

Culture in EFL context: Teachers' and Students' perspectives Case Study: Khenchela University EFL Teachers and Students

الثقافة في سياق تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية: وجهة نظر المعلمين والطلاب

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Abstract:

Culture and language are closely related. So integrating culture in the EFL curriculum has been widely supported by many scholars and educators belong to applied linguistics and anthropology. For this, foreign language learning is often foreign culture learning. This study sets out during the academic year 2021-2022 to explore both English as foreign language teachers' and students' perspectives towards the importance of culture teaching at English department, Khenchela University. To this end, two questionnaires adapted from Sercu and el (2005) aimed to investigate teachers' perspectives towards culture teaching; the researchers tried to expand this study and investigate both teacher' and students' attitudes, practices, and familiarity with the target culture. Regarding the importance of teaching culture, the results revealed that both teachers and students share positive attitudes. However, culture is still ignored in the classroom activities and disregarded in the curriculum.

Keywords: Culture, teaching, teachers, students, perspectives.

مُلَخَّصُ البَحْثِ

ترتبط الثقافة واللغة ارتباطاً وثيقاً. لذا فإن دمج الثقافة في منهج اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية كان مدعوماً على نطاق واسع من قبل العديد من العلماء والمعلمين الذين ينتمون إلى علم اللغة التطبيقي والأنثروبولوجيا. لهذا، غالباً ما يكون تعلم اللغة الأجنبية هو تعلم الثقافة الأجنبية. الدراسة الحالية تهدف للتحقيق في وجهات نظر كل من معلمي وطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه أهمية تدريس الثقافة خلال العام الدراسي 2021-2022 بجامعة خنشلة. ولهذا الغاية، تم اقتباس استبيانين من سيركيو (Sercu) و اخرين (2005) بهدف التحقيق في وجهات نظر المعلمين تجاه تدريس الثقافة؛ حاول الباحثون توسيع هذه الدراسة والتحقيق في اتجاهات وممارسات كل من

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المعلمين والطلاب ومعرفتهم بالثقافة المستهدفة. فيما يتعلق بأهمية ثقافة التدريس في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، أوضحت النتائج أن كلا من المعلمين والطلاب يتشاركون في المواقف الإيجابية. ومع ذلك، لا يزال يتم تجاهل الثقافة في المناهج الدراسية.



I. Introduction

Undoubtedly, language cannot exist without culture, henceforth produce fluent language users without teaching culture is apparently impossible. It is has been claimed that “the study of language cannot be divorced from the study of culture” (Steely, 1984, p.26). Language and culture are inseparable, understanding that fact in EFL classrooms would help both teachers and learners to achieve the main objective of EFL teaching which is the ability to use the language similarly as its native speakers do. Teaching language in separation of its culture is inaccurate, and insufficient; since language is the strongest way to express peoples’ cultural beliefs, values, thoughts, laws, behaviors, and attitudes. It is the most essential element in any culture (Brooks, 1964); it is often used to describe, interpret, and respond to the culture (Moran, 2001). According to Banks (2010) culture is “the shared beliefs, symbols, and interpretations within a human group...The essence of a culture is not its artifacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them.”(p.8)

Language and culture are inseparable entities; Agar (1994) stated that “Culture is in language and language is loaded with culture”. Hall (2002) also suggested that language is a social practice which indicates individual identities, their interpersonal relationships, and memberships in their social groups. Thus, language and culture are intertwined. Regarding the important place of culture in foreign language classes, the majority of studies claimed that, being fluent language user without knowing the culture of the target language would be almost impossible (Önalán, 2005; Razi&Böcü, 2016). Therefore, (Kaikkonen, 2001, p.64) asserted that “the most important goal of foreign language education is to help learners grow out of the shell of their mother tongue and their own culture”.

Effective communication in foreign language classrooms demands (entails) more than understanding of linguistic aspects, the cultural aspects are required also. These aspects will enable the students to use linguistically correct sentences in the appropriate context. Language is the most visible

expression of culture, teaching culture in foreign language classrooms is a fundamental concept. Kramsch (1998) stated that “language is the principle means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways” (p.3). Gudykunst states “Understanding communication in any culture... requires culture-general information (i.e. where the culture falls on the various dimensions of cultural variability) and culture-specific information (i.e. the specific cultural constructs associated with the dimension of cultural variability)” (pp. 285-286).

Blaska&Tseng(2000,2002) stressed the importance of integrating culture in foreign language classrooms. Schemshadsara (2012) also supported the idea of integrating culture in foreign language teaching as a result of the extricable relationship between language and culture. That is to say that the teachers should realize the significant role of culture in developing students’ communicative competence; in addition they should be aware that without acquiring a cultural knowledge many miscommunication problems will appear, even more in some cases effective communication would be impossible. Teaching language with its appropriate context would help the learners to use the target language appropriately under certain conditions. To sum up, the shift from the linguistic competence to communicative competence in EFL classroom confirms that EFL students need to more exposure to cultural knowledge in order to develop their intercultural communication skills. Besides to their linguistic accuracy, intercultural competence is also required.

II. Literature Review

Within the context of teaching foreign language, teaching culture has been an inquiry for a long time, For Bada (2000) “The need for cultural literacy in ELT arises mainly from the fact that most language learners, not exposed to cultural elements of the society in question, seem to encounter significant hardship in communicating meaning to native speakers.” (p.101)

Historically speaking, teaching FL aimed to translate one language into another one; teaching FL based only on teaching literature and civilization. Therefore, teaching culture was disregarded. The advent of communicative language teaching approach dedicated teaching culture in foreign language classes. Since, without cultural knowledge, it would be impossible to comprehend the meaning of language codes. The linguistic competence only cannot help the students to effectively communicate with the target language.

Reviewing the literature, many studies tried to investigate the place of culture in EFL classes through exploring teachers and students perspectives concerning the implementation of culture in their EFL classes. A comparative study conducted by Sercu and Bandura(2005), aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions towards the incorporation of intercultural competence in EFL classrooms; the participants belong to seven different countries : Bulgaria, Mexico, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Greece and Sweden. The results indicated that the teachers have positive attitudes towards the inclusion of cultural competence in their classes; moreover the teachers believed that in target language teaching, culture teaching should go beyond providing the students with information about history, civilization, and political issues, the students should be informed about daily life issues.

Gonen and Saglam (2012) investigate Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions towards the incorporation of culture into their classes, the participants were from different educational backgrounds. The researches use both questionnaires and group of interviews in order to gather the information; the results revealed that all the teachers are aware of the importance of culture in target language classrooms. Furthermore Gonen and Saglam (2012) recommended that in EFL classes, the teachers should be prepared more on how to teach culture. Within the same context, a study conducted by Bayyurt (2000) to find out the attitudes of non- native EFL teachers towards the cultural norms of the foreign language they are teaching, the teachers were from 25 different EFL classrooms in public and private primary and secondary schools in both Istanbul, and Turkey. The results showed that the teachers believed on the importance of raising students' cultural awareness.

Lessard- Clouston (1996) explores 16 EFL teachers' views on the role of culture in both EFL learning and teaching. Throughout the study the findings revealed that the participants agreed that culture has an important role in EFL learning. Another study conducted by Kahraman (2016) to find out EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes towards culture and culture learning in a Turkish context; the participants were 107 teachers and 310 students belong to two universities, Turkey-Hacettepe University and Dumlupinar University. The data collected through a questionnaire (attitude scale) which was developed by Han, Hui (2010) and slightly modified by the researchers; the results showed that teachers and students are highly interested in teaching culture in EFL classes. Rostami (2016) conducted a comparative study to explore the Iranian teachers and learners' perceptions towards the role of culture in EFL teaching; the participants consisted of 8

teachers, and 30 learners. The data collected through questionnaires and interviews; the results indicated that both teachers and learners have positive attitudes towards teaching culture, moreover the learners claimed that the cultural element is important in language teaching.

Similarly, other studies were conducted on investigating the Algerian EFL teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards the importance of culture in EFL classrooms. One of these studies conducted by Bahloul (2012) aimed at Exploring EFL teachers insights into culture and culture teaching; the participants were 15 EFL teachers at Batna University. The researcher used a questionnaire consists of 4 close-ended and 5 open-ended items; the findings revealed that all the teachers appreciate culture and culture teaching in their classrooms. Within the same vein, Hadoui (2000) investigated teachers' beliefs and practices of integrating the intercultural approach in teaching English as foreign language; the results showed that the teachers encouraged giving more importance to the integration of culture in their teaching classrooms. Mouas & Ghouar (2017) conducted a descriptive study aimed at investigating EFL teachers' practices and perceptions of Intercultural competence teaching. The participants were 44 from English department-Batna University. The study revealed that even though the teachers are aware of the important role of culture in their classes, it is still neglected within classroom activities. Additionally, there has been a gap in literature on exploring students' perspectives towards learning culture in Algerian EFL context. Consequently, this study intended to investigate Algerian EFL teachers' and students' perspectives of teaching culture in English classes at English department Khenchela university; additionally it deeply analyses teachers' and students' opinions, attitudes, practices and familiarity of the target culture. To this end, two questions were formulated:

- **RQ1:** What are the teachers' perspectives towards the importance of integrating culture in EFL classes?
- **RQ2:** what are the students' perspectives towards the importance of integrating culture in EFL classes?

III. Methodology

The current study is basically a descriptive research which is supported by qualitative and quantitative data. It aims to examine both teachers and students perspectives towards the importance of culture teaching. It was conducted with 20 EFL teachers from English department-Khenchela University, and 50 EFL students from the same university. To reach the research aim a questionnaire was opted for as "it affords a good

deal of precision and clarity because the knowledge needed is controlled by the questions” (McDonough & McDonough 1997, 171). Two questionnaires were designed differently in order to make them suitable for both teachers and students. The questionnaires were adapted from Sercu et al (2005) and slightly changed according to the purpose of this current study. Subsequently, the questionnaire of the teacher webbed to their emails in a Google form; while with the questionnaire of the students, the researchers used a Google form, then shared a link to second year EFL students’ Google classroom to grasp answers as much as possible.

IV. Data Analysis and Interpretation

A. RQ1: Teachers perspectives towards teaching culture in EFL classes

1. Teachers’ Background Information

Through the analysis of the table “1” we notice that the majority of the participants are females with a percentage of (65%); while males represent only (35%). Concerning teaching experience we see that the majority of the participants (40%) are teaching English for more than 5 years and less than 10years. (35%) of the informants has more than 10 years of experience; from this we can say that our results come from reasonable good experienced teachers. This indicates that the teachers are in good position to clarify students’ needs and difficulties. This demographic information serves as background information for this current study.

Table 1: Teachers’ Background Information

Gender	Male		Female
Number of teachers	7(35%)		13(65%)
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	Between 5 and 10 years	More than 10 years
Number of teachers	5(25%)	8(40%)	7(35%)

2. Teachers’ attitudes towards teaching culture

The statements 1 to 13 indicated that teachers had positive attitudes towards culture integration in EFL classes; as the results in the table above reveals that all the teachers (100%) agree with the importance of teaching culture in EFL classes. However a half of the teachers (55%) agree that the cultural dimension in EFL classes is neglected and more over (90%) of the participants agree on that the cultural dimension should be expended within their classes. The majority of the participants dedicate the necessity of cultural background with a percentage of (90%); nearly all the teachers (95%) disagree on that teaching culture had negative influence on the progress of

linguistic accuracy. Nearly all the teachers (80%) admitted the great role of culture to motivate students, and as we all know the significance role of motivation in developing students learning levels. Almost the majority of the participants (90%) agree on the positive influence of culture on the progress of linguistic accuracy. As for combining culture teaching with language teaching to enhance the development of students' skills (95%) of the participants agree. All the teachers (100%) agree that the main aim of teaching culture is to develop students' communicative competence.

Table2: Teachers' attitudes towards teaching culture

The items of the questionnaire	A (%)	D (%)	N (%)
1. In FL classes, teaching culture is important	100%	0%	0%
2. In FL classes, the cultural dimension is neglected	55%	10%	35%
3. In FL classes, cultural background knowledge is necessary.	90%	0%	10%
4. In FL classes, the cultural dimension should be expanded.	90%	0%	10%
5. In FL classes, teaching culture motivate the students	80%	0%	20%
6. Teaching the target culture have a negative influence on the progress of linguistic accuracy.	0%	95%	5%
7. Teaching the target culture have a positive influence on the progress of linguistic accuracy.	90%	0%	10%
8. Teaching the target culture can change students' cultural identity.	65%	15%	20%
9. The main aim of teaching the target culture is to develop students' communicative competence	100%	0%	0%
10. Integrating culture in FL classes helps the students to improve the foreign language skills.	95%	0%	5%
11. Integrating culture in FL classes helps the students to gain cultural background knowledge to increase their awareness, in order to develop their intercultural communicative competence.	95%	0%	5%
12. Teaching culture helps the students to develop respect, tolerance, and empathy towards "otherness".	80%	0%	20%
13. Combining language and culture helps students to improve their language skills.	95%	0%	5%

For the whole paper: A=Agree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral.

3. Teachers' practices towards teaching culture

Through a deep observation, table "3" shows that the participants of the study use a variety of activities to introduce culture in their classrooms. More over the participants do used all the provided activities at least for once. The findings also reveal that some activities have been used frequently among the teachers which are emphasized through the statements 7, 8, 11; and 13. More than half of the informants (60%) admit that if they have the chance, I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom. (30%) asserted that they ask my students to describe an aspect of their own culture

in the foreign language. Besides, (35%) of the teachers discuss with the students about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding habitants of particular countries. Only (45%) of the teachers ask their students to compare between students' own culture and the target culture. The activities used "sometimes" emphasized within the statement 2, 4, and 8. The findings in the table reveal that most of the teachers (40%) "Sometimes" ask their students about what would be like to live in foreign language classes. Furthermore (30%) of the informants occasionally ask their students to independently explore aspects of the target culture. With the same percentage (30%) of the teachers every often provide their students with new cultural information.

Table 3: Teachers' Practices towards teaching culture

Items of the questionnaire	Always (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)
1. I ask my students to think about the image that the media promote of the foreign country	15%	20%	65%
2. I inform my students what I listen (or read) about the foreign country or culture.	20%	30%	50%
3. I tell my students when I find something fascinating or strange about the foreign culture(s).	10%	15%	75%
4. I ask my students to independently explore an aspect of the foreign culture.	25%	30%	45%
5. I use authentic materials, or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign culture.	10%	20%	70%
6. I ask my students to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign culture.	20%	40%	40%
7. If I have the chance, I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom.	60%	20%	20%
8. I ask my students to describe an aspect of their own culture in the foreign language.	30%	20%	50%
9. I bring objects originating from the foreign culture to my classroom.	5%	10%	85%
10. I comment on the way in which the foreign culture is represented in the classroom materials.	20%	20%	60%
11. I ask my students to compare an aspect of their own culture with that aspect in the foreign culture.	45%	20%	35%
13. I talk with my students about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding habitants of particular countries.	35%	20%	45%

4. Teachers' familiarity with aspects related to target culture.

Table "4" indicates how far EFL teachers are familiar with the target culture. The findings show that only (35%) of the participants are very

familiar with daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink. With the same percentage teachers are very familiar with values and beliefs. More than half of the participants (55%) are sufficiently familiar with the target culture aspects related to history, geography, and political system. The participants (45%) are sufficiently familiar with the educational system and professional life of the target culture. Regarding teachers' familiarity with literary works, (40%) of the teachers are very familiar and (60%) are sufficiently familiar. Furthermore half of the subjects (50%) of the teachers are sufficiently familiar with the international relations with the students' own country and other countries. Last but not least, (30%) of the teachers are not sufficiently familiar with aspects related to traditions, folklore, and tourist attractions.

Table 4: Teachers' familiarity with aspects related to target culture.

Items for the questionnaire	Very Familiar	Sufficiently Familiar	Not Sufficiently Familiar
1. History, geography, and political system.	55%	45%	0%
2. Different ethnic and social groups.	35%	40%	25%
3. Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink etc.	35%	35%	10%
4. Youth culture.	45%	35%	10%
5. Education, professional life.	35%	45%	20%
6. Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions.	30%	40%	30%
7. Literature.	40%	60%	0%
8. Other cultural expressions(music, drama, art)	40%	40%	20%
9. Values and beliefs.	35%	25%	35%
10. International relations, with students' own country and other countries.	5%	50%	45%

B. RQ2: Students' perspectives towards culture learning in EFL Classes

1. Students' Background Information

Observing the table and the figure above, among 50 students, 36 are females and 14 are males. Accordingly the females represent the majority with (72%); while the males represent (28%) of the students, Regarding the second question, their age average is between 19 and 43 years old; (68%) are 20 years old , and (20%) of the informants are 21, while (8%) are 19 years old and (2%) for both 28, and 43 years old. All of them are Second year EFL students at English department, Khenchela University.

Table 5: Students' Background Information

Gender	Male	Female
Number of the students	14(28%)	36(72%)

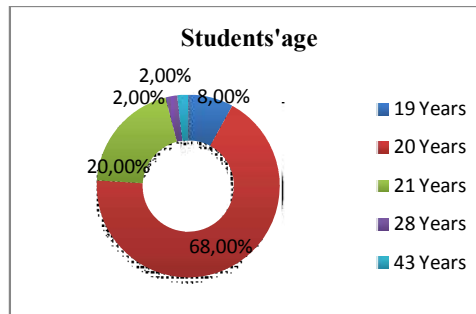


Figure 1 Students' age

2. Students' attitudes towards teaching culture

The findings of table "6" revealed that (92%) of the students agree on the close relationship between language and culture; more over (86%) agree on the importance of integrating culture in their classes. More than a half of the participants (75%) agree that when they struggle to understand aspects in the target culture; they receive help from their teacher. The majority of the informants (84%) agree that learning culture in FL classes helps to gain cultural background knowledge to increase their awareness and to develop students' ICC. (86%) of the informants disagree that learning culture is irrelevant. while (86%) agree that is enjoyable process to study culture and with (80%) students believe that learning culture increase their motivation.

Table 6: Students' attitudes towards culture teaching

Items of the questionnaire	A	D	N
1. Language and culture are closely related.	92%	6%	2%
2. Learning culture is enjoyable.	86%	10%	4%
3. In my classroom, teaching culture is supported.	8%	70%	22%
4. Learning culture is important	86%	12%	2%
5. Learning culture is irrelevant.	12%	86%	0%
6. Learning culture increases your motivation	80%	12%	8%
7. Learning culture in FL classes helps me to gain cultural background knowledge to increase my awareness, in order to develop my intercultural communicative competence.	84%	6%	10%
8. I think that the cultural dimension should take more emphasis.	56%	14%	30%

3. Students' practices towards learning culture

Observing Table "7" shows that the majority of the students enjoy learning culture through the use of variety of activities (inside and outside the classroom). To start with outside classrooms practices only (28%) of the students spend long time studying about customs of the target culture, while (56%) disagree, and (16%) of them were neutral. Additionally, less than the half (34%) admitted that they watch films, videos to learn different aspects of the target culture. Although, the participants show an awareness of the necessity of knowing about all the aspects of target culture, more than half (60%) agree. Concerning inside classroom activities, such as the use of authentic materials in class, only (10%) agree that their teachers use authentic materials. all the participants (100%) enjoy learning culture through the comparison method between the aspects of their culture and the target culture. The majority (72%) don't feel bored when the teacher explains some cultural aspects. However, (88%) disagree that their teacher and classmates are source of encouragement.

Table 7: Students' practices towards learning

Items of the questionnaire	A	D	N
1. I feel bored, when the teacher explains some cultural aspects.	10%	72%	18%
2. When I struggle in understanding some cultural aspects, I receive help from the teacher.	86%	12%	4%
3. The teacher uses different cultural materials in the classroom.	10%	88%	2%
4. The teacher uses different cultural materials in the classroom mainly authentic materials.	46%	50%	4%
5. The teacher compares between the aspects of your culture and the target culture	100%	0%	0%
6. My teacher and classmates are a source of encouragement for me	16%	80%	4%
7. I spend long time studying about customs of the target culture.	28%	56%	16%
8. I should be familiar with all aspects of the target culture	60%	22%	18%
9. I watch films, videos to learn about different aspects of the target culture	34%	56%	10%

4. Students' familiarity with the target culture

From table "8" we observe that there are categories of students' familiarity with aspects of the target culture: very familiar, sufficiently familiar, and not sufficiently familiar. A half of the participants (50%) are very familiar with music, art, and media. The results also reveal that more than a half of the students (52%) are sufficiently familiar with aspects related to history, geography, and political system. The (66%) of the students also are sufficiently familiar with literature. A significant proportion of the informants (78%) are not sufficiently familiar with daily life routines, living conditions, food, and drink. The higher rate (92%) of "not sufficiently familiar" is knowledge of different ethnic and social groups. Moreover (70%) of the informants are sufficiently familiar with education, professional life, traditions, folklore and tourist attractions. (80%) of the subjects are not sufficiently familiar with international relations, with students' own country and other countries.

Table 8: Students' familiarity with the target culture

Items for the questionnaire	Very Familiar	Sufficiently Familiar	Not Sufficiently Familiar
1. History, geography, political system.	28%	52%	20%
2. Different ethnic and social groups.	2%	6%	92%
3. Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink etc.	0%	22%	78%
4. Youth culture.	8%	50%	42%
5. Education, professional life.	8%	22%	70%
6. Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions.	10%	20%	70%
7. Literature.	24%	66%	10%
8. Other cultural expressions(music, drama, art)	50%	24%	26%
9. Values and beliefs.	8%	36%	56%
10. International relations, with students' own country and other countries.	2%	18%	80%

V. Discussion

This current study aimed to investigate teachers' and students' perspectives towards the importance of teaching culture in EFL context. The researchers interested in exploring both teachers' and students' attitudes, practices, and familiarity with the target culture. The analyses of two questionnaires (teachers' version and students' version) show that both teachers and students answered affirmatively, agree; and show positive attitudes on the importance of teaching culture. However the findings reveal that the teachers' attitudes were more positive than attitudes of the students. Therefore the results of this study are similar to many other studies Bada (2002), Sercu (2005), and Atay et al (2005) revealed that EFL teachers are interested in integrating culture in EFL classes. Another significant point is there is strong agreement on the need to give culture more emphasis in the curriculum from both teachers and students. This suggests that the cultural dimension should receive more emphasis, so the students can have better understanding of the target language. Another point is that both the teachers and the students acknowledge the close relationship between language and culture since they believe on the positive influence of teaching culture on the linguistic accuracy. Moreover, most of the teachers emphasize the need to combine culture with language teaching to improve students' communicative skills. According to Al-Amir (2017) "communicative competence refers to individuals' ability to communicate with people of different social and cultural identities. In order for students to obtain such competence, they need

to establish a shared understanding between them and people from different cultural backgrounds” (p.28)

As for teachers’ practices throughout the analysis of the results, the most common used practice of the teachers was to compare between the students’ source culture and target culture. It was clear that all the teachers support and use a variety of the activities in their classes in very limited way; since they do not appear to teach culture either in implicit or explicit manner. The results also indicate that teaching and practicing culture is still challenged and this proves the ignorance of teaching culture in EFL classes. The same for the students practices, the answers of the students displayed on an overall level they rarely use several activities to learn culture in and outside the classroom, and this confirms that learning culture should be encouraged in and beyond the classroom. The results also reveal that among all the provided activities the students prefer the comparison method between their culture and the target culture. The present study shows that the students consider culture integration as a factor which increases their motivation in learning EFL. The findings also reveal that the students are aware with the importance of culture in learning a foreign language; however the minority of them spends long time studying about customs of the target culture. It could be noted that EFL teachers teach culture in their classes with an emphasis only on teaching history and literature.

The analysis also reveals that the participants had limited knowledge of the target culture since only the minority of the teachers are very familiar with aspects related to geography , history and political system and literature in comparison to their familiarity with daily life, routines, living conditions, values, beliefs, etc . This suggests that their cultural understanding is linked to Big C culture rather than little “c” culture. With this regard, Paige et al (2003) expressed the necessity of teaching little “c” culture to avoid pragmatic failure. This unawareness of the cultural information would impede the teachers to develop their students’ cultural knowledge. On the other hand the majority of the students are not very familiar with any of the provided aspects of the target culture. This may due to the limited level of the cultural knowledge of the teachers, as well as the restricted integration of culture teaching in the foreign language curriculum. All in all, the results reveal that integrating culture in EFL process is favorable from both teachers and students. Another important point that the participants agree on the accepted fact that language and culture are inseparable. In spite the mentioned fact culture is still ignored and need more emphasis in the curriculum. The findings show that both the teachers and students lack knowledge of the

cultural aspects. Although, a worth noting point is that there is a gap between teachers beliefs towards teaching culture and their practices in their EFL classes.

VI. Conclusion

Recently in the context of teaching EFL, teaching culture considered as the main questioned issue. This current study shed the light on teachers and students' perspectives towards the importance of teaching culture in the Algerian universities context. The findings reveal that both the teachers and students support integrating culture in the curriculum while their attitudes do not much their practices in the classroom. Culture is disregarded in the curriculum and course design. Additionally, the findings claim that there is a shortage in culture related teaching activities. Also this study reveals that all the participants lack of cultural background knowledge.

Although, this study is highly recommend the urgent need to develop both teachers and students awareness towards the cultural differences between their culture and the target culture. Namely, the teachers and students should understand the differences in the ways of greeting, addressing, expressing, making requests asking questions, and communicating. From this study we can suggest that teachers need an organized effective training on what culture should they teach, and why; and how they can adequately integrate culture in their classes. Moreover decision makers and curriculum designers should give culture more emphasis and encourage the inclusion of cultural dimension with clear objectives to help both teachers and students. Additionally the focus of English teaching should be on culture teaching since the main aim of English learning is communication; and the latter one without acquiring a sufficient cultural knowledge could drop or fail. In this article the researchers attempt to explore the participants' perspectives in order to have a clear picture for the future researches; in other words this current study could serve as a basis for the researchers to investigate more about the place of culture in EFL context from both teachers and students perspectives. Additionally, they may use different data gathering tools as classroom observations, interviews, etc.

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