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**Abbas Laghrour University-Khenchela-
Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages**

Department of English



**Culture Learning as a Prerequisite towards English Language
Proficiency among Third Year English Students at Khenchela
University**

***Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
Master degree in Didactics of cultures and foreign languages***

Presented by :

- Saadi Aissa
- Rahmoune Ibtissam

supervisor :

Baghzou Sabrina

Board of Examiners:

Chairman: Mr. Guerza Omar

Examiner: Mr. Ounis Salim

University of Khenchela

University of Khenchela

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I

Abstract

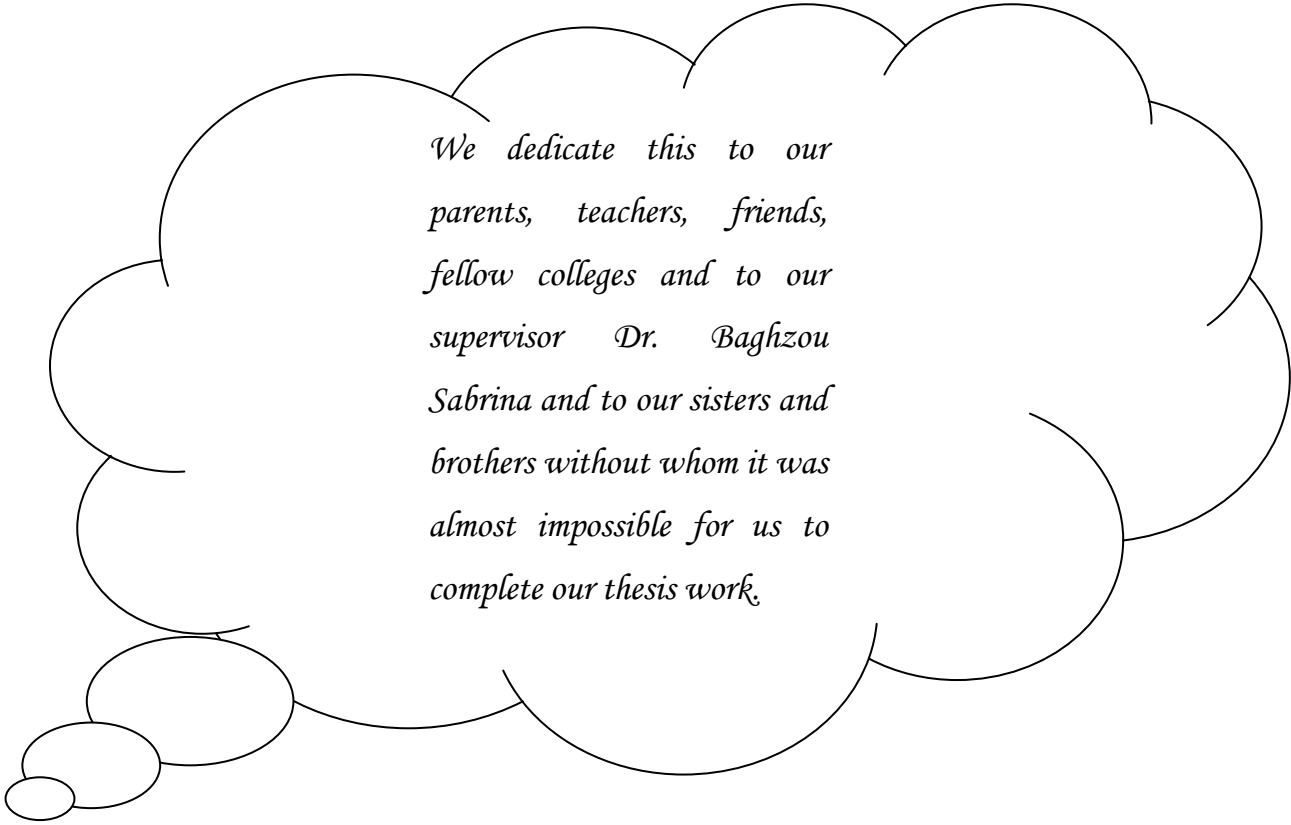
The current study aims at identifying how culture is being presented in the Algerian EFL classroom, consideration is given to the way the English language cultural component is treated. Along a descriptive study, the attempt was to shed light on the nature of the relation existing between students' English language proficiency linked to their cross-cultural awareness and whether they realize the real value of learning the culture of the target language as a prerequisite towards their English proficiency. Questionnaires' use on the population of both third year English students LMD at Khenchela university enrolled for the academic year 2013-2014, and all English teachers at the department as well, revealed, not only the tie aspect of the relation, but a "fact" latterly confirmed through the analyses of both questionnaires. On the basis of these findings, recommendations are suggested, in order to attract both teachers' and students' attention on the role of cultural performance for better understanding and language development, which is later on reflected on their English language proficiency achievement.

ملخص

يتعلق بحثنا هذا بكيفية تدريس الثقافة الأجنبية في قسم اللغات الأجنبية بالجزائر اخذين بعين الاعتبار طريقة التعامل مع الثقافة الانجليزية خاصة. من خلال دراستنا الوصفية، محاولتنا كانت دائما تسليط الضوء على العلاقة المتواجدة بين اتقان اللغة الإنجليزية باحترافية مقرونة بالوعي الثقافي بين اوساط الطلبة وبين ادراكهم الى أي مدى عليهم تعلم الثقافة الإنجليزية، كشرط مسبق لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية باحترافية. نموذجي الاستبيان المستعمل لكل من طلبة السنة الثالثة اختصاص لغة انجليزية لعام 2013-2014 وكل أساتذة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة خنشلة، قد بينا لنا عل حد سواء ليس فقط جانب من العلاقة المشار لها ولكنها حقيقة برهنت حديثا من خلال التحليل المقدم للاستبيانين. بعد ذلك توج بحثنا هذا باستخلاص جملة من الارشادات لاستدراج كل من اهتمام الطلبة والأساتذة على حد سواء لفهم أفضل ومعمق للجانب الثقافي للغات الأجنبية حين تدريسها في قسم اللغات الأجنبية والذي سيتوج وينعكس بذلك بإتقان أمثل للغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية.

II

DEDICATION



*We dedicate this to our
parents, teachers, friends,
fellow colleges and to our
supervisor Dr. Baghzou
Sabrina and to our sisters and
brothers without whom it was
almost impossible for us to
complete our thesis work.*

III

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We humbly extend our thanks to third year English students at Khenchela university enrolled for the year of 2013-2014 and all concerned persons who co-operated with us in this regard.

IV

List of Abbreviation:

C1: First culture

CF: Foreign culture

FL: Foreign language

SL: Second language

T C: Target culture

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

List of Figures

Figure n° 01: Elements of Culture by Tomalin and Stern and Stempleski.....12

Figure n° 02: Complex links between language and culture: a framework of
communication and learning.....39

VI

List of tables

Table n° 01: illustrating the difference between Big “C” and Small “c”11

The students’ questionnaire result analysis tables:

Table n° 02: Students’ gender.....47

Table n° 03: Students’ age.....48

Table n° 04: Students’ streaming.....48

Table n° 05: Students’ personal evaluation of their linguistic competence.....49

Table n° 06: students’ perceptions about being co-operative outside the classroom.....49

Table n° 07: Students’ perceptions about teachers’ curriculum.....50

Table n° 08: Responds showing the “teachers-students”, “students-teacher” rapport
and whether it is an obstacle for learners’ cultural development.....51

Table n° 09: Students perceptions concerning the importance of knowing about the
culture (s) of the English speaking people, their way (s) of life, and their
world view (s).....51

Table n° 10: Students’ perception whether reading novels and stories would improve
their level of English and their understanding of the target culture52

Table n° 11: Students’ perception about types of cultural content they have found
Inappropriate.....53

Table n° 12: Responses showing the presented cultural content.....53

Table n° 13: Students’ opinions about knowing the English language without knowing the English culture will not affect their communication with English community.....	54
---	----

The teachers’ questionnaire result analysis tables

Table n° 14: responds showing the teachers perceptions whether the cultural component would be considered as equal footing with other language elements.....	59
---	----

Table n° 15: responds concerning the relation between good mastery of language and cultural misunderstanding among students.....	59
---	----

Table n° 16: results showing how culture to be learned.....	60
--	----

Table n° 17: teachers’ evaluation of third year students English language proficiency..	60
--	----

Table n° 18: Evaluating third year students’ understanding when presenting lectures related to the target culture.....	61
---	----

Table n° 19: Teachers’ evaluation of students’ classroom interaction.....	62
--	----

Table n° 20: Teachers’ evaluation of students’ difficulties.....	63
---	----

Table n° 21: Teachers’ evaluation of students’ errors nature.....	64
--	----

Table n° 22: Teachers ’evaluations of students’ questions kinds.....	64
---	----

Table n° 23: Teachers’ suggestions for an easier approach to help third year English students to enhance their language proficiency and raise their cultural awareness.	65
---	----

VII

Glossary

Communicative competence: The ability to use the language effectively for communication.

Competence: Defined by Chomsky as ‘the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language’.

Connotation: The associations, positive or negative feeling that an item may evoke ex: Flower.

Linguistic competence: A broad term used to describe the totality of a given individual's language ability.

Performance: The actual use of language in a concrete situation.

Productive Knowledge: Means being able to use it in speaking and writing.

VIII

Content	page
Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	II
Abstract.....	III
List of abbreviations.....	IV
List of figures.....	V
List of tables.....	VI
Glossary.....	VII

Introduction

1. General introduction.....	01
2. Statement of the problem.....	03
3. The hypothesis.....	03
4. Background and significance of the study.....	04
5. Definition of terms	05
6. Limitations of the study.....	05
7. Basic assumption.....	06
8. Objectives of the study.....	06
9. Methodology and design.....	06
a- choice of the method.....	06
b- population	07
10. Data collection tools.....	07
11. Piloting.....	08
12. Data analyses	08

CHAPTER ONE

Section one

Aspects of Culture Teaching/Learning a Foreign Language

Introduction.....	09
I.1.Definition of Culture	10
I.2.The Areas of Culture.....	12
I.2.1.The Importance of Teaching Achievement Culture.....	13
I.2.1.1.The Objectives of Teaching Achievement Culture.....	13
I.2.2.The Importance of Teaching Behaviour Culture (small “c “).....	14
I.2.3.The concepts Belonging to the Third Area of Culture.....	15
I.3.Goals and Principles for Teaching Culture.....	15
I.4. Language and Culture.....	17
I.4.1.The English Language and Culture.....	18
I.4.2.The Importance of Culture in Communication.....	19
I.5.Culture as Perceived by Teachers.....	21
I.5.1.The Role of Teachers in FL Classroom.....	23
I.6.The Importance of Language Culture Teaching/Learning.....	24
I.7.To What Extant Culture Should Be Learned/Taught.....	26
Conclusion.....	28

Section Two

English Language Culture Teaching Implication

Introduction.....	29
II.1.English Language Teaching in Algeria and its Effect on Learners' Language Proficiency.....	30
II.2.Language Proficiency and Linguistic Competence.....	33
II.3.English Language Culture Teaching in Algeria.....	34
II.4.Problems of Teaching Culture.....	35
II.4.1.Problems Encountered When teaching Culture.....	35
II.4.1.1.The Culture to Learn Culture.....	35
II.4.1.2.The Culture to Teach Culture.....	36
II.4.1.3.The Linguistic Obstacle.....	37
II.5.Problems Caused by Teaching Culture.....	39
II.6.Aspects of Meaning Needed in Language Comprehension and production.....	41
Conclusion.....	43

CHAPTER TWO

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Introduction.....	44
III.1. Part one students' questionnaire	
III.1.1. Description of students' questionnaire	45
III.1.2. Administration of the students' questionnaire.....	46
III.1.3. Data Analyses.....	47
III.1.4. Findings.....	55
III.2. Part two: teachers Questionnaire	
III.2.1. Description of teachers' questionnaire	57
III.2.2. Administration of teachers' questionnaire.....	57
III.2.3. Data analysis.....	58
III.2.4. Findings.....	65
.	
Conclusion	67
Recommendations.....	68
13. General conclusion.....	71
Bibliography.....	VIII
Appendices.....	IX

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

1. General introduction.....	01
2. Statement of the problem.....	03
3. The hypothesis.....	03
4. Background and significance of the study.....	04
5. Definition of terms	05
6. Limitations of the study.....	05
7. Basic assumption.....	06
8. Objectives of the study.....	06
9. Methodology and design.....	06
a- choice of the method.....	06
b- population	07
10. Data collection tools.....	07
11. Piloting.....	08
12. Data analyses	08

1. Introduction:

English language teaching/learning has increasingly gained relevant portion in the educational systems all over the globe during the last decades. Linguists and anthropologists have long recognized that the forms and uses of a given language reflect the cultural values of the society in which the language is spoken. Linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language (Krasner, 1999). Culture performs an important role as an enhancer of the target language. Hence, to speak correctly the foreign, the foreign language learner has firstly to know about this culture. To make students aware of cultural features reflected in the language, teachers can make those cultural features an explicit topic in discussion in relation to the linguistic forms being studied. Not adequately mastered yet, the language, would represent a new impediment to the foreign language learner, who would face not only a set of information he is not familiar with, but has to process them using a language he handles to a very limited extent

The case of third year students in the department of English at Khenchela University, students seem meeting difficulties to use their English language proficiency, the unique mediator between them and the cultural aspect is what the curriculum offers them. In the first chapter by its two sections constituting the literature review, the interest was firstly to shed light on the historical background of culture inclusion in the foreign language classroom, and then to denote its aim and importance in the improvement and development of learners' language proficiency.

In the second section we will be highlighting culture teaching basic requirements as far as problems mainly related to foreign learners' English language proficiency in general, and with reference to the Algerian context in particular. Thirdly, we will be tackling the main problem in terms of fieldwork as it is in the next elements.

2. Statement of the problem:

Foreign language learning has traditionally centered primarily on learning the actual language skills: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. However, as a language and culture where the language is spoken are deeply imbedded in each other. Its main concern is to introduce the foreign language learners, in our case English language learners, to the target language by tackling different cultural aspects, introduced in the curriculum. Starting from the third year at English department, students even at this level seem encountering many difficulties in speaking English safely, which is at this particular level not sufficiently developed yet to meet their needs, either in terms of receptive requirements or for the productive ones. Consequently, it impedes not only their understanding and absorption of the cultural information, but exceeds to work out their predisposition and involvement to speak actually the target language accurately. The fact that pushed us to look for the issue so to attract both teachers and students' attention on the seriousness of this problem generally not attributed due to its importance of this to other elements like the linguistic content, for instance.

3. Hypothesis:

We hypothesize that third year English students are not aware about cultural based differences.

4. Significance and background of the study:

Foreign language learning is foreign culture learning, and, in one form or another, culture has even implicitly, been taught in the foreign language classroom –if for different reasons. What is debatable, though, is why it meant by the term “culture” and how it is integrated into language and teaching. Kramsch’s (1993) Keen observation should not go unnoticed:

culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, talked on so speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. it 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 sense of the world around them (p. 1)

We believe that this study will help both students and teachers to recognize how would they act towards the target culture and rise their awareness when it comes time to learn EFL. Through the study, learners may have the ability to get a thorough understanding of how language and culture are imbedded together where learning the target culture can be a key element to enhance their English language proficiency.

5. Definition of terms:

Language proficiency

-The possession of the fundamental linguistic information derived from enough practice and experience to be able, understand, and use language.

-The linguistic competence necessary to performance.

(Cambridge Dictionary of American English, 2004).

Prerequisite

A previously required, necessary as preliminary to any proposed effect or end; as, prerequisite conditions of success. (Webster's revised Unabridged Dictionary, 1996, 1998).

6. Limitation of the study:

Along this study, we will be limited to the analysis of third year students' English language proficiency role on their perspectives towards the target culture. We will be focusing on isolating the linguistic element to put much care to other involved factors in the learning process like cultural behaviour, teaching method, or students' motivation for instance. This limitation is explained in terms of students' complaints and questions, mainly connected to the expression of meaning of language. A phenomenon less apparent in higher levels, master degree for instance. The fact that explains our choice of the third year level.

7. Basic assumption:

We assume that third year English students are not adequately prepared in terms of speaking accurate English due to the lack of cultural awareness towards the target culture.

8. Objectives of the study:

1- To investigate students' awareness towards learning the target culture in terms of better English speaking.

2 - To help teacher to be more aware and focused on teaching culture in parallel with its current language so that students would become familiar with the target languages' dimensions.

4 -To motivate teachers to set cultural basics during the three years.

9. Methodology and design:**a- Choice of the method:**

In order to draw the link between third year English students' language proficiency and the target culture and their achievement in understanding what the connection between the two is, we opted for the use of the descriptive method, which will permit us to identify this relation and moreover to collect the need data about the subject under investigation. An experimental study would be of no usefulness if we consider that nothing new would be tested and that we consider will only report and analyze conditions

of the current situation and thereby to clarify its status. The research findings may provide a theoretical framework for future researches that may opt the experimental one.

b- Population:

Both students' and teachers', of the department of English at Khenchela university, attitudes towards the subject under investigation are of relevance at this study, that is why we will deal with both populations.

Students' concerned by our research are third year students of English at Khenchela University enrolled for the academic year 2013 – 2014. Their exact number is 239, divided into 5 groups varying from 42 to 59 we will be choosing the whole population of third year English student (information obtained from the administration). The teachers concerned in our study are those who had already taught third year and those who are actually teaching it at Khenchela University; in regard to their small number (ten), sampling will be of no need. Since what we point at, is the teachers' perception of the problem under investigation.

Students 'sample: Since the objective of the study is to get students' perceptions' of the problem, so the questionnaires will be delivered to the chosen sample.

10. Data collection:

In order to bring more consistency to the study we opted for the simple approach by using only questionnaires as an instrument of gathering the needed data.

Questionnaires: In order to obtain the perception of the students and the teachers, a questionnaire is designed for both populations; with little difference in terms of vocabulary, (students' questionnaire uses a simple vocabulary). The questionnaire is used as the main source of data and seems the most appropriate tool for many considerations like the large number of the population under study, its guarantee of the respondents' anonymity, and the short period if compared to the interview for instance.

The questionnaire will be directly administered to the teachers and the students of the department of English at Khenchela University by the end of the academic year 2013 – 2014, which corresponds to the period of six month of the study.(three months is better)

11. Piloting:

Piloting the questionnaire was of a great relevance since it permitted us to bring important corrections namely in students' questionnaire. By piloting it on a randomly selected population of 51 third year students, which denotes to the number of the first group (information obtained from the administration) most of them expressed a difficulty in understanding some utterances like proficiency, and cross-cultural awareness which was adequate to what is being offered in our study.

12. Data analyses:

All obtained data will be interpreted and presented in tables; statically analyzed to be interpreted. Answers are going to be represented in terms of numbers and percentages.

Literature Review

CHAPTER ONE

Section one

Aspects of Culture Teaching/Learning a Foreign Language

Introduction.....	09
I.1.Definition of Culture	10
I.2.The Areas of Culture.....	12
I.2.1.The Importance of Teaching Achievement Culture.....	13
I.2.1.1.The Objectives of Teaching Achievement Culture.....	13
I.2.2.The Importance of Teaching Behaviour Culture (small “c “).....	14
I.2.3.The concepts Belonging to the Third Area of Culture.....	15
I.3.Goals and Principles for Teaching Culture.....	15
I.4. Language and Culture.....	17
I.4.1.The English Language and Culture.....	18
I.4.2.The Importance of Culture in Communication.....	19
I.5.Culture as Perceived by Teachers.....	21
I.5.1.The Role of Teachers in FL Classroom.....	23
I.6.The Importance of Language Culture Teaching/Learning.....	24
I.7.To What Extant Culture Should Be Learned/Taught.....	26
Conclusion.....	28

Introduction

In the last decades, EFL teaching/ learning increased, and becoming uncontested international language. It became the worlds' language of communication a need to learn it with all of its cultural aspects is crucial.

Both language and culture are deeply integrated and no way the can be separated, without losing their essence and significance. Through language, communication would be possible; without culture, communication will take its right place.

Teaching a foreign language is a process of transmission of the target culture as well, educators recognized that it is crucial to integrate cultural teaching with its relative foreign language English in particular. In this section, we tend to explore the cultural aspects in the students' language development.

I.1.Difinition of culture:

Culture is not an easy concept to define, for it reflects what one thinks of oneself and how one is seen by others. Actually, the definition of this concept has developed in time. Nemni (1992) and Street (1993) declared “This is not an easy question to answer, particularly in an increasingly international world” (cited in Clouston, 2001, p. 3). In fact there are two reasons for this. Firstly, for a long time “Culture” was much a debate among linguists, ethnographers, anthropologists, scholars, educators, and social scientists. Thus, there is unlimited number of interpretations that reflect different theories for understanding and valuing human activities. Each one defines it according to his field and discipline. Hinkel (1999) emphasizes its complexity by stating that there are “as many definitions of culture as there are fields of inquiry into human societies, groups, systems, behaviours and activities”. In its broadest meaning, Tylor (1871) mentioned that culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” Additionally, culture is regarded as the collective programming of the mind (Hofstede, 1984), ways of people (Lado, 1986), a way of life (Brown, 2000), the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts (Bates & Plog, 1990; Damen, 1987).

According to Peterson (2004), there exist two different levels of culture, namely visible and invisible cultures. Culture is like an iceberg and the tip of the iceberg is the visible culture, which can be observed easily. Architecture, geography, gestures, and clothing are categorized as visible elements of culture. On the other hand, the bottom of

the iceberg is regarded as invisible culture and it covers beliefs, society's norms, opinions, preferences or tastes, which are relatively difficult to observe. Peterson (2004) draws a chart showing the interaction between big "C", small 'c' 'visible' and 'invisible' cultures as below:

	Big 'C' culture Classic or grand themes	Small 'c' culture Minor or common themes
Invisible Culture "Bottom of the iceberg"	EXAMPLES: Core values attitudes or beliefs, society's norms, legal foundations, assumption, history, cognitive process	EXAMPLES: Popular issues, opinion, viewpoint, preferences or tastes, certain knowledge (trivia, fact)
Visible Culture "Tip of the iceberg"	EXAMPLES: Architecture ,geography, classic literature, president or political figures, classical music	EXAMPLES: Gestures, body posture, use of space, clothing style, food, hobbies, music, artwork

Table n° 01: illustrating the difference between Big "C" and Small "C" By

Fulya Kurtuluş Arslan and Abdullah Arslan (2012).

Secondly, as its "broad concept" (Seelye 1984, cited in Hall, 2000, p. 1) "complex Clouston, 1997, p. 4), and "that needs to be handled carefully" (Kerr, 2004, p. 1). There is another relevant element, that contributes largely in the almost impossibility of obtaining a unique definition of culture, which is its "dynamic nature" (Thanassoulas, 2001, p. 8) and through time culture changes and being perceived and interpreted as Harklaw advocates: "Culture is an elusive construct that shifts constantly over time. And

according to who is perceiving and interpreting it.” (1999, cited in Hall 2001, p. 4). Similarly, culture is being transmitted through language, which reflects the relationship resides between the two. Kramsch (1993, p. 1) advocates this relation and stresses the fact that “One of the major ways in which culture manifests itself is through language. It is because of that mediatory role of language that culture becomes the concern of the language teacher ...” She also adds to that:

... culture is often seen as mere information conveyed by the language, not as a feature of language itself, [...]. If, however, language is seen as a social practice; culture becomes the very core of language teaching ...

(Ibid, p. 8)

Peterson and Coltrane (2004, p. 1) share the same thought:

“... language is not only part of how we define culture, it also reflects culture”.

I.2. The Areas of Culture:

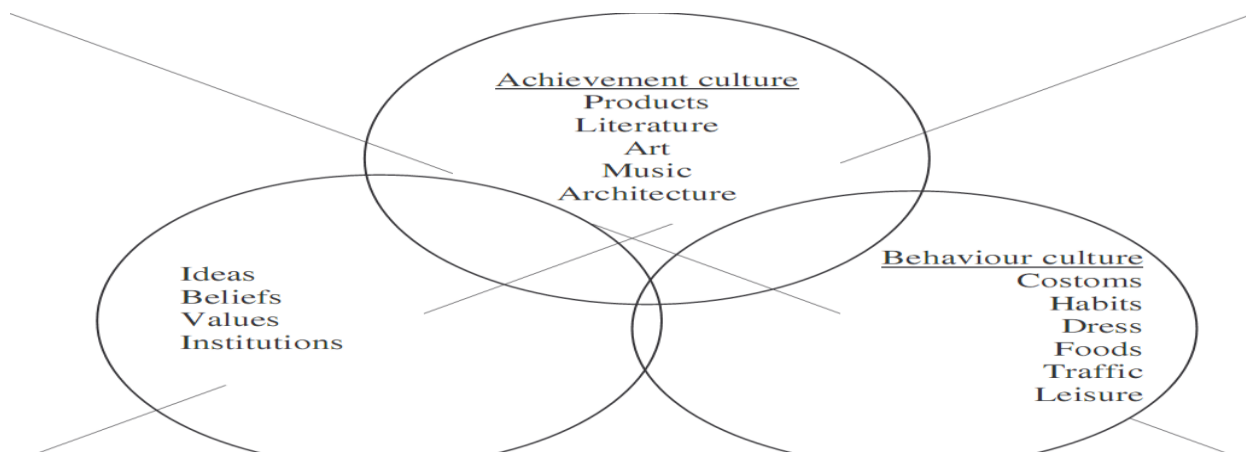


Figure n° 01: Elements of Culture by Tomalin and Stern and Stempleski (1993, p. 3)

I.2.1.The Importance of Teaching Achievement Culture:

Though many experts criticize focusing on factual information, there indeed exists a basic repertoire of information necessary for the comprehension of most cultural concepts' (Lafayette, 1997, p. 122). Language is a means of multicultural education, which is part of global education and as holistic approach is the characteristic feature of communicative language teaching, it is very important for language teachers to develop the students' personalities, their global, factual knowledge about the target culture (Sarsody, Bencze, poor, Vadnay, 2006, p. 85).

I.2.1.1.The Objectives of teaching Achievement Culture:

The objectives of teaching 'big C' are classified to its basic fields, which are the following:

1. recognize and explain major geographical monuments
2. recognize and explain major historical events
3. recognize and explain major institutions (political, administrative, religious, etc.)
4. recognize and explain major 'artistic monuments' (architecture, arts, literature, etc.)

The words recognize and explain are emphasized not accidentally. Recognize means to familiarize students with the given patterns, explain means to help students recognize the cultural connotations rooted in the background history and be able to locate cultural products of the target countries. We need to emphasize the fact that a constant

comparison involving the students' own culture and the target culture should be planned and maintained in teaching 'big C' as well as in integrating 'small c' (Sarsody, Bencze, poor, Vadnay, 2006, p. 85)

I.2.2.The importance of teaching behaviour culture ('small c'):

It exists mainly two reasons to put mach emphases on teaching achievement behaviour more than teaching achievement culture. It is "the invisible culture" (Peterson, 2004) "small C" that students face in target country, that is why we have to provide them with the taste of the lifestyle of the target nation. The second reason is to improve language learners' familiarization of behaviour culture in terms of surviving in the foreign country. Many useful readings can be found on history or literature but it is the language class where students can learn about the patterns of the pragmatic domain of culture. While getting familiar with the cultures of the target language students will be more aware of their own, Algerian behaviour culture. Let us mention the topic 'housing'. Students can compare the British 'terraced houses' to Algerian 'housing estates' and American 'apartment' to British 'flats' and they will learn the fact that the 'first floor' in America is the same as the 'ground floor' in Great Britain. The students can speak about the so-called 'pigeon holes' in Japan and the 'two-storey houses' in Great Britain. In behaviour culture, students will learn what the British mean by lunch, double-Decker, cider, or public school. (Sarsody, Bencze, poor, Vadnay, 2006, p. 85).

I.2.3.The concepts belonging to the third area of culture:

The concepts belonging to the third area of culture will have an impact on both large areas of culture, on ‘big C’ and ‘small c’. Religious beliefs will be reflected in pieces of music, in literature and in music. The same religious belief will give explanation to the eating habits of a nation, e.g. Muslims and Jews do not eat pork.

I.3.Goals and Principles for Teaching Culture:

Foreign language teaching should enhance students’ connotations towards the target culture, and to develop the “ability” to communicate effectively and appropriately in various situations. Seelye claims that: “All students develop cultural understanding, attitudes and performance skills needed to function appropriately within a segment in another society and to communicate with people socialized in that culture” (seelye 1993, p. 29)

Chastain (1988, p. 299- 300) adds that, in language classes where intercultural understanding is one of the goals, students become more aware of their own culture and more knowledge about the foreign culture. In such classes, students learn to recognize cultural patterns and behaviours and communication and function within the parameters with those new expectation

Seelye goes on to say (ibid, p. 30) that large goals should be described in more detail to be useful. He suggests six instructional goals, which he summarizes as follows: the teachers should “help the student to develop interest in who in the target culture did

what, where, when and why” (the first five goals) and “some sophistication in evaluating statements about the culture and finding out more about it” (the sixth goal).

Tomalin and Stempliski (1993, p. 7- 8) come up with new modified goals of cultural instruction of seelye's. According to them, the teaching of culture should help students:

- To develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally conditioned behaviours;
- To develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the way in which people speak and behave;
- To become more aware of conventional behaviour in common situations in the target culture;
- To increase their awareness of the cultural connotation of words and phrases in the target language;
- To develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalization about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence ;
- To develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture;
- To stimulate students intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.

Stern (1992), who has an insight about other scholars' goals, concludes that all goals, despite the differences in terminology, stress, the cognitive aspects, that is: “knowledge

about the target culture, awareness of its characteristics and differences between the target culture and the learner's own culture". A "research-minded outlook" is also important that means "willingness to find out, to analyze, synthesize and generalize" (p. 212- 215).

In order to attain the above-mentioned goals culture in foreign language classes should be presented in a systematic and organized way it should not be "incidental to the real business of language teaching" (Byram, 1989, p. 3), neither could it be treated as "an interesting sidelight that is included periodically to provide a change of pace from language studied" (Chastain, 1988, p. 305). Cultural studies should have "a rightful place" (Byram, 1989, p. 3) in foreign language teaching.

I.4. Language and Culture:

Language and Culture are strongly connected to each other, in which language is a way of expressing our thoughts and understanding to the existing world. This reality was stressed by many scholars and researchers mainly when it concerns language teaching / learning. The intimate interweaving of language and culture was pointed out in instances, as "human culture without language is unthinkable." (Kluckhohn, 1944, p. 26; in Damen, op.cit, p. 84). Accordingly, researchers attempted to describe it as nearly as possible to the best each one according to his tempted domain.

Alptekin (1993, p. 136, cited in Taibi, 2002, p. 20), claims that "language and culture are inextricably tied". Even the famous linguist Edward Sapir, who in the 1920's

(cited in Hinkel, 1999, p. 2) stated that “language and the culture of its speakers cannot be analyzed in isolation”, sooner contradicted his first statement by 1921 and firmly claimed, that “language, race and culture are not necessarily correlated” (1921, p. 215, cited in Thanassoulas, 2001, p. 8). To finally admit, later on that “language and our thought-grooves are inextricably interrelated, are, in a sense, one and the same” (ibid, p. 217-218).

By the same concern of defining the connection between language and culture, Kramsch (1991, p. 217, cited in Thanassoulas, 2001, p. 7) affirms that “culture and language are inseparable and constitute a single universe or domain of experience”. Thanassoulas (2001) on her side claims that “Language is intertwined with culture [...]. In the past, language and culture were lumped together as if they automatically implied each other” (p. 8).

I.4.1. The English Language and Culture:

With respect to the English language, some professionals refer to what they call 'Neutral' English (Hill, 1967), 'Nuclear' English (Quirk, 1981), i.e., 'a culturally unmarked' version of English "which would serve as a universal medium of communication" (Saleemi, 1985, p. 16). Along these lines, Chew (1991) argues for an IAL, namely, an international auxiliary language. She believes that "We need a worldview of English, which recognizes that it no longer belongs exclusively to its native speakers. We must realize that when any language becomes international in character, it cannot be bound to any culture. It cannot be owned by its native speakers" (p. 43). She

states further that "the English language has to be denationalized "(p. 44). For Hasman (2000), "English is divesting itself of its political and cultural connotations as more people realized that English is not the property of only a few countries. Instead, it is a vehicle that is used globally and will lead to more opportunities. It belongs to whoever uses it for whatever purpose or need" (p. 4). In other words, English became as an international language of communication among nations, it has become, at the same time, a language that belongs to no particular culture, and shifted from its authentic connotations and specificities towards common international culture.

English as many other languages changes constantly, according to people's communicative needs. Language is being affected by numerous extra-linguistic factors (social, cultural, political, educational) interacting in a complex way. Widdowson (1982; in Saleemi, op. cit, p. 17) puts it so aptly that " a language stripped down to its bare essentials as a resource for impersonal reference is deprived at the same time of its potential for creativity and change, and the humanity of its users is diminished accordingly ... [Such a language] ceases to function as a natural language". Cultural norms and conventions of a society are so deeply 'ingrained' in its language that one can hardly see how they could be 'extracted' or 'uprooted' from it .

I.4.2 The importance of culture in communication:

Jiang (op.cit) compares communication to swimming, where language is the swimming skill and culture is water. Communicative competence is a target in itself in as far as teaching foreign languages in general and English language in particular are

concerned. As Crystal (op. cit, p. 48) puts in interest that: “In different times and places we may be obliged, permitted, encouraged, or even forbidden to communicate; and the quality or quantity of the language we use will be subject to social evaluation and sanction". Communications is not only bounded by the transmission and exchanging “Information” but exceeds beyond the literal meaning of words. Thus, culture is the best and only mediator which meets these conditions considering that, it assumes a vital role since it“...enhances or even inhibits communication” (Thanassoulas, 2001, p. 3). By providing a background and significance to items principally because “People do not communicate by expressing isolated notion or fulfilling isolated functions any more than they do so by uttering isolated sentence patterns” (Widdowson, 1978, p. 1). Moreover and even before the acquiring of the abilities of producing and so to communicate, it involves other specific implications and further needs since it implies firstly understanding which calls in its turn for an immediate link with culture as specified by Kramersch (1993):

After all, communication requires understanding, and understanding requires stepping into the shoes of the foreigner and sifting her cultural baggage, while always’ putting [the target] culture in relation with one’s own . (p. 205)

English language in this case meets the same charges, Pulverness (2002) describes it “In teaching English for communication and neglecting culture , we may actually be

giving learners access to an impoverished means of communication, effective for survival and routine transactions, but lacking much of the cultural resonance that makes it fully meaningful for native speakers”(p. 2). Wu and Stephens (1991, p. 29, Taibi, 2002, p. 28) hold that most of the students' errors “stems from their lack of cross-cultural awareness rather than weaknesses in knowledge of language”. Stagitch (1998, p. 73, cited Ibid) assumes that “in the teaching of a foreign language, understanding the culture context is the most effective way to learn real meaning and to read, write , and speak competency ”.

I.5. Culture as Perceived by Teachers:

On a more specific level, educators opted for defining culture in respect to two distinct aspects but with a great relevance in teaching .Though the diversified manners of naming both, they all converge in the same sense. Whether, it is pointed out the formal/ deep culture by Brooks (cited in Peck 1984, p. 2), the high/ low culture by Singhal (1998, p. 3), the achievement/behaviour culture of Tomalin & Stempleski (1993, cited in Pulverness, 2003, p. 2) or the MLA/BBV for Hall (2001, p. 1);all refer to what is agreed on the ‘capital C culture’ (the Olympic or “Big –c”) and ‘small c culture’ (the Hearthstone or “little –c”) (Ibid) .Both are prominent in the foreign language classroom.

When the capital C culture, reflects the ‘humanities’ Kramsch (1994, p. 8) and all the material productions like architecture, technology and even politics, including Brook’s MLA, which are Music, Literature and Arts .The ‘small c culture’ however, concerns the other facet of humans’ lifestyles and every day occupations that Brooks again, qualifies as BBV Beliefs, behaviour and Values, that represent for him everything

in human life. Which signifies for Nostrand “the ground of meaning” (1989, p. 51 cited in Kramsh, 1994, p. 1).

For a further precision, Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990, p. 3- 4, cited in Clouston, 1997, p. 4) suggest another classification that comprises four ‘senses’, including the ‘capital C and small c cultures’, but with a slight difference in nomination. In that, the first is referred to as the ‘aesthetic sense’, and by which people “ tend to develop the highest faculties, the imagination, the sense of beauty and intellectual comprehension ” according to Rivers (1969, p. 263, cited in Syed, 1988, p. 45, cited in Taibi, 2002, p. 23). Whereas Hall (2001, p. 3) qualifies it as the ‘best in human life’, and moreover he precise that it is restricted to the elitists .The ‘sociological sense’ which equals the “small c” culture refers to family organization and nature such customs, interpersonal relation, institutions and all what a society is built on.

In respect to teaching, these two types are intended, each a part, for a specific learning stage as outlined by Taibi (2002, p. 23). That is the ‘small c culture’ is ‘much suitable for beginners and intermediate foreign /second language learners, while the ‘capital C culture’ would suit advanced learners “who wish to explore the society’s contributions to the world knowledge and civilization in greater depth and breadth” (Chastain, op. cit, p. 388; Ibid).

At any rate, and to conclude what had been said about culture, though the myriad of definitions attributed to the term , either by teachers or anthropologists, culture resides

in the fabric of human's lives and regulate them at any turn .What is more important now is to identify what the relation binding language and culture is about.

I.5.1.The Role of Teachers in FL Classroom:

Foreign language teachers are an important link between target culture and foreign language learners, they should be carrying a clear idea about the foreign culture, it is important for them to make a comparison between their own culture and the target one. Teachers ought to present and introduce the target culture to their learners. This may change their thoughts and perspectives to both the world and the cultural identity as members of a given society. In fact, the role of the teachers is to face implications and provide them with the practical and theoretical support (Byram et al, 1994). Similarly, Valdes (1986) proclaimed that the effectiveness of teaching process results once the teacher is aware of the nature of culture he is teaching, offering learners the right explanations and interpretations of the target values besides the explanations of tenses, grammar rules, and other aspects. Therefore, adding culture knowledge to the learners would make the lesson more interesting and easier to understand.

For instance, successful teachers start their classes with a five minute warm up discussing effectively the differences existing between the native culture and the target one (Byram et al, 1994). Kramsch (1993) believes that teachers have responsibility, but, it mustn't be limited to teach students only what to say or what to have to be appropriate in different situations. Rather it is his task to open wide spaces for students to be creative and stimulates their critical thinking.

However, teachers' knowledge and experience differ from one to another and the target culture is based on a limited personal experience rather than systematic description and analysis, as well as educational systems. For example, Britain's foreign language teachers spend one academic year engaging with the foreign culture course. In the contradictory, Danish teachers are not obliged to involve themselves or spend any period in the foreign culture courses (Byram et al, 1994).

Textbooks are being used to a large extent by foreign language teachers. Teachers are free in selecting the teaching materials for their classrooms. Usually, alternative materials are being chosen when textbooks do not meet their expectations. Hence the target culture should be well presented by teachers (Sercu & Bandura, 2005). In the same context, Byram et al (1994) the role of teachers in which foreign language teachers should be foreign culture teachers, having the ability to experience and analyse both the home and the target culture.

I.6.The Importance of Language Culture Teaching/ Learning:

With the rise of pedagogues' awareness about the importance of teaching culture in the target language, educators showed their concerns about learners. Such recognition then cultivated awareness in SL/FL teaching experts that language and culture are inseparable. Peck (1998), for instance, emphasizes that "Without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete" (p. 1). This awareness later

developed the perspective that teaching and learning culture in a SL/FL program are inevitable.

Although language teachers realize the crucial role of integrating culture in the language learning process, what all foreign language teachers do is focus on grammar and words, without explaining the cultural meaning, the meaning which is not understood (Heusinkveld, 1997). It is also pointed out that learning a language in isolation of its cultural roots prevents people from integrating into society and socializing in that culture (Seelye, 1997). Therefore, only in the context of culture, the grammar and words acquire value and meaning, which will give a way to communication/interaction with different cultures (Lee, 1997). Kramsch's (1993) observation seems to summarize what is being said previously. She states:

Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, talked on so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It 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. (p. 1).

I.7. To what extent culture should be taught/ learned:

A foreign or a second language may be to a certain extent taught /learned independently and rinse of any cultural element as assumed by Pulverness (2003) “...language can somehow stand alone and be taught/learned as a value-free symbolic system...” (p. 3). However, the use of ‘somehow’ in this statement is not arbitrary, but intended for specific purposes. Which reveals, that there is no absolutism, no supreme assurance or an ideal guarantee in the perfect separation of language and culture mainly when it comes to teaching, and so falls in the sense of what Valdes (1920, p. 20, cited in Baker, 2003, p. 3) explained concerning the evidence that language teaching is indeed culture teaching since whatever the linguistic element to introduce embodies a hidden cultural value.

As there is a need to learn a foreign language, also there is a need to deal with its culture adequately. In the language classroom culture remains an unavoidable and prominent parcel of the foreign language learning process as Thanassoulas (2001) admits “At any rate, foreign language learning is foreign culture learning and in one form or another, culture has even implicitly being taught in the foreign language classroom – If for different reasons”(p. 2). What is still debatable, however, is the amount of culture to be introduced into the language classroom mainly in relation to the other components of the curriculum for instance grammar, syntax and vocabulary.

Consequently, and for exploiting culture to the best benefit of learner, and to make it the most profitable in order to facilitate their language mastery and “enhance the learning experience” (Valdes, 1920, p. 20, cit in Baker, 2003, p. 9); culture teaching should neither exceed to the detriment of the other elements of the language learning. “It should begin on the first day of class and should continue every day after that” (Peck, 1984, p. 7). In respect to that the linguistic side neither will be ignored, nor to be restricted to a set of facts or reduced to few lessons as advocated by Peterson and Coltrane (2003) “...the cultural associated with a language cannot be learned in a few lessons...” (p. 3). But instead a balance should be kept and an equilibrium must be maintained between all constituents as claimed by Baker (2003: 4) “...Culture would surely be best approached in the same kind a systematic way as other aspects of language, such as grammar and vocabulary”, and supported by Littelwood who advocates the value of culture learning but still keeps language proficiency “as the overall aim of communicative competence.” (Cited in Byram, Morgan et al., 1994, p. 6, cited in Thanassoulas, 2001, p. 4).

Conclusion

Before knowing the role of language when studying culture, we want firstly clarify the role of culture teaching in foreign language learners' linguistic improvement, therefore its importance. Along our reading, two points we consider of relevance have to be discussed.

Culture teaching had been always a debatable and attractive subject in the foreign language classroom, which captivates the researchers' attention though the difference of their fields. This variety offered us the possibility to find out a diversified and a rich literature to refer to on one side, and on the other, caused the dilemma of selection, as what point to mention and which to omit though their importance.

The second point, is related to the aim lying behind culture teaching itself, which exceeds the generally apparent foreign language learners' progress, to cover a more humanistic area, as to raise learners' awareness by bringing different cultures as closer as possible, to erase the geographical boundaries and judgments so to lead to empathy, the acceptance of differences and similarities of people. This aim is claimed, mainly by the Western world but not perceived from the same perspective in the East. A fact, which we tend to investigate in the second section specifying culture teaching in Algeria.

Section Two

English Language Culture Teaching Implication

Introduction.....	29
II.1.English Language Teaching in Algeria and its Effect on Learners' Language Proficiency.....	30
II.2.Language Proficiency and Linguistic Competence.....	33
II.3.English Language Culture Teaching in Algeria.....	34
II.4.Problems of Teaching Culture.....	35
II.4.1.Problems Encountered When teaching Culture.....	35
II.4.1.1.The Culture to Learn Culture.....	35
II.4.1.2.The Culture to Teach Culture.....	36
II.4.1.3.The Linguistic Obstacle.....	37
II.5.Problems Caused by Teaching Culture.....	39
II.6.Aspects of Meaning Needed in Language Comprehension and production.....	41
Conclusion.....	43

Introduction:

When English is learned as a foreign language in countries such as Algeria, and where the proficiency in English is essential for full learners, acquiring the language involves much more than merely learning English phonology, syntax, and vocabulary, for it must be able to serve most of the same functions that English does for the native speaker, medium of instruction, expression of concepts and feelings, participation in the nature of scope of culture. In this section, we tend to highlight the most relevant problems, caused when linking foreign language with its relative culture.

As far as the study's concern is third year kenchela University students' English language proficiency, it is obvious if not necessary to primarily privilege their English language learning background and invest the status of the latter (English Language) in Algeria and its presence in their ' direct environment.

II.1.English Language Teaching in Algeria and its Effects on Learners' Language

Proficiency:

Due to the economical strength and growth of the English language speaking countries, English language has an indisputable status as the first language all over the world as noticed by Backer (2003) "English has become firmly established as the international language of the present time"(p. 2). English language become not only the language of music, literature, politics, technology, and /or sciences, but also imposes itself in every single field of human beings' daily life. Nowadays, English has become a part of our daily life ...? We refer to someone who doesn't actually know the basis of the English language at least to read a drug's instruction, or how to make use of household electrical appliances. In the few past decades, the definition of illiteracy was restricted only to those who do not know how to write and read, but to those persons who doesn't know about English basic rules.

In the shade of globalization a challenging economical world started to emerge shaping a new thinking of how to communicate. Where and even though the existing of the linguistic confusion specifying the Algerian society, many imposed questions like what is the real native language of the country either Arabic or Tamazighth? And or what is the real status of the French language in the Algerians 'daily speeches? In the case of Algeria, the English language found its way to Algerian people in the early 60's and 70's mainly in respect to the economical rising tendency of the country as being recognized in the British Council Profile on ELT in Algeria 1975 "Algeria's interests in the field of

petroleum, natural gas, iron, steel, ... orientates her increasingly to the English speaking west..." (Cited in Khelloufi, 1983, p. 56, cited in Taibi, 2001, p. 7).

Therefore, English and French language remained and still in a perpetual competition in respect to three points:

- Unlike the French, which is considered as a first foreign language, English has the status of a second foreign language.
- English is latterly introduced to the Algerian learners during their schooling in the 8th A.F (Année Fondamentale / Fundamental schooling) in the middle school before and 1st after the reform, the reform comparing to French which is inserted in the 4th A.F in the primary school (in the 2nd year after the reform).
- Though its rank as a foreign language, the French language is part of the Algerian learners' daily life since they use it in their ordinary speech and it is present in their direct environment in media like newspapers or on TV, and even in the official speeches of the Algerian official, Whereas, English is restricted to the classroom use only as a school subject.

Algerian students' English language gaps covers also the vocabulary area, if we consider that the English language vocabulary include '988968' words until 21st of mars of the year 2006, according to the Centre of Foreign Languages Control in San Diego, (Elchourouk, 2006, p. 17). Furthermore, a recent research performed by the same institution denotes that any individual possessing 3.000 English words may be in the possibility to fluently handle the language which comes to support what had been

previously advocated by Laufer (1992, cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002, p. 259) "Knowing a minimum of about 3.000 words was required for effective reading at the university level. Whereas knowing 5.000 words indicated likely academic success". In regard to all these researches, many questions arise: Do Algerian students' possess the 3000 words required at University? And does the offered period of learning English permit such number of words learning?

II.2. Language Proficiency and Linguistic Competence:

Linguistic competence, referred to as "a person's knowledge of grammar, lexis and sound patterns" (Edunet International, 1996, p. 22), is useful when teachers are interested by accuracy. Though its importance, linguistic competence alone cannot lead to fluency required when the concern is to convey and receive messages "Linguistic competence is very important, but on its own it isn't enough to make you a fluent speaker and writer or a competent listener and reader" (ibid). Seen from this perspective and linked to the current study, students may possess an important linguistic competence that they struggled hard to obtain, however, are not fluent when it comes to make use of it in real communicative situations like to absorb information of British civilization course.

Brown (1996), and in order to explain linguistic competence's deficiency when it concerns fluency, linked it to performance and suggests "the relationship between linguistic competence and performance is most usefully perceived as one of continual, mutual modification of one by other" (P. 185). Lyons (Ibid) on his turn and by defining

linguistic competence related performance to learners' familiarity with activities that require the transmission of meaning:

The knowledge which enables a speaker to use language, is treated as only minimally dependent on the initial system, and as maximally dependent on experience, including practice in receptive and productive linguistic performance

(cited in Brown & Williams 1996, p. 185)

II.3.English language culture teaching in Algeria:

As the uncontested language in the world, English language had become a part of the Algerian curriculum and as if it is known it has a dominant position in science, technology; diplomacy and international organization. Though, the importance that English language holds as a foreign language it remained considered as “the pursuit of colonialism...contributing the decay of the minority languages and culture in many parts of the world” as proclaimed by Pulverness (2003, p. 1). Thus, the English language teaching had been purposely restricted to the transmission of the linguistic code devoid of any cultural aspect. For some middle and secondary schools teachers, textbooks are considered as the only source to present their lectures, some expectations may be cited as elements slightly referring to the British and American cultures like the motivation of reaction, sports, some famous people, some artifacts...ect.

For an English Bachelor of Arts (licence), at the university, adults are conscious and more aware of the strong link binding both the foreign language to be learned, and the target community's culture, either British or American as the natural social context of the language in a way they highly show a curiosity and interest to the studying of the target culture as asserted by Byram and Fleming (1998, p. 46) “ studies of the motivation of university language learners... invariably show the importance of an interest in the foreign people and their culture” . Hence, courses of British and American civilizations are included in the curriculum to bring university students as closest as possible to the target society. Studying the target culture from different perspectives, can simply lead to more consistency so that students improve and develop their communicative skills in terms of cross-cultural understanding.

II.4.Problems of Teaching Culture:

In spite of the clear lines binding language and culture, the unquestionable importance of the latter and its role in the foreign language learning, yet to concretely insert it, remains a complex and a hard task to perform. As far as being itself an entity of different interconnected elements, language is one of its important constituent by the way of being the vehicle transmitting it; but it simultaneously encounter much hindrance by the same way of engendering others. Hence, culture teaching problems may be represented into two categories: Problems encountered when teaching culture and problems caused by culture teaching

II.4.1.Problems Encountered When Teaching Culture:

In respect to the required period to settle them, we may consider problems encountered when teaching culture in the foreign language classroom as long term problems and short term problems.

II4.1.1The Culture to Learn Culture:

When learners are learning a new foreign language it is obvious for them that the culture is also integrated somehow. Whatever the aspect through which is presented for them. As claimed by Allwright (1996) "...culture and language are an integral part of the language acquisition process. One cannot learn a language without its culture" (p. 112).

The newness as a factor, hence effects learners' predispositions to learn the target language, nevertheless being itself a matter of time and learners habit, simultaneously it carry on the solution since it is universally accepted "Everything new is strange until it becomes familiar and taken for granted" (Jordan and Roberts ,cited in Byram and Fleming, 1998, p. 76). That's why; we ranged this element as a short term problem, so all what teachers have to do, is to be patient and help their learners to adapt with the new cultural course. And as explained by Byram (1998):

It is common place to think of foreign language teaching as bringing a target culture to learners. This is culture as content .The aim is that students should acquire knowledge of a target culture. (p. 245).

II.4.1.2.The Culture to Teach Culture:

There is a strong link between language and its culture, in which we can never deny, so that each of both can transmit the other. Even though it may not be overtly embodied in the foreign language classroom, since culture is conveyed through the linguistic code itself. More importantly and once again, culture teaching "doubles the usefulness of the lesson in adding another dimension and making it more interesting therefore easier to learn" (Valdes, 1986, p. 121, cited in Taibi, 2001, p. 29). Consequently, many scholars, Risarger among them claims its utility in the language classroom and confirm that " Language teaching should offer insights into the culture and the civilization of the Countries where the language is spoken" (cited in Byram and Flemming, 1998, p. 242).

Teachers always have to maintain that level of awareness and should be carefully handled in regard to learners' predisposition and preparations to absorb the appropriate information needed to enhance their cross-cultural understanding when learning a foreign language. Hence, learners may promote their assimilation, and their curiosity towards the target community which reduces the psychological and or the sociological effects arise by introducing the foreign culture into the foreign language classroom like the misunderstanding ,stereotyping or the cultural shock generally generated from the meeting of C1 with TC, either C2 or FC. In this respect, Byram and Fleming (1998) stress the language teacher's role as an instructor and as a guide to help learners in their building of cultural awareness "Language learners need to go beyond the acquisition of a

linguistic system and the language teacher need to find new ways to help them do so”(p. 242).

II.4.1.3.The Linguistic Obstacle:

Many educators claim that the cultural learning's value is very important in the foreign language classroom. They stress the fact that whatever the aspect under which it is introduced, either direct or indirect, explicit or implicit; it cannot but only positively affect and enhance learners' language knowledge “Nowadays, some researchers claim that cultural learning positively affects students' linguistic success in foreign language learning. Others state that culture can be used as an instrument in the process of communication when culturally determined” (Baker, 2003, p. 2). Therefore, the purpose is to include the cultural aspects in the early stages and the few first moments of the foreign language learning as claimed by Peck (1984) when responding to the question: responding to the question: “when should the study of culture begin?...the study of culture should begin in the very first day and should continue everyday there after”(p. 2).

Another question arises, as what amount of foreign language learners possess to meet the needs of cultural material, in which stimulates another question to appear for us: how much time do they require to learn the necessary language competence? In this respect Brumfit (1976) advice to language teachers who has to ask themselves when incorporating the cultural course “How much value meaning students' may use and how much signification meaning students' may possess to understand the content”(p. 118).

In this sense culture teaching in the language classroom is highly difficult task to perform since it calls for a combination of highly connected elements as perfectly sum up in Jin's and Corttazzi 's figure (1996, cited in Byram and Flemming, 1998) where they assume that :

In learning about target cultures, students need a set of terms : a language to talk about culture ... It may include folk linguistic terms used with varying degrees of understanding.

(pp. 99- 100)

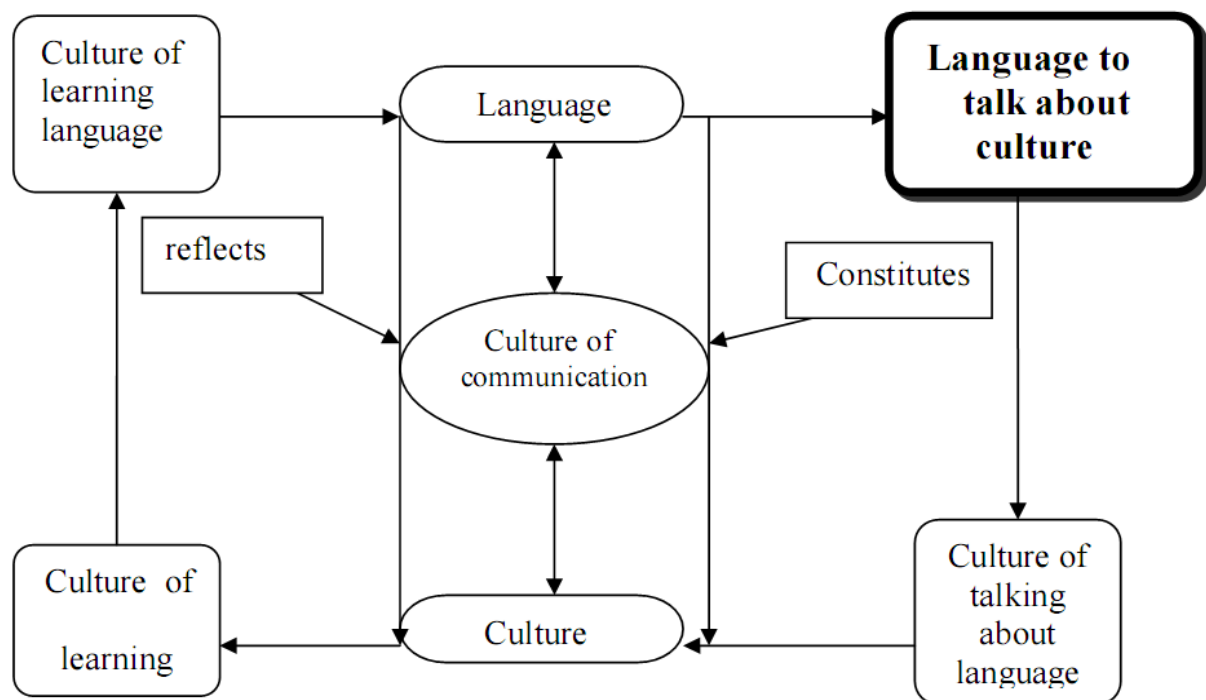


Figure n° 02: Complex links between language and culture: a framework of communication and learning (Byram & Flemming, 1998, p. 99).

Cultural information should be perfectly transmitted through its relevant language, language teacher should always do when teaching a foreign language is “to provide them with some kind of met a language in order to talk about culture” (Straub, 1999, p. 5, cited in Thanassoulas, 2001, p. 13).

II.5.Problems Caused by Teaching Culture:

In any language classroom students’ needs and their level as well should be put under consideration. Culture teaching has to be carefully handled as far as it creates in the language learner and many questions should be given most attention as what to teach and what effects it may have on learners?

Many teachers fail to recognize the interface between language and culture. The literature shows that teachers experience certain problems while teaching, which results in either not dealing extensively with culture or ignoring it completely (Sercu, 2005).

One of the problems that teachers may face is the overcrowded curriculum. The study of culture requires time; therefore, many teachers feel they cannot spare time for teaching foreign language culture in an already overcrowded curriculum. They think that students will be exposed to cultural material later after they have mastered the basic grammar and vocabulary of the target language. However, this ‘later’ never seems to come for most students. Another problem is that teachers may fear of not having sufficient knowledge on the target culture. That is, teachers are afraid to teach culture because they think that they do not know enough about it, and that their role is limited to expose students to facts only. A third problem is students’ negative attitudes. Students often assume target culture

phenomena consisting of new patterns of behavior; thus, they try to understand the target culture within only their own framework of native culture. Işık (2003, 2004) pinpoints a similar concern for foreign language teaching as students may put barriers between their own culture and the target culture by rejecting all the values associated with the target culture. When cultural phenomena differ from what students expect, they may react negatively, characterizing the target culture as “strange”. The fourth problem is the lack of adequate training on behalf of teachers. Teachers may not have been adequately trained in the teaching of culture and do not have suitable strategies and clear goals that would help them to create a framework for organizing instructions around cultural themes. As it is also proposed in the literature, the development of such framework depends on teachers’ own definitions of culture from which much of the difficulty arises. Another problem is that teachers may not know how to measure cross cultural competence and changes in students’ attitudes as a result of culture teaching. Byram and Kramsch (2008) also state that teachers who teach language as culture often fear of the stereotypes related to the target culture, and they have concerns related to students’ ability to deduce meanings from what they read and how they interact.

II.6.Aspects of Meaning Needed in Language Comprehension and Production:

According to many linguists, language comprehension is the most important process in language teaching and should be attributed due consideration as claimed by Nattinger (1988, cited in Jordan, 1997, p. 149) “Language comprehension should precede language production in language teaching”. Language comprehension implies three

aspects of meaning which are denotation, connotation and appropriateness. What is generally noticed is that foreign language learners may handle language meanings in terms of denotation with more ease if compared to connotation or appropriateness. This may be explained in relation to cultural differences binding the different social groups, the natural environment of the language. As such, what may be appropriate, positive and adequate in a specific social context within a community may be perceived and interpreted in the opposite sense by members of another group. This comes to confirm language culture teaching role and reject the conviction assuming that learn ability of foreign languages is predicated on the fact that all humans share the same code so that they can easily understand each other once mastering it.

Nevertheless, to use this code accurately and appropriately, they must go beyond forms and comes under functions. Thus teaching a language implies “teaching people how to use somebody’ else’s linguistic code in somebody else’s cultural context” (Kramsh, 1994, p. 3). Consequently, in order to understand content courses, for instance, learners should rely on their language proficiency so to receive meanings in the appropriate way .In this respect O'Malley and Chemot (1990) identified learners’ language proficiency as an obstacle in language comprehension “We would add that the difficulty of the task depends upon the proficiency of the learner” (p. 37). The more proficient may a learner be, the most easier he may understand the new vocabulary presented to him and hence assimilating the content of the course he is introduced to.

Conclusion:

The attempt in this section , was to clarify that language and culture teaching is a long way from the study of language as a system or the acquisition of skills , to fulfill minimal communication needs which have been the two dominant approaches to language teaching. It would of course will liberate the disadvantages from social injustice .There is nonetheless a potential for language teaching which can contribute to learners' better understanding of others and themselves ,of other cultures and societies, their own, and that is a worthwhile purpose for any teacher ,university, and education system.

Field work

CHAPTER TWO

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Introduction.....	44
III.1. Part one students' questionnaire	
III.1.1. Description of students' questionnaire	45
III.1.2. Administration of the students' questionnaire.....	46
III.1.3. Data Analyses.....	47
III.1.4. Findings.....	55
III.2. Part two: teachers Questionnaire	
III.2.1. Description of teachers' questionnaire	57
III.2.2. Administration of teachers' questionnaire.....	57
III.2.3. Data analysis.....	58
III.2.4. Findings.....	65
Conclusion	67

Introduction:

In order to identify third year students' problems towards the target culture, and to check their attitudes and perceptions of the subject under study, mainly related to their English language proficiency a questionnaires are being designed to gain the needed data. Piloting the questionnaire was of a great relevance since it brings consistency and accuracy to the study. As a first step we will be analyzing students' questionnaires then we move to reveal teachers' results both outcome will be translated into tables and percentages.

III.1. Part one: Students' questionnaire

III.1.1. Description of students' questionnaire:

An introducing paragraph precedes the 16 items. All items are spread out of four sections, each one is aimed to provide with a specific set of information but with a relative aim, organized in a deductive order from general facts to more precise and closed elements. The following is a brief description of each section:

Section one: General information (01→03)

It contains three items designed to obtain general information about the students 'age, sex, the learning background as far as their secondary school studying background.

Section two: Students' general evaluation and classroom interaction (04→08)

This second section, which consists of 5 questions, is meant to provide with students' general opinions and evaluations of their personal English language competence, and mainly their classroom interactional in relation to their language proficiency as well.

Section three:

As opposite to the second section, this section is purposely designed to provide with some information closely connected to the students' perspectives towards the target culture. The attempt behind addressing general questions in this section is to test if whether third year students are aware about the cultural based differences when learning English as a foreign language so to confirm or reject our hypothesis concerning its difficulty or linguistic requirements without directing the participants' opinions.

Section four:

The last item offers students a free space to give what they think best for a better achievement in their cross-cultural background all linked to students' language proficiency.

III.1.2. Administration of the questionnaire:

Problems met when distributing the students' questionnaire, completely disappeared when we introduced it. we observed that some questions were totally ambiguous, but we succeeded to explain what they didn't understood, lesson shyness, reassure them and make feel more confident specially when insisting on the fact that they are free in expressing their opinions and points of view and all what will be said. We choose the session Psycho pedagogy with Mr. Guerza for the purpose of meeting a good number of three groups, but we only met a few of them because it was just after the exams' period. As mentioned earlier third year students official number according to the attendance sheets designed for teachers' needs, obtained from the administration of the department of English, is 239 students officially enrolled for the academic year 2013-2014. Students are listed according to the alphabetic order, divided out of five groups. Each group contains an important number varying from 49 to 52

By introducing the questionnaire we insisted on the fact that students are free to use the language it suits them best so they may express themselves in English, French, or Arabic concerning questions that need full statements since the important thing is to obtain their answers. To avoid any misunderstanding or misinterpretation, we provided them only with the literal explanation of the items to not influence them.

III.1.3. Data Analyses:

Data will be treated in tables, and information will be presented and analysed according to the order of items in the questionnaire and not according to the obtained rate (not from high to low or the inverse).

When administering the questionnaire, students attaining the lecture of Psychopedagogy were 75 out of 150 in the first delivered collection of questionnaires where 3 groups had to be there. The complete number of the retrieved questionnaires was 97 as final number because of the absence of the majority of students.

Section one: (01-04)

Item one: gender

Possibilities	Male	Female	No answer	Total
Number	13	84	00	97
Percentages	13.40%	86.60%	00%	100%

Table n° 2: students' gender

It is clear from the above table that the leading majority are females with 84 (86.60%) which largely accedes males' number representing only 13 (13.40%).

Item two: age

Age	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	No answer	Total
Number	10	38	29	12	04	02	01	01	00	97
percentage	10.30 %	39.18 %	29.9 %	12.37 %	4.12 %	2.06 %	1.03 %	1.03 %	00%	100%

Table n°03: Students age

According to table n° 02 students age varies between 22 to 27 years this reflects a great interest to study the English language by different categories of people

Item three: streaming

Streaming	Literature	Scientific	Technical	Total
Number	58	36	03	97
Percentage	59.79%	37.12%	3.09%	100%

Table n°04: Students' streaming

From the obtained results it is clear that the majority of students representing 58 (59.79%) come from the literary stream, and only 36 (37.12%) students studied in scientific stream, and the rest with 03 (3.09%) students came from the technical stream. This fact considerably effects students' language proficiency either positively or

negatively. If we consider that English language time allocation in the literary stream is more important compared to the scientific one.

Section two: (04-08)

Item four: How do you evaluate your English language competence?

Possibilities	Very satisfying	Satisfying	Not satisfying	No answer	Total
Number	06	65	25	01	97
Percentage	6.09%	67.01%	25.77%	1.03%	100%

Table n°05: Students' personal evaluation of their linguistic competence

65 (67.01%) students out of 97 claim that they are satisfied by their language competence unlike 25 (25.77%) students who stat that they are not satisfied, whereas a very small group of 6 (6.19%) students only seem very satisfied.

Item five: Is there some sort of co operation among students outside the classroom in terms of tackling and solving different issues in English?

Possibilities	Yes	No	No answer	Total
Number	40	55	02	97
Percentage	41.24%	56.70%	2.06%	100%

Table n° 06: students' perceptions about being co-operative outside the classroom.

55 (56.70%) students see that there is no co-operation outside the classroom whereas 14 (41.24%) students assume the opposite.

Item six: which activities that are being offered by teachers they see most effective to promote students English language proficiency?

Through students' perspectives analysing novels and making oral presentation are among the most used activities that are being offered besides

Item seven: Does the teachers' curriculum provide further needed information which can help promoting your English communicative competence?

Possibilities	Yes	No	No answer	Total
Number	50	46	01	97
Percentage	51.55%	47.42%	1.03%	100%

Table n° 07: Students' perceptions about teachers' curriculum.

From the above table n° 07 50 (51.55%) students agreed that teachers' curriculum provide students with the needed information which can promotes student's English communicative competence which 46 (47.41%) said the opposite.

Item eight: Does the "teacher-student", "student-teacher" rapport would become an obstacle for developing your linguistic and cultural aspects towards the target culture?

Possibilities	Yes	No	No answer	Total
Number	25	70	02	97
Percentage	25.78%	72.16%	2.06%	100%

Table n ° 08: Responds showing the “teachers-students”, “students-teacher” rapport and whether it is an obstacle for learners’ cultural development.

The Majority of students representing 70 (72.16%) see that the relationship among students and teachers wouldn’t be an obstacle for their cultural achievement, while others 25 (25.78%) students said it is.

Section three: (09-15)

Item nine: Do you think it is important to know about the culture (s) of the English speaking people, their way (s) of life, the world view (s)?

Possibilities	Yes	No	No answer	Total
Number	92	05	00	97
Percentage	94.85%	5.15%	00%	100%

Table n ° 09: Students perceptions concerning the importance of knowing about the culture (s) of the English speaking people, their way (s) of life, and their world view (s).

It is clear from the above table n° 09 that 92 students representing (94.85%) out of 97 agreed that it is highly important to know about the English speaking people culture, their way (s) of life, and their world view(s) ; whereas the rest representing 05 (5.05%) students disagree.

Item ten: Do you think that reading novels and stories related to the target culture would improve your level of English and your understanding to the other culture?

Possibilities	Yes	No	No answer	Total
Number	94	03	00	97
Percentage	96.91%	3.09%	00%	100%

Table n° 10: Students' perception whether reading novels and stories would improve their level of English and their understanding of the target culture.

94 (96.91%) students agreed that reading novels and stories related to the target culture do really improve their English level and their understanding towards the target culture as well, whereas 3 (3.09%) students assume the opposite.

Item eleven: Are there types of the cultural content that you have found culturally inappropriate?

Possibilities	Yes	No	No answer	Total
Number	34	58	05	97
Percentages	35.05%	59.80%	5.15%	100%

Table n°11: Students' perception about types of cultural content they have found

Inappropriate.

According to the table n° 11, 34 (35.05%) students claimed: there are types of the cultural content that they have found culturally “inappropriate”, while 58 (59.80%) students do not think so.

Item n° 12: Is the cultural content presented?

Possibilities	a	b	c	d	e	No answer	Total
Number	32	09	25	05	19	07	97
Percentage	32.99%	9.28%	25.77%	5.15%	19.59%	7.22%	100%

Table n° 12: Responses showing the presented cultural content.

The table n° 12, indicates that 32.99% (32) of the students said that the cultural contents are presented realistically, while 9.28% (09) of the students responded that they are presented accurately 25.77% (25) of the students reputed that they are presented up to date and only 5.15% (05) of the students have the opinion that they are free of stereotypes and bias, whereas 19.59% (19) of the students think that it is presented comprehensively.

Item thirteen: Knowing the English language without knowing the English culture will not affect your communication with English people?

Possibilities	Yes	No	No answer	Total
Number	49	48	00	97
Percentage	50.52%	49.48%	00%	100%

Table n° 13: students' perception about whether knowing the English language without knowing its relevant culture would affect their communicative competence.

Item fourteen: Which module (s) you see that it is truly helpful to promote your English language proficiency?

From students statements most of them share the same idea that oral expression and written expression are two modules in which they help promoting students' English language proficiency. Whereas others mentioned Literature and civilization modules as the only way to enhance their English language proficiency, where is fewer of them stated that phonetics and linguistics could be the key element towards proficiency.

Item fifteen: What kind of materials is (are) being used by teachers to enhance your cross-cultural awareness towards the target culture?

Students stated that there are several materials that are being used by teachers to put students inside the picture for the purpose of rising their cross-cultural awareness

towards the target culture, from those materials: using projection presentations and analyzing novels and books, or using videos related to the target community.

Section four: students' suggestions.

Item sixteen: What do you suggest for an easier understanding and best achievement in your cross-cultural background?

Students' perceptions were not clear few of them expressed what they have in their mind, they claimed that adding other cultural aspects of the target culture like arts, the people way of living, traditions..., to lectures may appear very handy. Using authentic material as well were one of the major mentioned suggestions. Facilitating the language and use a simple one which suits their level, and having teachers which they have the capacity to differentiate between different target culture backgrounds.

III.1.4. Findings:

Results are going to be presented by sections each section reveals a certain information concerning the topic under investigation.

Section one: This section revealed that we are dealing with different ages, the leading majority is formed by females and that Rezig (2001-2002: 77) explains in relation to a pure "feminist learning». There is another criterion but with a great relevance in our work which concerns students' diversity of background learning, which reflects a mixed English language abilities.

Section two: This section is designed to collect certain general information without influencing students' opinions. Third year students admit that they are satisfied with their linguistic competence, and the majority of them have no co-operation among each other outside the classroom, in the same time they agreed that teachers' curriculum provides students with the needed information which can promote their English communicative competence, and they point out that analyzing novels are the most effective activity to promote their English language proficiency, and the relationship among teachers and students won't be an obstacle for their cultural achievement.

Section three: In this section, students clearly declare that it is important to know about culture of the English speaking people, their way of life, the world view also, considering the type of the cultural content appropriate and presented realistically, and up to date. Third year students claim that the use of authentic materials to facilitate the language, and insist to teach modules like compared culture which reflect an awareness about the importance of foreign language culture and foreign language teaching, and the tie relation linking both culture and language.

Section four: through students' suggestion we noticed the poor language that they are using to express their opinions except some. Where the majority of them didn't even try to highlight what we are trying to investigate. Most of the questionnaire were empty of any suggestion to be mentioned. They focused mostly on using authentic materials and to facilitate the language by using some translation when presenting lectures by teachers in some cases. Fewer of students recognized the tie link between the language and its relevant culture, referring to as an important element towards their language proficiency.

III.2. Part two: teachers Questionnaire

III.2.1. Description of teachers' questionnaire:

The questionnaire contains 11 items organized in three sections. 1 of the questionnaire items is common in both: the students' questionnaire as well as the teachers' one in order to compare both viewpoints concerning certain facts that need to be evaluated and dealt with from both scopes the one of students and the other of teachers.

The questionnaire is a combination of different types of questions .It consists of open form items, the closed form items with yes/no questions where respondents after choosing their answers have a free space of about five lines to either explain their choices.

The following is a detailed description of each section:

Section one: (Q1 → Q4)

This section contains 4 items. This section deals with cultural aspects only in which it investigate teachers point of view about students' cultural background and culture in its general meaning according to them.

Section two: (Q 5→ Q10)

This section hold six items numbered from five to ten and the focus is made on the relation between students' language proficiency and their classroom interaction. What is meant by interaction is students 'understanding and the different aspects it undergoes such as kinds of questions they ask or the way they answer teachers' questions.

Section Three: (Q11)

This section is designed to provide with a kind of consistency to previous sections. In this section (last item) teachers are given an open space to provide with some suggestions, solutions, or comments to put their attention upon the issue being tackled.

III.2.2. Administration of teachers' questionnaire:

Before administering the questionnaire, we piloted it on two teachers in the department of English at Khenchela University to test its validity.

After bringing some relevant corrections, the questionnaire has been directly administered to all teachers who either already taught third year, or they actually teaching it for the academic year 2013-2014. Their number is 10.

III.2.3. Data analysis:

Data gathered will be presented in tables, where symbols including the number and percentage of respondents at each time will be included. All tables are presented by a number and a title representing questions in order. The obtained results will be ordered according to rates but according to the order of questions. Questions are going to be analysed by sections.

Section one: cultural factors.

Item one: Do you think that the cultural component is considered on the equal footing with other language components?

Possibilities	Yes	No	To some extant	Total
Number	05	02	03	10
Percentage	50%	20%	30%	100%

Table n° 14: responds showing the teachers perceptions whether the cultural component would be considered as equal footing with other language elements.

5 (50%) teachers think that the cultural component is considered on the equal footing with other language components while 2 (20%) teachers do not think so and 3 (30%) teachers think that it is to some extent.

Item two: Are there instances of situations in which someone with a good mastery of English language is not understanding because of cultural based differences?

Possibilities	Yes	No	No answer	Total
Number	06	03	01	10
Percentage	60%	30%	10%	100%

Table n° 15: responds concerning the relation between good mastery of language and cultural misunderstanding among students.

The table reveals that 6 (60%) teachers agreed that there are some instances where students with good mastery of English language are not understanding because of cultural based differences, where 3 (30%) teachers disagree.

Item three: Is culture to be learned as:

- a. Supplementary optional material. b. An integral part of language learning.

Possibilities	a. Supplementary optional material	b. An integral part of language learning	Total
Number	00	10	10
Percentage	00%	100%	100%

Table n° 16: results showing how culture to be learned. The above table discloses that all teachers agreed that culture should be leaned as an integral part of language learning.

Section two: classroom interaction.

Item five: How do you evaluate third year students' English language proficiency?

- a) Very satisfying. b) Satisfying. c) Average.
d) Poorly satisfying. e) Not satisfying.

Possibilities	Number	Percentage
a. Very satisfying	00	00%
b. Satisfying	01	10%
c. Average	07	70%
d. Poorly satisfying	01	10%
e. Not satisfying	01	10%
Total	10	100%

Table n° 17: teachers' evaluation of third year students English language proficiency.

According to the results of table n°, seven teachers evaluate students' English language proficiency as average, and one teacher rates it as satisfying. Whereas one teacher estimates it as poorly satisfying and the same for not satisfying.

Item six: When presenting lectures related to the target culture to third year students, how do you evaluate their understanding?

- a. Very difficult.
- b. Difficult.
- d. Average.
- e. Very easy

Possibilities	Number	Percentage
a. Very difficult.	04	40%
b. Difficult.	05	50%
d. Average.	00	00%
e. Very easy.	00	00%
No answer	01	10%
Total	10	100%

Table n° 18: Evaluating third year students' understanding when presenting lectures related to the target culture.

As table n° shows 40% of teachers representing 4 of them see that students' understanding is very difficult when presenting lectures related to the target culture, while 5 of them which denote to 50% of the teachers say it is difficult.

Item seven: I relation to students language proficiency how do you evaluate their classroom interactions?

- a. Very important
- b. Important
- c. Not important

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
a. Very important	09	90%
b. Important	00	00%
c. Not important	01	10%
Total	10	100%

Table n° 19: Teachers' evaluation of students' classroom interaction.

Nine teachers qualify students' classroom interaction as very important as far as connected to their language proficiency. One teacher estimates it as not important.

Item eight: In regard to students' language proficiency what is the most difficult thing for them during lectures?

- a. To understand the course.
- b. To understand the teacher's questions.
- c. To answer the teacher's question.
- d. To ask questions.
- e. All the above.

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
a. To understand the courses.	03	30%
b. To understand the teacher's questions.	00	00%
c. To answer the teacher's question.	01	10%
d. To ask questions.	06	60%
e. All the above	00	00%
Total	10	100%

Table n° 20: Teachers' evaluation of students' difficulties

Again six teachers explain that third year students have different kinds of problems related to classroom interaction like asking questions, their Inability to ask/ answer a question. Three teachers say that they have problems mainly to, understand the courses, and which in one way or another will ultimately affect the other domains. Only one teacher sees that third year students' problems reside in answering the Teachers' questions.

Four (40%) teachers connect students' questions to the meaning of difficult items. Five (50%) others claim that questions frequently asked by third year students are linked to the content of the course itself, and one teacher states that they are related to both the content as well as the meaning of new and or difficult words.

Section three: teachers Suggestions.

What do you suggest for best and appropriate strategies that may help third year English students to enhance their language proficiency and rise their cultural awareness?

suggestions	Number	Percentage
Planned reading books, novels, and magazines in different subjects linguistics, civilisation, literature, and psychology...	07	70%
Selecting some programs and watching TV shows, plays, documentaries.	04	40%
More use of authentic materials.	05	50%
To raise students motivation.	01	10%

Table n° 23: Teachers' suggestions for an easier approach to help third year English students to enhance their language proficiency and raise their cultural awareness.

III.2.4. Findings:

The aim residing behind designing teachers 'questionnaire is that to have a professional perception towards what is being tackled in our research, and more importantly to obtain solutions they may provide with to help students to pass over the linguistic obstacle.

Despite highly stressing the role and the importance of the students' language proficiency related to their cultural awareness, as being the vehicle to transmit the information, and the tool by which they communicate in the language classroom. Nevertheless, teachers consider that third year English students' language proficiency is not sufficient to meet their needs in different cultural situations, if we consider what new items presents to them. The result is that third year students are neither able to retain the cultural information nor to develop their language proficiency. To remedy to this, teachers frequently use translation to facilitate their learners' understanding.

Conclusion:

To conclude this chapter certain facts appeared which affirms in one hand our hypothesis by gaining the needed data from both students' and teachers' questionnaires, and to further highlight certain unsuspected points but with a great relevance on the other one. Firstly, evidence is that third year students' poor cultural background does in no way correspond to the linguistic requirements. Students' questionnaire revealed that their cross-cultural awareness towards the target culture has a great deal of deficiency in transmitting the message itself either by a misunderstanding or not understanding at all on the part of the learners. Not limited only to this, students' linguistic deficiency exceeds to other areas like motivation and classroom interaction which ultimately alters their involvement.

A confirmation of our hypothesis is obtained via teachers' responses unanimity, mainly concerning the items closely linked to the question under study.

Recommendations:

Teaching and learning a foreign language is a highly complex task, that should consider both parties, the teacher's and the learner's, requirements, needs and wants so to reach their expectations and objectives. Through our study and the obtained here are some suggestion designed to attract both teachers' and students' attention on the importance of learners' language proficiency in relation to their cultural background. For culture to be adequately catered for the purpose of should be a consideration of the following points:

- The cultural component of the English language should be viewed as an integral part of the English lesson rather than as supplementary optional material.
- It should be considered on equal footing with the other language components, that is, the representation of the FC should be regarded of equal importance with the provision of means to teach the linguistic elements.
- The English-speaking culture(s) should not be removed on behalf of the learners' NC, other cultures, or general culture. The former is (are) more relevant and more useful to acquire the TL.
- It should not be shown in partial stereotypical glimpses. It would be absurd to require that all socio-cultural aspects be reflected, yet, significant features of life in (an) English-speaking country (ies) is not to be left unrepresented or misrepresented.

-
- The cultural content suggested should be realistic. The course book author needs to do more than encourage positive attitudes through the presentation of an idealistic image of the TC. S/he should depict it as it is actually lived, with its negative as well as positive facets. S/he needs to portray credible characters, which are happy one moment, sad the other. The cultural content should also be up-to-date and structured.
 - It should be concerned with both small 'c' and big 'C' aspects: on the one hand, it should portray a variety of socio-cultural situations, reflecting daily life, routines, festivities and rituals; on the other hand, it should deal with Literature and Art and provide some knowledge of the history, geography and politics of the target country.
 - Culture is to be integrated in texts, but also in activities. Catering for the cultural dimension does not merely mean providing for culture-seeded passages under a 'Learn about Culture' heading. There should most importantly be culture-oriented activities and tasks that broaden knowledge, develop intercultural skills, and support reflective learning. A communicative activity that places the learners in situations which require them to react according to the socio-cultural norms of the situation is one type of these recommended activities. It is devised not only on the basis of linguistic criteria (grammar, phonology, semantics), but equally on socio-cultural contexts that reflect the reality of the TL society. Other culture immersion activities invite the learners to take in the other's perspective, to investigate the TC from within.

- Learners' understanding be the prior goal and objective of the teacher despite any other considerations, like to get the end of the syllabus.
- Teachers should stress the fact that making an error is a quite natural phenomenon and even an important aspect of the learning process, and linguistic development, so to encourage students to get rid of the shyness and frustration, hence to improve their classroom interaction.

13. General conclusion:

The attempt along this research was to highlight the nature of the relation existing between students' English language proficiency and the target culture. Through the literature reading, it has long been stressed that there is a high connection between foreign language to be mastered and its relevant culture that stems as the natural environment of that language. What implies that one has to learn the foreign culture so to adequately speak the foreign language? Ideally, it is a logical necessary step mainly if considering the variant pragmatic and meaning systems governing the language like the English one. However, once effectively applied in the foreign language classroom, the culture to speak the language would arise the question of the language to speak about the culture. Hence, a vicious circle where to situate what should come first: the culture, or the language. This exactly what corresponds to the challenges met by third year students since they have to face a large set of information presented to them in the English language that they do not adequately handle. A fact widely confirmed thanks to the obtained results from both teachers' and students' questionnaire. Furthermore, at the beginning of this research, we hypothesized that students' poor culture language proficiency affects the learning process. Again thanks to the questionnaire results, it has been proved that the poor linguistic effects extends to affect the affective inside the learner. On the basis of the examination of the data collected from the teachers' questionnaire, it has been to come to the conclusion that the majority of the teachers, of the third year, are aware of the relevance and importance of the cultural aspect in foreign language teaching. Also they have a clear view of what this awareness implies in

classroom, and devise activities that promote cultural knowledge and understanding. Moreover, most of the informants put it openly that they have in-depth knowledge about English-speaking cultures to teach about them. It follows that the most of English teachers at Khenchela University are conscious of the importance of incorporating the cultural component in the FL teaching, and design activities to integrate it in their lessons, has been partly confirmed.

It is high time for them to consider themselves not only teachers of language, but of culture as well. It is, we believe, their responsibility to get the learners to think about the cultural issues relevant to learning a foreign language. It is equally their job to supplement the cultural content where language and the target culture are interrelated. The recommendations are by no means comprehensive, but are intended to bring some ideas on the subject to the attention of both teacher as well as students. Despite all the ink that has been expended on the topic, the teaching of culture continues to be one of the most challenging aspects of foreign language education.

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APPENDICES

Section three:

9- Do you think it is important to know about the culture (s) of the English speaking people, their way (s) of life, the world view (s)?

-Yes -No

10-Do you think that reading novels and stories related to the target culture would improve your level of English and your understanding to the other culture?

-Yes -No

11- Are there types of the cultural content that you have found culturally inappropriate?

-Yes -No

12- Is the cultural content presented?

a-Realistically b-Accurately c-Up to date

d- Free of stereotypes and bias e-Comprehensively

13- Knowing the English language without knowing the English culture will not affect your communication with English people?

-Yes -No

14- Which module (s) you see that it is truly helpful to promote your English language proficiency?

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15- What kind of materials is (are) being used by teachers to enhance your cross-cultural awareness towards the target culture?

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Section four:

16- What do you suggest for an easier understanding and best achievement in your cross-cultural background?

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Appendix n°2
Teachers' questionnaire

Dear teacher:

This is a questionnaire designed for the purpose of providing data for a research aiming at investigating how learning culture as a prerequisite to improve third year students' English language proficiency at Khenchela university.

Please have the kindness to provide us with the necessary answers to the following questions either by ticking the appropriate boxes or by making full statements.

Thank you

Section one:

1-Do you think that the cultural component is considered on the equal footing with other language components?

-Yes -No -To some extent

2-Are there instances of situations in which someone with a good mastery of English language is not understanding because of cultural based differences?

-Yes -No

3-Is culture to be learned as:

a)Supplementary optional material b) An integral part of language learning

4-Is culture approached:

a)Implicitly b) Explicitly c) Both

Section two:

5- How do you evaluate third year students' English language proficiency?

a) Very satisfying b) Satisfying c) Average

d) Poorly satisfying e) Not satisfying

6- When presenting lectures related to the target culture to third year students, how do you evaluate their understanding?

a)Very difficult b) Difficult Average c) Very easy

7- In relation to students language proficiency how do you evaluate their classroom interactions?

- a)Very important b) Important c) Not important

8- In regard to students' language proficiency what is the most difficult thing for them during lectures?

- a)To understand the courses b) To understand the teacher's questions
c) To answer the teacher's question d) to ask questions
e) All the above

9-When interacting in the classroom what kind of errors do students make?

- a) Are of a grammatical order b) Are of a vocabulary order
c) Both

10- The most frequent asked questions by learners are related to:

- a) The meaning of difficult or new items
b) Linked to the content of the course itself
c) Both

Section three:

11-What do you suggest for best and appropriate strategies that may help third year English students to enhance their language proficiency and rise their cultural awareness?

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