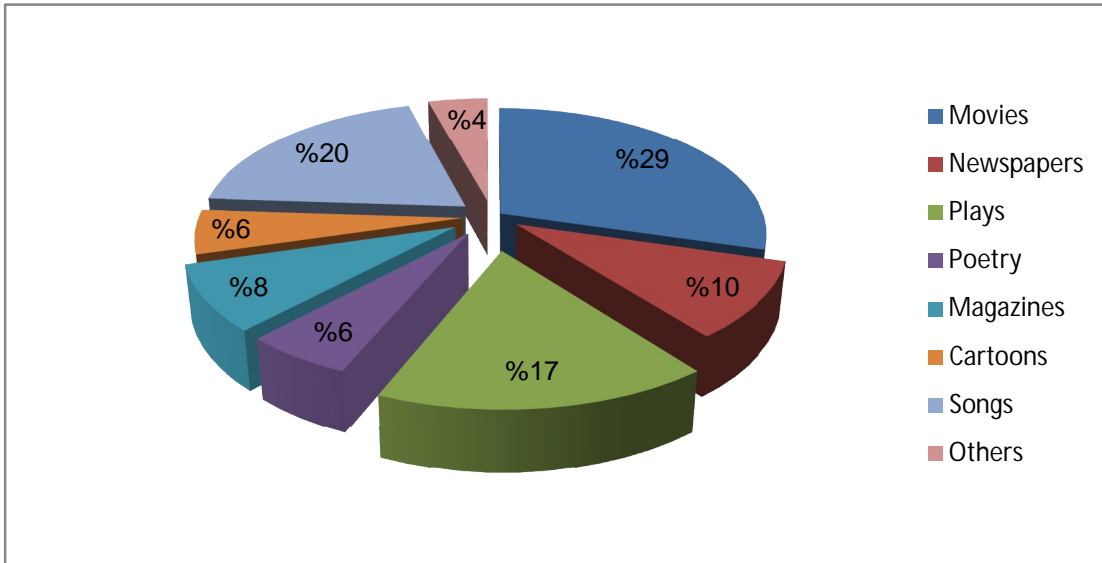


Diagram 07: Students' favorite authentic materials

From the results presented in diagram 07, we can see that students are very interested in authentic materials, in which twenty one students (29%) prefer movies as a type of authentic material to acquire cultural knowledge, seven students (10%) adopt newspapers, twelve students (17%) prefer plays, four students (06%) consider poetry as a preferable type of authentic material, six students (08%) choose magazines, four students (06%) nominate cartoons, fourteen students (20%) prefer listening to songs, and three students (04%) prefer other authentic materials such as books, articles, dialogues.

N.B. When counting the respondents' number, you may find more than 40 answers because most of them have selected more than one choice.

Item 08: Do you think that poor knowledge about the socio-cultural norms of the TL is the reason of learners' communication breakdowns?

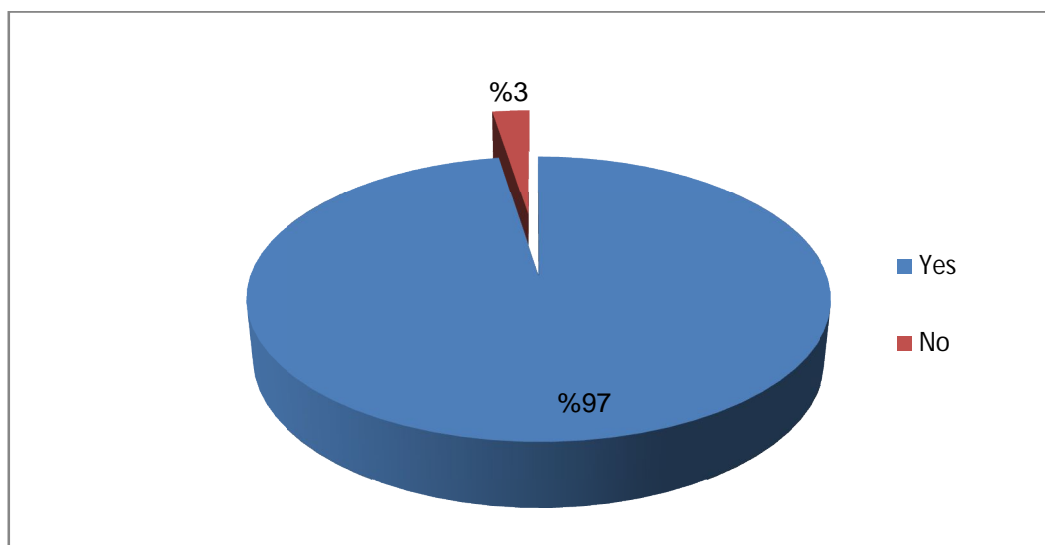


Diagram 08: Students' opinion about the reason of learners' communication breakdowns

From the results above, the vast majority of students representing thirty nine out of forty (97%) agree with the idea that poor knowledge about the socio-cultural norms of the TL is the reason of learners' communication breakdowns, while only one student (3%) who claims the opposite.

Students' justifications

According to students who think that the reason of learners' communication breakdowns comes from the poor knowledge about the socio-cultural norms of the TL, they justify their answers by claiming that the knowledge of the socio-cultural norms facilitates their communication ability through developing the skills of the language, in order to be cultivated, to reduce the difficulties of understanding the other; thus, cultural background is pivotal for mastering the language, because each culture has its own norms, and being aware of the differences across cultures leads to avoid misunderstandings and obstacles among the interlocutors. Therefore,

students argue that having just the linguistic proficiency is not enough to practice the language as well.

Item 09: Raising target language cultural awareness and giving it importance among EFL learners leads to effective communication

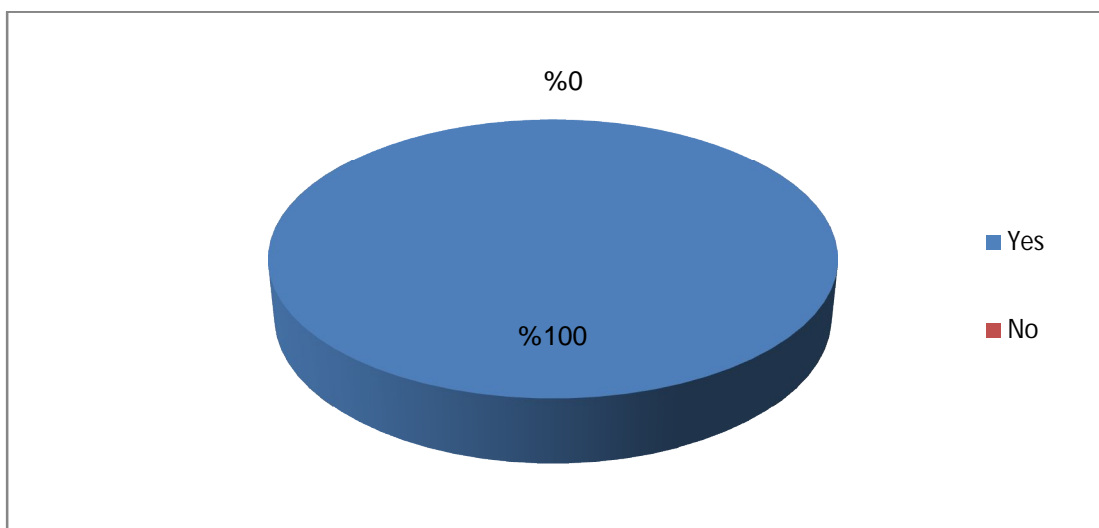


Diagram 09: Students' opinion towards the importance of target language cultural awareness in effective communication

All the students (40) who represent 100% support the idea which claims that effective communication involves raising target language cultural awareness and giving it importance among EFL learners.

Students' justifications

All the students say that raising target language cultural awareness and giving it importance among EFL learners leads to effective communication. They claim that cultural awareness raises the communicative competence and effects the learning process, also, making a balance between cultural competence and linguistic competence through understanding what behind a sentence or an utterance. They also assure that knowing about culture means knowing about the mechanisms of communication in order to reach fluency, and then, to facilitate the contact between

the native and the non-native speakers. So, according to students' justifications, there is no language without its cultural background.

Section Three: Developing pragmatic competence (Question items from 10 to 19)

Item 10: How do you assess your linguistic competence?

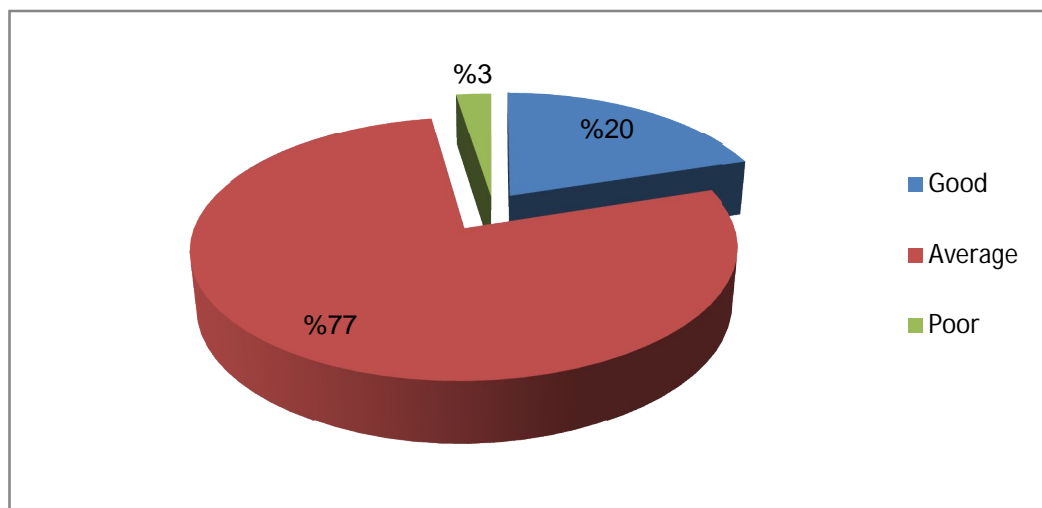


Diagram 10: Students' personal evaluation of their linguistic competence

eight (20%) students out of forty claim that they have good linguistic competence, while thirty one (77%) who consider their linguistic competence as average level; whereas just one (3%) student who has poor linguistic competence.

Item 11: Do you think that having only the linguistic competence enables you to communicate effectively in a social interaction?

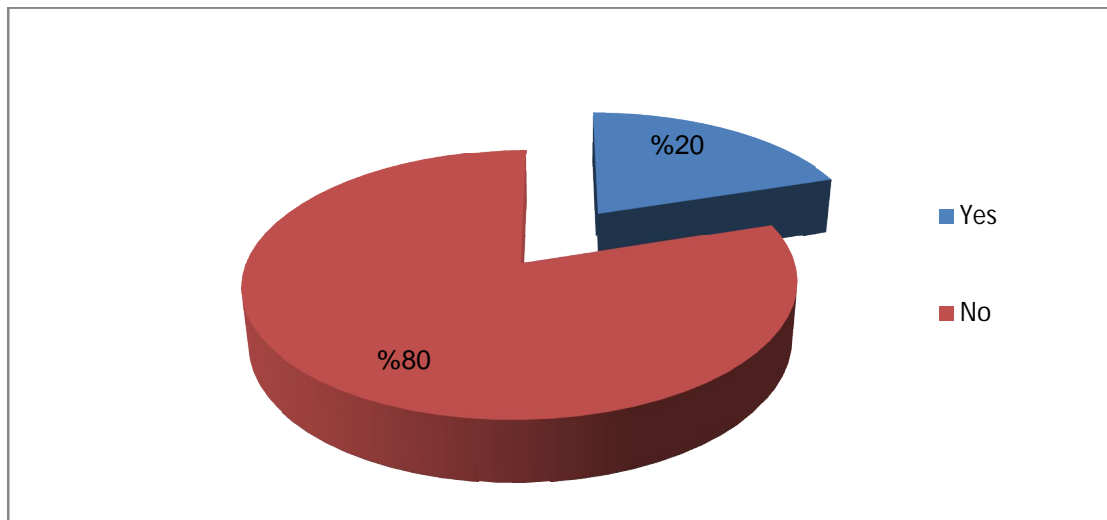


Diagram 11: Students' perception towards the importance of linguistic competence

According to Diagram 11, thirty two (80%) students who assume that having only the linguistic competence unable them to communicate effectively in a social interaction, unlike eight (20%) students who assume the opposite.

Item 12: Do you think that you have the ability to communicate effectively with a native speaker?

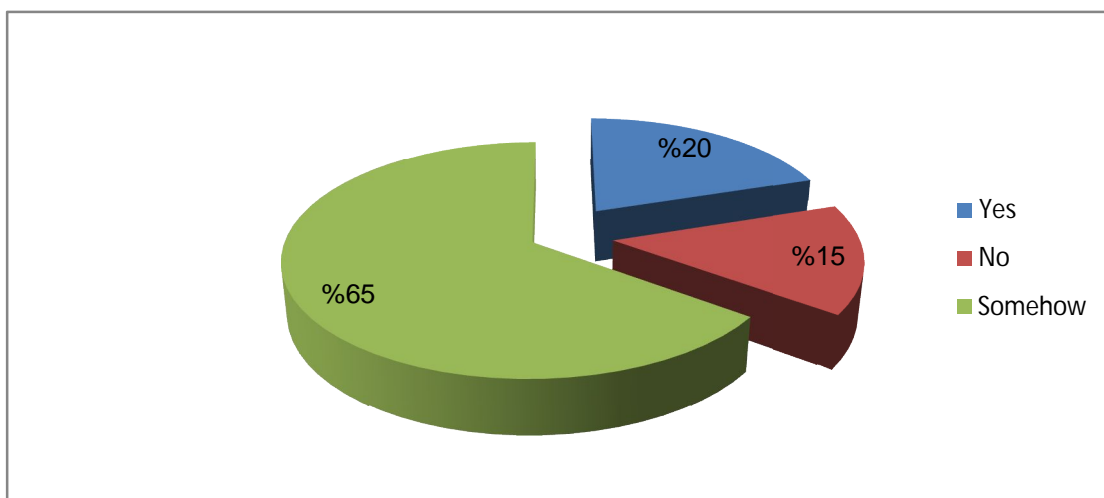


Diagram 12: Students' ability for effective communication with a native speaker

eight students with 20% who claim that they can communicate effectively with a native speaker, six (15%) students who have not the ability to communicate, while the rest majority of students that represent twenty six (65%) whom somewhat have the ability to do so.

Students' justifications

For students who claim that they are unable to communicate effectively with a native speaker, they referred that to the lack of confidence that comes from the fear of making mistakes, they think that they are far from fluency and the intended meaning is difficult to encode or to interpret. Furthermore, students refer their lack of communication to their accent of speaking which may seem strange for the natives who may not understand what the foreigners said since the native speakers are experts about the rules that their language goes through.

Item 13: How often do you concentrate on the pragmatic aspects of the language?

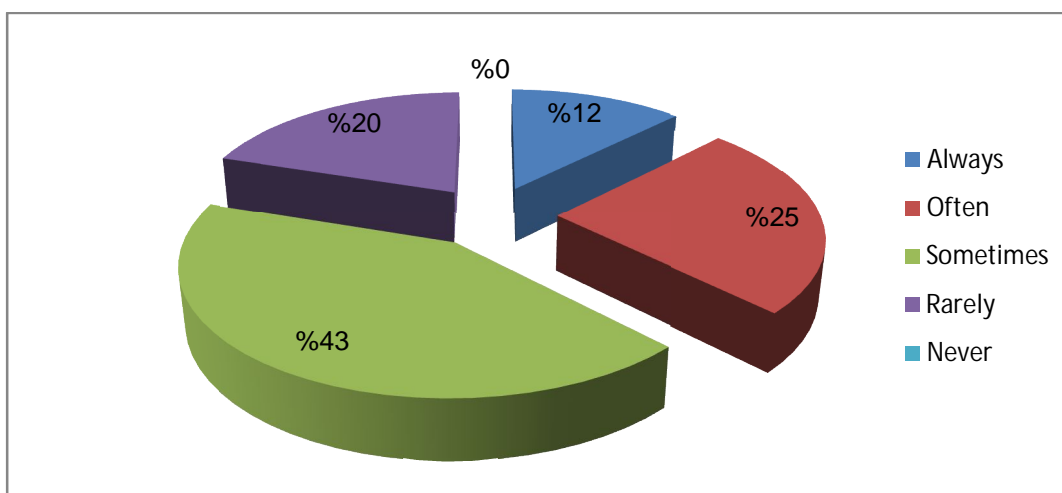


Diagram 13: Students' frequency towards their concentration on the pragmatic aspects of the language

From the results above, five students (12%) who always concentrate on the pragmatic aspects of the language, ten students (25%) who often give emphasis on

the pragmatic aspects, seventeen (43%) students are sometimes concentrate on the pragmatic aspects, unlike eight (20%) students who rarely give importance on pragmatics.

Item 14: Do you agree that socio-cultural knowledge can improve foreign learners' pragmatic competence?

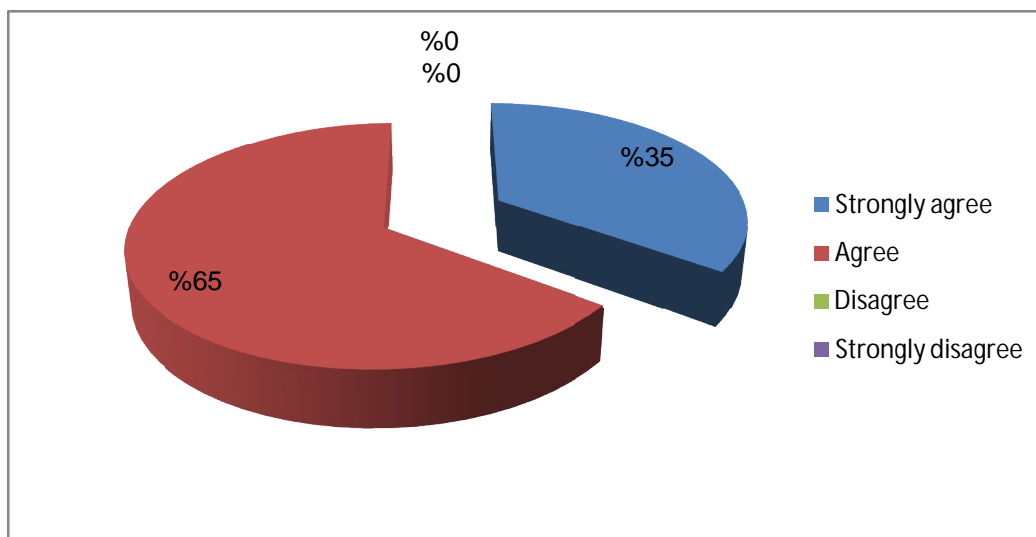


Diagram 14: Students' opinion towards the improvement of pragmatic competence through the integration of socio-cultural knowledge

From Diagram 14, the majority of students, who represent twenty six (65%), agree with the idea that socio-cultural knowledge can improve foreign learners' pragmatic competence, fourteen (35%) students out of forty state that they strongly agree towards the improvement of pragmatic competence by integrating socio-cultural knowledge.

Item 15: Which type of language features does your teacher focus on more when teaching pragmatics?

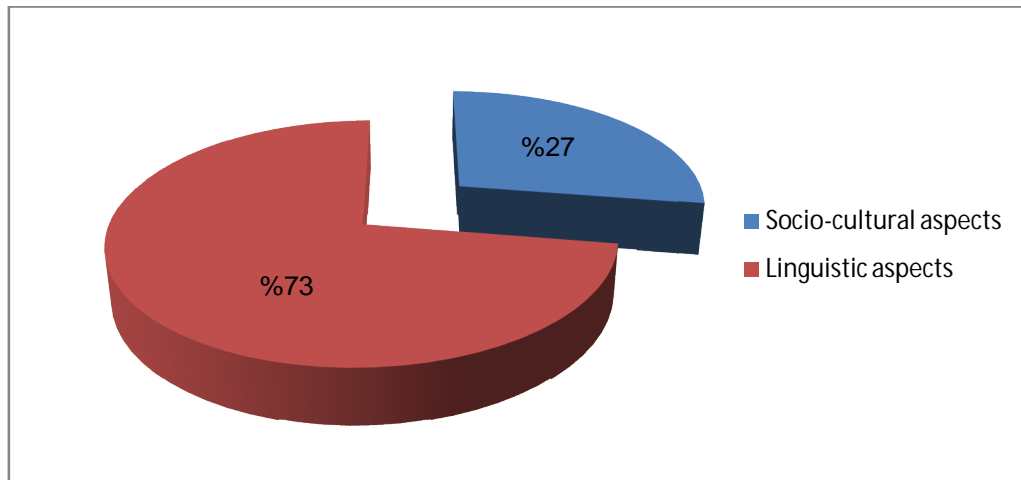


Diagram 15: The major type of language features that teachers use while teaching pragmatics

eleven (27%) students claim that socio-cultural aspects is the type that their teacher focus on more when teaching pragmatics, while the majority of students who represent twenty nine (73%) state that the major type of language features used is the linguistic aspect.

Item 16: In your opinion; Which is the crucial element that may influence the development of your pragmatic competency?

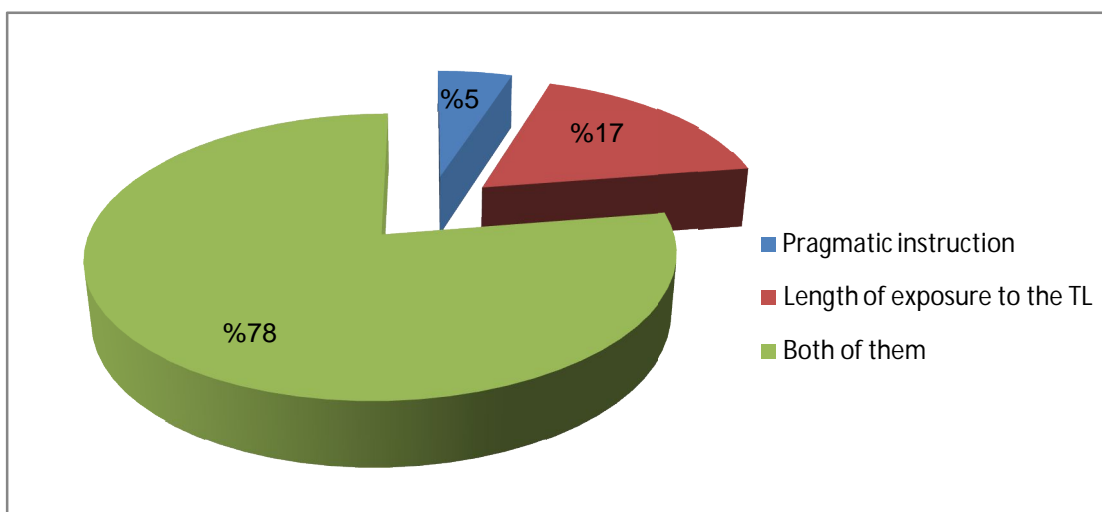


Diagram 16: Students' opinion towards the crucial element that influence the development of their pragmatic competency

In Diagram 16, only two (5%) students who give the importance to the pragmatic instruction for the development of their pragmatic competence, seven (17%) students who refer the development of their pragmatic competence to the length of exposure to the TL, whereas thirty one (78%) students include both of them.

Item 17: How often does your teacher of pragmatics provide you with genuine samples of discourse?

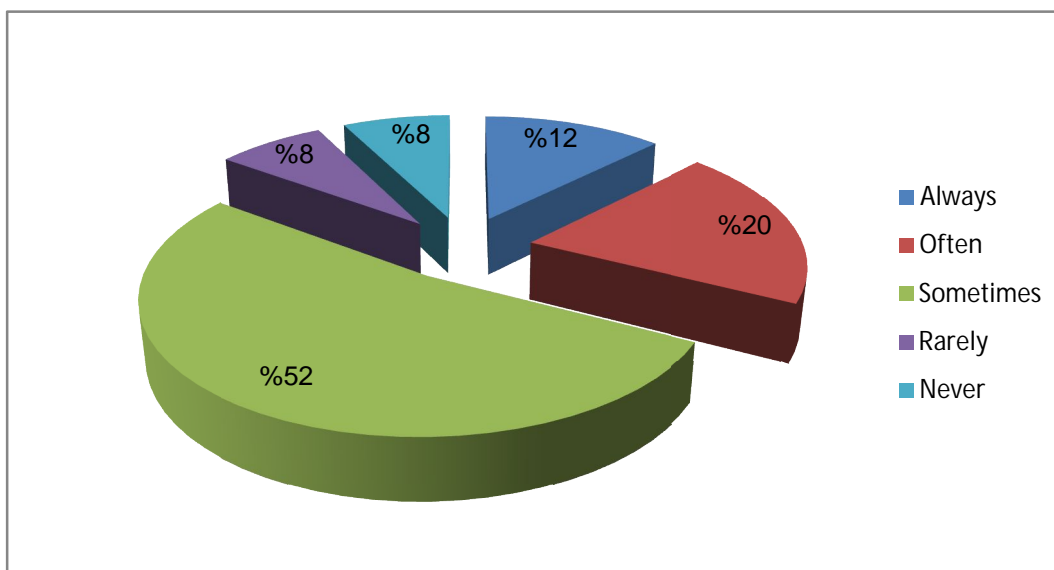


Diagram 17: Students' opinion about the frequency of using genuine samples of discourse in pragmatics

From Diagram 17, five students (12%) see that their teacher of pragmatics always provides genuine samples of discourse, eight students (20%) think that their teacher often uses genuine samples, twenty one students (52%) consider that their teacher sometimes uses authentic discourse, three students (8%) who state that their teacher rarely provide them with genuine samples of discourse, whereas three students (8%) who claim that their teacher of pragmatics never uses genuine samples of discourse.

Item 18: Does cultural awareness of the TL help learners to use language appropriately in accordance to the contextual factors?

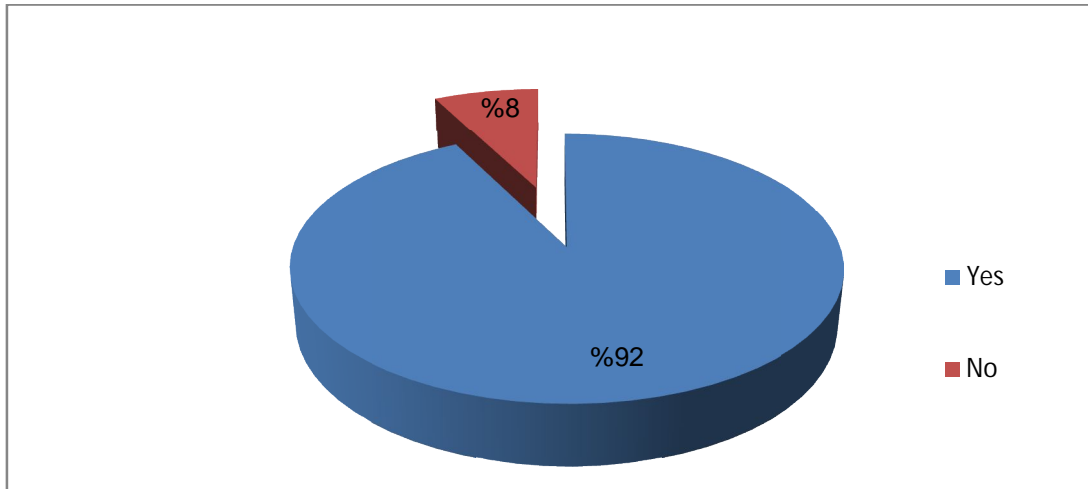


Diagram 18: Students' opinion about using language appropriately in accordance to the contextual factors through integrating cultural awareness of the TL

From the results above, the leading majority of students that represent thirty seven (92%) out of forty agree that cultural awareness of the TL helps learners to use language appropriately in accordance to the contextual factors, while only three students (8%) state the opposite.

Item 19: The development of the pragmatic competence through integrating cultural insights leads to avoid serious social implications

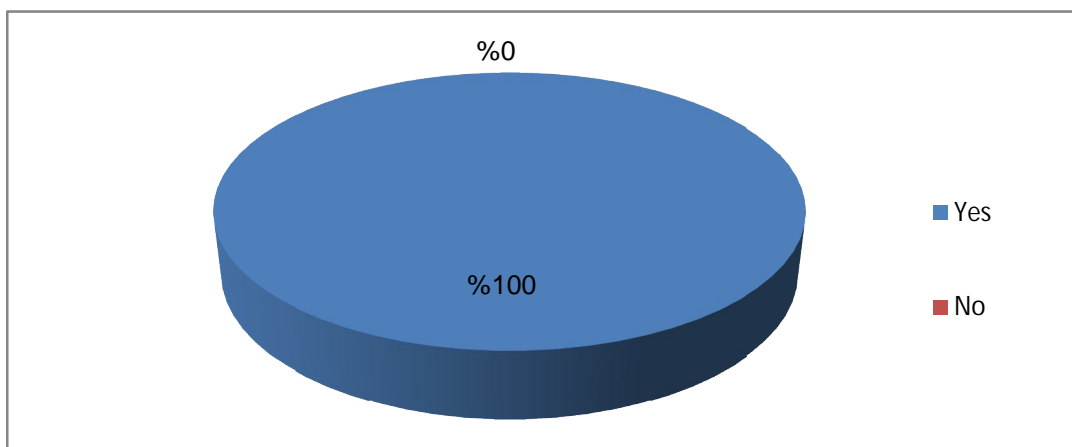


Diagram 19: Students' opinion towards avoiding serious social implications through the development of pragmatic competence

From Diagram 19, all the students (40) that embody 100% state that the development of pragmatic competence through integrating cultural insights leads to avoid serious social implications.

Students' justifications

Students' viewpoint is united towards the development of pragmatic competence through the integration of cultural dimension that plays in avoiding serious social implications. They justify their answer through their awareness about pragmatic competence in which they claim that having a strong pragmatic competence means avoiding misunderstanding and helps to better understand the native speakers, and hence, it prevents the breakdown of a conversation between the interlocutors. Students explain that the development of pragmatic competence through merging cultural insights helps the learners to acquire deeper TL culture and know how to use the language appropriately in order to speak with the natives properly, because pragmatics has a strong effect on the implied meaning of any text or discourse. Therefore, the development of pragmatic competence, according to students' justification, makes language learning more practical since the field of pragmatics deals with the study of everyday language, i.e. to study the language in use in order to obtain cultural background in almost all contexts; and that, it leads to avoid serious social implications.

3. 4. Discussions

The analysis of students' questionnaire stated that cultural awareness truly influence in developing foreign learners' pragmatic competence. In this investigation, we have collected data about background information of each student from the sample selected. The second section tends to illustrate the extent to which students know about the importance of cultural awareness that plays in the process of learning the TL. Developing pragmatic competence through integrating cultural insights that concerning the third section, aims to know students' viewpoints towards the relationship between TL culture and the development of pragmatic competence.

Section One: This section revealed that we are dealing with heterogeneous classes either in terms of gender or age. The leading majority of students are females, which detects a pure feminist learning. There is another criterion but with a great relevance in our work that concerns students' choice to study English language, which the overwhelming majority study the language by their own choice; this reflects the students' desire to study English for the sake of communication.

Section Two: This section is designed to introduce section three and collect certain general information without influencing students' opinions. First year master students are totally aware about the importance of incorporating target language culture in the FL classroom through integrating authentic materials in order to acquire cultural knowledge. Accordingly, the majority of students' opinions reveal that raising TL cultural awareness and giving it importance among EFL learners leads to effective communication; otherwise, it could be the reason to communication breakdowns.

Section Three: Although students' personal evaluation towards their linguistic competence is between good and average, they clearly declare that having only the linguistic competence is insufficient to communicate effectively in a social interaction. Since the field of pragmatics deals with the study of language in use, first year master students agree and to some extent with strong agreement that socio-cultural knowledge can improve foreign learners' pragmatic competence in which helps learners to use language appropriately in accordance to the contextual factors. For that reason, all the students' answers reveal that the development of pragmatic competence through integrating cultural insights leads to avoid serious social implications by claiming that the development of pragmatic competence leads to lessen the problem of misunderstanding and to prevent communication breakdowns.

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the questionnaire that had been used is to collect data about the significance of being aware of the target culture for the development of pragmatic competence. Students' responses revealed that integrating the socio-cultural aspect of the FL in the first year master classrooms, at the department of English at Biskra University, is not taken into consideration to improve their pragmatic competence.

The analysis of the students' questionnaire allowed us to highlight certain points that are of great relevance to our subject. Firstly, students' awareness about the importance of incorporating the TL culture in the FL classroom, and link it with effective communication. Secondly, students' responses agree that the linguistic proficiency alone is not sufficient for becoming eloquent or fluent speaker although they are advanced learners, but they are not sure about whether they have the

ability to communicate effectively with the native speakers. Last but not least, students have the consciousness about the development of pragmatic competence which cannot be realized without the help of cultural insights.

General Conclusion

The attempt along this research study was to shed light on the factor of integrating culture as one of the intrinsic factors that has a critical influence on the development of Master one students' pragmatic competence at Biskra University. The aim was to analyse the role of cultural awareness in the learning process, and especially, in developing learners' pragmatic aspect. Through literature reading, it has long been stressed that there is an interwoven connection between the communicative ability to be developed and the incorporation of TL culture. What implies that cultural dimensions have to be involved so to adequately master the pragmatic aspect of the language. Ideally, it is a rational and essential step, particularly, when considering the diversity of socio-cultural norms that should be known by the EFL learner. It is evident that Master one EFL students' performance reflects an advanced level of linguistic proficiency but in the absence of effective and appropriate communication. If this mirrors something, then it is the lack of exposure to the TL culture in the FL classroom, and the focus has been only devoted on linguistic skills rather than cultural competence which leads to inoperative communication. As agreed among many researchers, developing pragmatic competence demands socio-cultural insights that allow learners to practice the target language in its natural contexts.

At the beginning of this research, we hypothesized that the awareness of the cultural dimension affects students' pragmatic competence. A fact widely confirmed thanks to the obtained results from students' questionnaire, it has been proved that the leading majority of students agree with the proposed hypothesis, in which the more being exposed to the cultural aspects of the foreign language, the better

her/his level of pragmatic competence becomes. Thus, cultural awareness of the TL is the crucial element that helps learners to use language appropriately in accordance to the contextual factors.

Recommendations

Based on the literature review and taking into account students' opinions and views, collected via the questionnaire of first year Master students. Here are some suggestions for EFL learners and teachers on how to develop students' pragmatic competence that could lead to effective communication:

- EFL teachers should bear in mind that having only the linguistic competence is not enough for foreign learners to attain their educational, professional, and social goals.
- TL culture should be highly incorporated in the FL classrooms in order to recognize the variance between the culture of one's own and the culture of the other.
- Learners need to be taught routinized expressions and behaviors common in the FL community because it may be difficult, if not impossible, to become interactionally competent in the FL without knowing the nuances of the foreign language.
- Teacher's task, particularly in the field of pragmatics, is to provide learners with the tools that they need through engaging authentic materials when using genuine samples of discourse.
- EFL teachers should have good knowledge about the socio-cultural norms of the TL for the sake of effective communication for language learners.
- Length of exposure to the TL culture tends to be critical in influencing the development of pragmatic competence, this is what EFL teachers should take into consideration, in order to not face communication breakdowns.

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Appendix

Appendix

Students' questionnaire

Dear students:

This questionnaire aims to collect data about the role of integrating cultural dimensions in developing pragmatic competence among EFL learners. I would highly appreciate if you could take the time, and energy to share your experience by answering the questions below. Your answers are very important and will be of much help for the fulfillment of this work. Please, tick (√) the option that represents the answer which you see the best and give full answer if necessary.

N.B. We rely on your collaboration as far as your honesty.

Section One: Personal Background

1- Gender:

-Male

-Female

2- Age

3- Your choice to study English

- Your own choice

- Imposed

Section Two: Cultural Awareness

4- In your opinion. Foreign language culture is not integrated enough in the classroom.

- Yes

- No

If no, Please justify

.....

5- Do you think that incorporating culture in the FL classroom is important?

- Yes

- No

If yes, please justify

.....

6- Does your teacher use authentic materials to merge FL culture in the classroom?

- Yes

- No

7- What type of authentic materials do you prefer?

- Movies

- Newspapers

- Plays

- Poetry

- Magazines

- Cartoons

- Songs

- Other ways:

.....

8- Do you think that poor knowledge about the socio-cultural norms of the TL is the reason of learners' communication breakdowns?

- Yes

- No

Please, justify your answer.....

.....

9- Raising target language cultural awareness and giving it importance among EFL learners leads to effective communication

- Yes

- No

Please, Justify

.....

Section Three: Developing pragmatic competence

10- How do you assess your linguistic competence ?

- Good

- Average

- Poor

11- Do you think that having only the linguistic competence enables you to communicate effectively in a social interaction?

- Yes

- No

12- Do you think that you have the ability to communicate effectively with a native speaker?

- Yes
- No
- Somehow
- If no, please say why?
-

13- How often do you concentrate on the pragmatic aspects of the language?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

14- Do you agree that socio-cultural knowledge can improve foreign learners' pragmatic competence?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

15- Which type of language features does your teacher focus on more when teaching pragmatics?

- a. Socio-cultural aspects
- b. Linguistic aspects

16- In your opinion. Which is the crucial element that may influence the development of your pragmatic competency?

- a- Pragmatic instruction
- b- Length of exposure to the TL culture
- c- Both of them

17- How often does your teacher of pragmatics provide you with genuine samples of discourse?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

18- Does cultural awareness of the TL help learners to use language appropriately in accordance to the contextual factors?

- Yes
- No

19- The development of the pragmatic competence through integrating cultural insights leads to avoid serious social implications

- Yes

- No

Please, justify :

.....

Thank you for your cooperation

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إبراز الوعي الثقافي في تحسين الكفاءة العملية لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. على وجه التحديد، الإعتبار القاضي إلى ضرورة إدماج الأبعاد الثقافية في الكفاءة العملية لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. إن إمتلاك المعرفة اللسانية وحدها لا يمكن أن تعطي للمتعلمين الرؤى الحقيقية حول اللغة الأجنبية مالم تدمج معرفة العوامل الإجتماعية و الثقافية. و هذا يعني أنه لا يمكن إنكار أهمية تدريس الثقافة في قسم اللغة الأجنبية من أجل تطوير الكفاءة التواصلية لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية, و بالخصوص في الكفاءة العملية. تصبو هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في العلاقة بين دور الثقافة و تطور الكفاءة العملية في قسم اللغة الأجنبية من أجل معرفة السبب وراء تعطل التواصل. خلال هذه الأطروحة, فقد إفترضنا أن إدراك البعد الثقافي, الذي يلعب دورا فعالا في عملية تعلم اللغة الأجنبية, سيحسن الكفاءة الواقعية لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. هي محاولة لجعل الطلاب على دراية حول أهمية معرفة الثقافة المستهدفة نظرا لعجزهم على التواصل بشكل فعال وفقا للعوامل السياقية. أنجز هذا العمل من خلال الإستبيان الذي أدير لطلبة الماجستير السنة الأولى لشعبة اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بسكرة الذي بدوره يسلط الضوء على آرائهم و مواقفهم تجاه الدور الذي تلعبه الثقافة المستهدفة في تطوير الكفاءة التواصلية, و الأهم من ذلك, في تطوير الكفاءة العملية. بعد تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها و النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من الإستبيان, وصلنا لتأكيد فرضية هذا البحث وحاولنا طرح بعض التوصيات التربوية و كيفية إيجاد حلول مناسبة التي من شأنها تساعد المتعلمين لتطوير كفاءتهم العملية.