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The Implementation of Foreign Culture in EFL Classes
Case of Study 1st Year Middle School Pupils
Mostaganem

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Dedication

I dedicate this work

To my parents for their support and prayers

To my family

And my best friend Nermine for being there for me

*Special thanks to Yacine, Hamza, Abdou and Bouchra
for their encouragements*

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Abstract

The act of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) does not necessarily entail the teaching of grammar and vocabulary. In fact, one of the key components of teaching any language entails the teaching of its culture as part and parcel of a whole body. Therefore, the aim behind this study is to examine the way Algerian middle school teachers introduce the cultural component in their EFL classrooms, how they perceive it and what is their attitude towards teaching it. Respectively, we hypothesized that culture cannot be disassociated from language; hence, teaching culture is as important as teaching a foreign language. However, teaching a target culture without being objective to the native culture of the learner would probably have a negative impact on the learner's cultural identity. To test the validity of our hypotheses, a mixed-method approach has been adopted that has been employed by means of a questionnaire administered to twenty five (25) middle school teachers and by conducting an interview with ten (10) first-level teachers. The analysis of data has revealed that first-level teachers argue that their learners should build their cultural identity first then learn about a target culture. In addition, Algerian EFL teachers hold the premise that culture is carried through its language and cannot be taught without it. Eventually, it is shown that integrating culture uncontrollably or subjectively may have negative effects on learners.

Key words:

- Foreign Culture
- Foreign Language
- Native Culture
- Teaching EFL
- Middle school
- Cultural Identity.

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General Introduction

The connection between culture and language has always been the centre of debates in the history of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Several scholars as Byram and Kramch asserted that disregarding culture while teaching a foreign language is a failed process. In other words, teachers should not be concerned with teaching linguistic components of the language to their learners only, but also a focus on the cultural element of that language is necessary. Cultural knowledge should be widened and cultural competence should be developed: it is evident that learners will not be able to achieve effective communication unless they are aware of the target culture. Therefore, fostering one's culture is as necessary as learning a target one.

The aim of this study is to investigate the place of teaching culture at the level of Algerian middle schools. By distributing a questionnaire to twenty five (25) middle school teachers and by conducting an interview with ten (10) first-level teachers, the researcher opted to highlight teachers' opinions on teaching culture in their EFL classrooms. For this, the following questions have been raised:

1. Is teaching culture an important procedure when teaching EFL?
2. Can English be taught without emphasis on its culture?
3. Does teaching a target culture have drawbacks on learners?

For the sake of delivering answers to the abovementioned questions, the following hypotheses have been put forward:

1. Teaching culture is as important as teaching a foreign language.
2. Culture cannot be disassociated from language; therefore, it is impossible to teach English without referring to its culture.
3. Teaching a target culture without being objective or regarding the native culture of the learner would probably have a negative side-effect on the learner's cultural identity.

In this study a mixed-method approach of qualitative and quantitative data collection tools has been adopted including a questionnaire and an interview. First, the questionnaire consists of open-ended and close-ended questions; it is addressed to a number of twenty five (25) Algerian middle school teachers for the sake of investigating the way they perceive culture integration in their EFL classrooms. Second, the interview is addressed to only first-level teachers; it aims at uncovering teachers' opinions and claims on the importance of culture and its connection to foreign language teaching. The data gathered from teachers' answers is then analysed and discussed to answer the research questions in order to confirm or contradict the hypotheses.

The dissertation consists of three chapters; the first chapter is devoted to the theoretical framework: several scholarly definitions of the term "culture", its interconnectedness with language teaching and the importance of teaching culture. The second chapter presents the corpus of the study consisting of the methodology of the study, the description of data collection tools and an analysis of the gathered data. The third chapter deals with the discussion of the findings as it also delivers guide-lines for integrating culture in EFL classrooms, redesigning textbooks and raising teachers' and learners' awareness of the importance of developing their cultural competence.

Chapter One
Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter highlights the different definitions of what “culture” is. Then, it briefly examines the aspects of culture represented in: beliefs, behaviours, values, symbols and myths. After that, light will be cast on the interconnectedness of language and culture, and how language is the primary tool which reflects one's culture. Moreover, the research aims to put emphasis on the importance of teaching culture or aspects of culture in Foreign Language classrooms", or simply put , the chapter’s aim is at stressing the importance of culture along with explaining what “cultural awareness” is Finally, more is added on some of the well-known techniques for teaching culture.

1. 1 Definition of Culture

Derived from Latin “cultura” which means “growing or cultivation”, the term “Culture” has found its way into several disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and linguistics. To begin with, Oxford English Dictionary (2010) defines it as, “The ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society.” That is, culture is reduced to not only how people dress or behave in a certain society, but also how they think and act according to the shared norms governing their community.

In line with this, the first appearance of the word culture is noticed in the book of Edward Tylor “Primitive Culture” (1871). He asserted that “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, Law, custom, and any other capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society”. From an anthropological perspective, he denotes that culture is the result of societal conventions that all members of one particular society have in common. (cited in Sander & Loon, 1997, p4)

Byram (1989 p 15) on the other hand refers to culture as, “the whole way of life of the foreign country, including but not limited to its production in the arts, philosophy and `high

culture' in general". Culture, according to Byram, is manifested in art and philosophy; that is, if one is to examine any typical culture, they should analyse the portraits, drawing, style of clothing, and way of writing of a particular group of people. Chastain (1976), on the other hand, draws a clear cut between "Culture" with capitalized "C" and "culture" with lower case "c". The latter is the label for: how people contribute to building civilization and the world as a whole, whereas the former "Culture" refers to conventions, social life, behaviour and activities.

Horton and Hunt (1984,p.545) argue that culture is, "everything that is socially learned and shared by the members of a society; social heritage which the individual receives from the group; a system of behaviour shared by members of a society"(p.545) .Evidently, Horton and Hunt believe that culture is acquire from the society and is not, by any means, predisposed into the human brain. Moreover, culture is transmitted from one generation to another: this is what they call "social heritage"

The definition of culture may differ from one field to another, but they all agree upon the fact that, culture is a social heritage: containing human beliefs, art, philosophy, customs, norms, behaviour and even the common stories, myths or folklore a particular group of people tell each other.

1. 2 Aspects of Culture

As explained above, culture is the common cultural and historical background members of one society share. However, it is worth mentioning that culture is a general notion that includes several aspects: beliefs, behaviours, values, symbols and myths. These aspects are crucial to understanding culture; hence, elaborated below.

1. 2. 1 Beliefs

A belief refers to the fact that something is accepted as a truth: conviction. Damen (1994 p 191) categorises belief into three elements that are:

- (a) Informational: This type is related to the amount of data and information a person acquires.
- (b) Experiential: Refers to one's experience in life.
- (c) Inferential: Which is the last type demonstrates how a person relies on their mind and logic to reach a result then accept it as a belief.

1. 2. 2 Behaviours

Behaviour, according to Oxford English Dictionary (2010), is “The way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.” Not different from this, Cushner and Brislin (1996 p 57) explain, behaviour is cultural-bound; that is, the behaviour that is complimented in a particular group, might be criticised in another. A set of behaviours is often called "role", the latter differs from one person to another. For instance, a mother, in a certain culture, has a particular role to perform, and so is the father. Besides, a role may change according to the situation. Moreover, cultural behaviours take place when two individuals, having different cultural backgrounds, meet. Therefore, people should not judge other behaviours. Instead, they should try to understand how other behaviours make sense.

1. 2. 3 Values

Values are moral indicators that tell people what is right and what is wrong, acceptable or unacceptable based on conventions. Cushner and Brislin (1996 p 319) state that:

People make judgments and draw conclusions about what is and what is not of value. These judgments give rise to certain presuppositions from which people act

with little or no conscious awareness. These presuppositions learned during childhood, play a pervasive role in all areas of people's adult experiences.

Accordingly, values are considered as beliefs and rules that guide people from on the early age. They do not only instruct people towards making choices, but also shape their lives and give them a sense of value.

1. 2. 4 Symbols and Myths

For Hofstede (2003 p 10) symbols are «words, gestures, pictures, and objects that carry often complex meanings recognized as such only by those who share the culture". Symbols usually manifest themselves in special occasions such as, national days in which a national flag is raised to symbolize peace or remember those who died in war. In Islam, for example, women are to wear the veil (Hijab) to cover their heads. Colours, too, may have a certain significance bound to them. In Japan, for instance, the white colour refers to purity and honour. Such distinction between colours can also create confusion when used in different cultures as with the green colour, in Algeria, which is usually used to refer to everything positive, while in the French culture, the same colour refers to jealousy or sickness, in simple terms, songs, drawings, or traditions can all be symbols that embody a cultural value.

Understanding the myths and stories underpinning culture is crucial to understanding culture itself. Jandt (2018 p 1075) defines myths as, "Stories and images representing a culture's values, handed down from generation to generation as a guide for living." Therefore, myths can be stories of a person, an animal or even ghosts and monsters, imaginary or true, that people take as an example and tell their children to learn from; it also denotes the concept of the "hero" that is looked at as a model. For instance, Americans regard the concept of "cowboy" as an example of bravery and chivalry; hence, used in T.V commercials.

1.3 Language and Culture

To begin with, language and culture are two facets of one coin: they are closely bound. In terms of teaching language, scholars such as Krumsch, Byram and Brown believe that teaching language must go hand in hand with teaching culture. Brown (1994 p 165) asserted, “a language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate from the two without losing the significance of either language or culture”.

In the same vein, Byram (1989 p 41) defines culture and language as follows; “language pre-eminently embodies the values and meanings of a culture, refers to cultural artefacts and signals people's cultural identity. Because of its symbolic and transparent nature language can stand alone and represent the rest of a culture's phenomenon». Therefore and according to him, members of society employ language to externalize their thoughts and how they conceptualize the world around them; hence, mirrors their values and cultural beliefs. That is, culture and language line up and constitute one aspect. Simply because, one cannot learn language and overlook its culture for, the latter embodies language.

On the one hand, Thomson (2007) wrote, language is linked to the way people live. That is to say, activities performed by people and interpersonal relationships connection reflect their culture. In addition, learning a language means learning a different culture of different individuals. On the other, Krumsch (2000 p14) elaborated the interconnectedness of language and culture in the following lines, “As a code, language is conceived as a reflection of the cultural preoccupations and constraints of the way people think. Context is highly important in complementing the meanings encoded in the language.” Apparently, Krumsch refers to two insights. The first one: culture is carried out and transmitted by language. As for the second insight: culture becomes apparent and vivid when language is used in appropriate contexts to maintain meaningful

conversations. In other words, this means that is extracted from one language might be different from the one extracted from another language because of cultural boundaries between languages.

1. 4 The Importance of teaching Culture

As mentioned earlier, culture and language go hand in hand, therefore teaching a foreign language (FL) should not be reduced to grammar and rules or vocabulary only. Instead, learners of (FL) should focus as well on enhancing their cultural competence, simply because, a language cannot live on without culture, because the latter contains meaning too. For instance, there are some words and expressions used in special contexts; if one does not know the culture in which these words occur, they would not be able to comprehend the conveyed message. This goes in line with Shahriar (2017 p 260), who wrote, “if we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning”

Kramersch (1993 p 1) also argues that teaching a language without putting proper emphasis on its culture is senseless and will not, by any means, contribute in developing the learners’ communicative competence. He believes that teaching the four skills only would not be much of a help to learners who engage in conversations with individuals who have different cultural background. Therefore, the complete way of teaching a FL should be teaching language and its culture.

Furthermore, Bredella (2003 p 228) highlighted another important aspect of learning the others’ culture. He stated, " reconstructing others' frames of reference and seeing the world in their eyes" in simple terms, learning the others' language is not enough to understand them, but learning their culture as well gives us the advantage of looking at the world as they do: understanding the way they think and live. Therefore, we reconstruct and reshape the way we think too.

To conclude, the debate on whether teaching culture is necessary in classrooms has shown a general agreement that culture should be integrated in the curriculum of FL classrooms. Furthermore, cultural awareness is vital, not only to enhance students' cultural competence, but also to empower their language proficiency. Eventually, learning a language cannot go without learning its culture which denotes how meaning is encoded into language. This has led to the development of salient approaches that suggested several methods to teaching culture.

1.5 Cultural Awareness

It is the mental state in which a learner becomes aware of the similar and contrasting elements between their culture and the target culture. Byram (1989 p 27) wrote, "Learners need to be prepared for experience of the daily rhythm of the foreign culture, of the behaviours which are different and those which are the same but have a different significance". In this line, Kramsch (1993 p 8) argued that learners should be given the chance to explore and discover the cultural boundaries between home culture and target culture. This process would enable learners to not only learn new ways of communicating, enhancing their language proficiency, but also pushes them cross the barriers that culture differences build.

Eventually, as Cushner (1996 p 57) puts it, when people succeed at spotting the differences between their culture and others'; they will cease to judge and criticize the target culture, simply because they reached an understanding of how others' culture is different from theirs. In his words, "(...) one must understand how various customs have developed to contribute to the smooth functioning of a society."

1. 6 Approaches to Teaching Culture

Regarding the importance of culture, teaching such element has not been an easy task to carry out. Consequently, several scholars have suggested at least five practical techniques to help integrate culture in FL classrooms: (1) culture assimilation, (2) genuine materials, (3) culture capsules,(4) culture cluster and (5) role playing.

1. 6. 1 Culture Assimilation

This method is based on the theory that learners learn from experience more than they do with lessons. For them to understand the target culture, they are to be put in somehow made-up situations where they need to interact and experience a new culture. To illustrate, students when exposed to an expression from a different culture, the teacher gives them possible interpretations and they choose on the basis of what they have learned. The teacher, then, discusses with them their choices and explains which choice is the correct one (Wang, 2007). This theory helps students gain information about others' culture and communication.

1. 6. 2 Genuine Materials

Implementing authentic materials is proven to bring fruitful results. This method helps students gain access to original and real items from the target culture. As a result, learners would use language appropriately in situations that require cultural competence.

Kramsch (1993 p 196) argues that using multimedia in teaching can bring about many advantages and revolutionize the way culture is integrated and thus learned profoundly. Implementing visual aids contributes to the comprehension of the lesson in FL classroom. Furthermore, multimedia brings about authentic materials as videos, movies, conversations and slides. These materials help in exploring new cultures along with their meaning.

1. 6. 3 Culture Capsules

Culture Capsules is the method of integrating culture into teaching a foreign language. This method was first developed by Taylor and Sorensen (1961 p 350) they argued, " What follows suggests a method of procedure for the production of short, meaningful programs using this view of culture application in the ordinary foreign language classroom. Moreover, this view uses a comparative method to compare between the target culture and the culture of the learner in terms of greeting, food, phone calls, etc. They also suggest that this method would work best if compensated with audio-visual aids.

1. 6. 4 Culture Cluster

This theory is an extension to Culture Capsules. Culture Clusters, developed by Meade and Morian (1973), refers to the mixture of two or more capsules relating to one topic. The teacher's role in this view is to guide learners. An example of Culture Cluster is grades, and how they contribute in shaping the learners' academic career. The teacher explains how marks are given and how they differ from one culture to another. In addition, how different universities around the world require different grades in order to accept new applicants. (cited in Brislin, 1986)

Culture Capsules and Culture Cluster are important in teaching culture; they provide learners with an important amount of knowledge about the target culture. However, they neglect the emotional side of the learner. Role-plays, on the other hand, paid attention to learners' feelings.

1. 6. 5 Role-Plays

Roleplaying or "dramatization" is combining language and culture in a simulated context where they needs, to experience a different culture in order to complete the given task. In addition, roleplaying provides the learner not only with an exposure to a different culture, but also targets their feelings. As Isbell (1999 p 10) put it, "an environment in which they could experience new

and different feelings (...) risk-taking, shock, self-doubt, and fear". However, Role-plays activities should be designed carefully to meet with the psychological sides of learners; otherwise, this could lead to what Preisler (2011 p 205) mentioned as "culture-bumps" or "culture shock" which is the situation in which a learner finds himself overwhelmed with negative feelings such as, anger, frustration and unhappiness. This results when the learner has expectations and finds something entirely different. Furthermore, the teacher may need to explain more than instruct.

1. 7 Constraints in Teaching a Foreign Language

The constraints of teaching are limited to the abilities and merits related to teachers, learners, learning environments and conditions. As for teaching a foreign language, the teachers' qualifications contribute significantly to the reduction of any obstacles or constraints that a foreign language-learning environment may have. For that, the lack of knowledge about the foreign language, its grammar, strategies of teaching, and the inability of dealing with foreign language learners can all be constraints that hold back the teaching process. The EFL classrooms in Algeria, for instance, witness a number of setbacks particularly in the elementary level where English is still new to the learners; therefore, EFL teachers face barriers when teaching English. Furthermore, teachers who do not possess the cultural competence or lack knowledge on the target culture would be incapable of teaching a foreign language; some words are deeply rooted in culture and cannot be directly translated without an explanation. For instance, the word "Mayda" in Algerian Arabic would be translated to "table" which is not accurate. However, explaining that a "mayda" would be a round squared triangular short-legged table around which people sit to dine or have lunch would be more accurate. Moreover, textbooks that do not have culture integrated in them and the lack of authentic materials would also construct a block that hold learners from fully grasping the lesson.

Conclusion

Undeniably, culture remains one of the most controversial topics that are still debated. This chapter has provided several definitions to the concept of "culture". As it also decomposes culture into aspects and defines them separately. Furthermore, it has investigated the link between language and culture. Additionally, it highlights the importance of integrating culture into schooling curriculum, sheds light on the concept of "cultural awareness", and then states the main techniques employed in teaching culture that are assimilation, genuine materials, culture capsules and culture clusters, and role-plays.

Chapter Two

Methodology and Data Analysis

Introduction

Moving from theory to practice, the present research aims at investigating the middle school Algerian EFL teachers' attitudes towards the importance, usefulness and implementation of culture in EFL classrooms. The chapter at hand represents the practical part. An overall description of the research design is provided. It presents the characteristics of the population participating in this study. Further, the chapter provides a description of the research instruments used in the study, the questionnaire and the interview. Data collected from both tools are analyzed afterwards.

2.1. Research Design

To investigate the place of teaching culture at the level of Algerian middle schools, the researcher opted for a design that explores the teacher's knowledge, views and perceptions of culture teaching in theory and practice. For this the following questions have been raised:

1. Is teaching culture an important procedure when teaching EFL?
2. Can English be taught without emphasis on its culture?
3. Does teaching a target culture have drawbacks on learners?

Therefore, the study attempts to test the following hypotheses:

Our main aims in this research are:

- Teaching culture in the EFL Algerian middle schools' classrooms is not placed as important as it should be.
- EFL teachers' awareness of the importance of teaching culture in middle schools is desperately weak.

The research aims limit the researcher to the choice of population as well as the tools of investigation. It is necessary to note that all the participants are teachers of English at different levels in different middle schools situated in the city of Mostaganem, Algeria.

2.2. Participants

The target population in this study is the community of EFL teachers, namely Algerian middle school teachers. As they are teaching a foreign language and confronted to its culture in the course of teaching, they are selected to give insightful information about the situation of teaching culture in Algerian middle schools.

The total number of participants is twenty-five (25) EFL middle school teachers at different levels. The schools as mentioned earlier are all situated in the city of Mostaganem, Algeria. All participants are of different genders, ages, experiences and social and cultural backgrounds. Besides, they all participated in the first tool, the questionnaire, yet only ten (10) of them participated also in the second tool, the interview.

2.3. Research Instruments

There are two different tools of investigation in this study, a questionnaire and an interview. The mixed-method approach of qualitative and quantitative tools was selected by the researcher to be used in the investigation.

2.3.1 The Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was addressed to twenty-five (25) EFL middle school teachers (all participants). All participants in this questionnaire were requested to provide general information about their genders, ages, and experiences. They were further asked to answer some close-ended and open-ended questions that would reflect the way they perceive the importance of teaching

culture, their cultural awareness and attitudes towards the integration of culture in EFL Algerian learning contexts.

Part 1: aims at gathering general information about the participants such as their gender and age followed by the following questions:

Question 1: You are a: Permanent teacher, Part-time teacher

This question aims at revealing the number of permanent and part time teachers in the three middle schools.

Question 2: Years of Experience

This question aims at revealing the amount of time permanent and part-time teachers have as experience in teaching EFL.

Question 3: Class (es) you currently teach

This question allows the researcher to know which level the informant is currently teaching to link it to their type (part time or permanent teachers) and year of experience

Part 2: This part is devoted to investigating how teachers perceive of culture and whether or not they integrate it in their EFL classrooms.

Question 1: Do you prefer the old school curriculum or the new one? And why?

This question aims at checking which curriculum EFL teachers prefer.

Question 2: When preparing a lesson, is the syllabus enough for you as a teacher or do you bring modification to it?

This question aims at investigating the flexibility of teachers when it comes to teaching EFL.

Question 3: In your opinion, cultural implementations are more included in: Previous version of the textbook, Actual version of the textbook.

This question aims at assessing the cultural implementations in both old textbooks and new ones.

Question 4: Do you think that learning some cultural aspects about the target language is important?

This question aims at checking teachers' awareness of the importance of teaching English with its culture.

Question 5: In your opinion, can we learn a language without learning about its culture? Why?

This question aims at collecting teachers' opinions on the separation of language and its culture while teaching EFL.

Question 6: Which activities with cultural aspects you practice in your class?

This question aims at highlighting the process of teaching culture through activities.

Question 7: Throughout your teaching experience, do you feel that students have enough cultural knowledge about the English-speaking countries.

This question aims at showing the extent to which learners are knowledgeable about the culture of English-speaking countries.

Question 8: What can you do to enhance students' cultural knowledge?

This question targets the strategies that teachers undertake to enhance their learners cultural knowledge.

2.3.2 The Teachers' Interview

Only teachers of first-year level were interviewed. Thus, the interview was addressed only to ten (10) EFL middle school teachers (out of the total number of participants). All participants in this interview were requested to answer a few open-ended questions. Their answers are expected to support the results gained from the questionnaire. The interview, hence, aims at revealing the importance of culture being taught to learners of early levels of EFL in middle schools as well as the teachers' knowledge about culture.

2.4. Data Collection

The questionnaire was addressed to EFL middle school teachers of different levels. The data needed in this present research has been collected after being distributed to twenty-five participants. The teachers provided their opinions and claims about the importance of culture in EFL classroom. The interview was conducted with the teachers of first-year level. Ten interviews were made and data have been then collected.

Prior to data analysis, it is necessary to mention that data are to be quantitatively and qualitatively approached and analyzed for that the researcher relies on using both instruments (questionnaire and interview). The contents of the questionnaires and the interviews complete each other in terms of quantity and quality. As qualitative data are based on unstructured or semi-structured research instruments, the quality in the questionnaire reflects the few open-ended questions as it is existent in the contents of the interviews.

2.5. Data Analysis

This is divided into two parts, questionnaire and interview.

2.5.1 Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Part One: General Information

This part of the analysis presents the participants, classes and years of experience.

Less than 25	25 to 30	30 to 40	More than 40
3 (12%)	6 (24%)	12 (48%)	4 (16%)
Total: 25 (100%)			

Table 2. The Teachers' Ages

The informants of the questionnaire are of variant ages. The majority (48%) are aged between 30 to 40 years old. In addition, a percentage of (16%) demonstrates those who are more than 40 years old. However, only 12% representing those who are less than 25 years old and (24%) aged between 25 to 30 years old. The age variant reflects experience and whether the participant is a part time teacher or a permanent teacher. The two last percentages (12% and 24%) represents participants who are under 30 years old and who are more likely to be part-time teachers.

Permanent Teachers	Part time Teachers
18 (72%)	7 (28%)
Total: 25 (100%)	

Table 3. Permanent and Part-Time Teachers

As table 3 demonstrates, only seven (7) participants are part-time (or novice) teachers. While the remaining eighteen (18) participants are permanent teachers.

1-2 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	More than 10
3 (12%)	6 (32%)	7 (28%)	9 (36%)
Total: 25 (100%)			

Table 4. Teachers' Experience

As shown in table 4, teachers who have 1 to 2 years of experience are only three (3) teachers (12%). Teachers of 3 to 5 years of experience reflect 32%, while 28% represents those who have an experience of 5 to 10 years. However, the rest 36% represents nine (9) teachers who have more than ten (10) years of experience, which means that the latter are experienced permanent teachers.

1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
10	14	14	12

Table 5. Teachers' current classes

Teachers of middle schools have to teach at least one level, the majority of them teach two levels, and rarely one teacher holds responsibility of three levels. For that, the number of teachers in the table above reflects that most of the teachers opted for more than one level. The informants, as shown in the table, consist of ten (10) teachers who teach first-year level; fourteen (14) who teach second-year; fourteen (14) who teach third-year; and twelve (12) who teach fourth-year.

Part Two: Teachers' Views on Teaching Culture of Target Language

This part of the questionnaire tends to investigate the way middle school EFL teachers perceive teaching cultural aspects in their classrooms. The questions below are followed by tables and graphs that demonstrate the results from collected data.

1- Do you prefer the old school curriculum or the new one? And why?

Old Curriculum	New Curriculum
12 (48%)	13 (52%)

Table 6. Preferred Curriculum

As the table above shows, twelve (12) teachers (48%) preferred the old curriculum, while the other thirteen (13) teachers (52%) preferred the new curriculum.

Justifications

Those who preferred old curriculum of teaching in middle schools claimed that the activities are less complicated and methodologically organized. Also, the curriculum is designed to be dealt with in three trimesters unlike the new one which contains more activities and lessons that require more than a year to teach.

Those who preferred the new curriculum of teaching in middle schools claimed that the new program is updated and contains words that are new especially in the field of technology. In addition, it provides sets of activities that enrich the learners' cultural competence.

2- When preparing a lesson, is the syllabus sufficient for you as a teacher or do you bring modification to it?

Sufficient	Not Sufficient
18 (72%)	7 (28%)

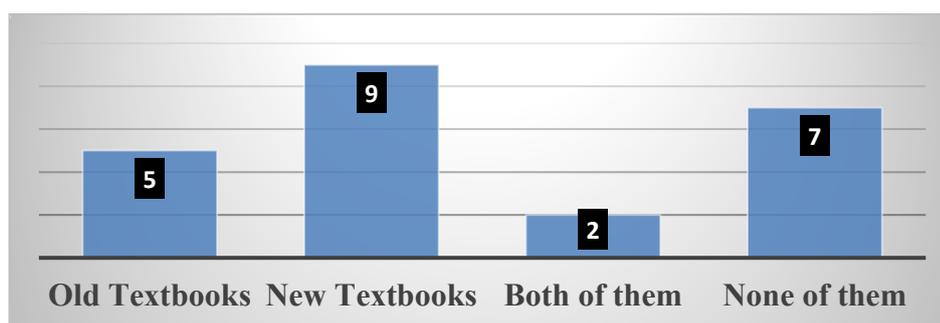
Table 7. Syllabus Sufficiency

Almost two-thirds (72%) of participants reported that what the syllabus contains is sufficient for the learners to have. Only seven (7) teachers considered that the syllabus as insufficient.

Justifications

For those who opted for 'not sufficient', they mentioned that they employ and include some elements like adding more activities that tackles the skill of writing, bringing new materials to help in delivering the lesson (such as documentaries, games or stories) and most importantly exposing learners to native speakers.

3- In your opinion, cultural implementations are more included in:



Graph 1. Cultural implementations in textbooks

The Graph above shows that five (5) teachers believed that cultural implementations are incorporated in the old textbooks while seven (7) of them believed that culture is excluded from both the new and the old textbooks. However, nine (9) teachers opted for the new textbooks. Only two (2) teachers are of neutral opinion, as they considered both the new and old textbooks containing elements of culture.

4- Do you think that teaching some cultural aspects about the target language is important?

Yes	No
21 (84%)	4 (16%)

Table 8. The importance of teaching cultural aspects of target language

Teaching cultural aspects about English in EFL middle schools has been perceived as important by the majority of teachers (84%). Only four (4) teachers did not consider teaching the target language's culture as important, thinking that language can be taught without its cultural aspects.

5- In your opinion, can your students learn English without learning about its culture?**Why?**

Yes	No
9 (36%)	16 (64%)

Table 9. Learning language without learning culture

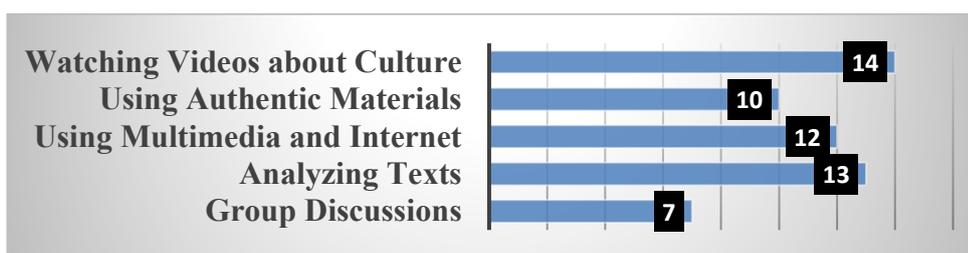
The answers of many teachers (64%) as shown in the table above indicate that learning EFL without learning the culture of English-speaking countries is impossible. However, nine (9) informants confirmed that learning a language is separate from learning its culture, so, the former can be learnt without learning the latter.

Justifications

Those who confirmed their students' inability of learning EFL without learning its culture emphasized the need of learning about English-speaking countries' cultures to understand the way they think and communicate.

As for those who saw no necessity to teach the language's culture, they believed that language can be taught in separation from its culture mainly because they taught English from old textbooks. Furthermore, they also argue that since English is an international language it does not necessarily include one specific culture. Therefore, teaching English without culture is more suitable for them.

6- Which activities with cultural aspects you practice in your class?



Graph 2. Activities with cultural aspects

Teachers opted for more than one activity in this question. Watching videos about English speaking countries was the commonly used activity where cultural elements are taught. Besides, reading and discussing texts about food, clothing and traditions of some countries are reported as another commonly implemented activity. Notably, twelve (12) informants mentioned the use of multimedia and internet (pictures, blogs, YouTube, recordings, etc.). Ten (10) teachers claimed that they use authentic materials when teaching culture, and other seven (7) teachers reported that they use groups discussions about target culture.

7- Throughout your teaching experience, do you feel that students have enough cultural knowledge about the English-speaking countries?

Yes	No	Medium Knowledge
7 (28%)	15 (60%)	3 (12%)

Table 10. Students' cultural knowledge

The table demonstrates that fifteen (15) Teachers in EFL classrooms assess their students' cultural knowledge as being insufficient, while seven (7) teachers argued otherwise. Only three (3) teachers answered that their students have a medium amount of knowledge concerning the target language's culture.

Justifications

Those who opted for “No” as an answer explained that when it comes to implementing culture in EFL classrooms, learners are less interactive and do not appreciate the target language’s culture. In addition, those teachers might not have the competence to teach culture. Those who answered “Yes” argued that technology and globalization help learners be more exposed to the English culture, and might become familiar with it through time. As for the rest of the teachers who picked “medium knowledge”, they believed that learners have an average amount of cultural knowledge.

8- What can you do to enhance students’ cultural knowledge?

Those who are against the separation between language and culture suggested that schools need to provide teachers with authentic materials reflecting the target culture in order to enhance students’ awareness about culture. Some suggested the use of audio-visual tools such as films, documentaries or pictures. Some teachers stressed that learners should be more engaging and willing to learn about the new culture. In addition, teachers should explain abstract ideas with examples taken from the target culture and not the local culture of the learner. Besides, learners have to be exposed to the target language’s culture for instance chatting with native speakers or asking them to exchange cultural information with them.

2.5.2 Analysis of the Teachers’ Interview

Only the teachers of first-year level middle school (ten teachers) have been interviewed in order to check their opinions about the importance of culture when teaching EFL. Their answers are briefly provided below after each question.

1- How do you define culture?

Two teachers defined it as another unit -other than language- that is acquired, learned and transmitted from generation to generation. Other two teachers agreed that culture is what nurtures a person throughout their life persistently, and it tells them what to do in almost all the events they witness, engage in and live. Other teachers provided different definitions. For instance, one said that culture is the sum of history, religion, values, social organization, and language. Another informant said that culture determines how people ought to behave in society. Besides, some teachers insisted on the fact that culture is the knowledge about things that help us communicate appropriately in our social groups.

2- Do you think culture is important when teaching any language?

The majority of teachers confirmed that culture is undeniable when it comes to foreign language teaching. Culture may pop up in any lesson that learners take. For that, they intensified the importance of culture being taught directly or indirectly in EFL classrooms. However, some participants claimed that the importance of culture is not apparent at elementary levels. That is, learners at middle schools, for instance, would find no benefit from learning culture, they rather allot time to learning the language. One teacher claimed that culture cannot be taught easily, it is the learners' job to read about the culture or learn it from real interactions; hence, for him, culture is important yet not in the learning environment.

3- Do you think that cultural aspects are included or missing in the current curriculum?

Culture was considered as a fifth macro-skill by teachers, that is why there is a separate section reserved for culture in textbooks. However, teachers saw these sections as not including the elements of culture that learners typically experience difficulty with. Some teachers reported

that textbooks focus on manifold cultures such as the American, the British, and the Indian compared to the Algerian one, promote mutual understanding and tolerance.

All informants confirmed that the textbook contains cultural aspects such as some songs. ('Where have all the flowers gone?' sung by Bob Dylan, 'a rainy Sunday' sang by Jimmy Spkens, and others), Textbooks also consist of some American cultural texts such as Indian tribes living in the south-east of America, an article entitled: 'Should we celebrate Martin Luther King Day?', and other cultures (like Indian culture). Some teachers claim that much cultural elements (like proverbs, values, beliefs, celebrations) are missing from the textbook, as they said that diversity would make it interesting.

4- Do you find it difficult to teach a foreign culture?

All informants claimed that they find no hardship in teaching culture. Rather, they consider it fun and enjoyable when sharing cultural knowledge. Some teachers answered that they like to warm up lessons about culture and introduce gradually the relevant skills in each session and use different techniques to acquire the culture of a language. In brief, the informants' views agreed on the easiness and manipulation of lessons that raise learners' awareness of intercultural issues and enable them to communicate effectively and appropriately in a variety of communicative contexts.

5- Do you think that mixing between native and foreign cultures is beneficial to learners?

Almost all teachers reported that mixing between local and foreign cultures when teaching EFL is a necessity. Some claimed that learners should act ethnocentrically and compare foreign culture to their own cultures. It is in such way that learners discover local cultures and understand the foreign culture. Only three teachers disagree on the idea of mixing between cultures. Rather, they opined that culture is within language and vice versa. That is, language and culture cannot be separable -or considered as two- by textbook's contents, nor by teacher's methods of teaching.

6- Do you think that teachers should focus on teaching language or on teaching culture?

The majority of teachers preferred to focus on teaching language. It is the reason why they are in classroom. However, culture cannot be avoided, for them, it would be taught occasionally and accordingly. They reported that EFL teachers, for instance, should focus on how learners need to improve their writing and speaking, hence, learning culture for them would be easier. No teacher opted for focusing on teaching culture, yet some of the informants claimed that it is the teacher's mission and intelligence that drive the class to be learning language and culture. Such argument, for them, clarifies the inseparability of language and culture in the learning environment. One teacher stressed that focusing on language or on culture is driven by the lesson objectives.

7- If you were to bring any modifications regarding culture to the current textbook, what would you change?

Some teachers recommended that reading lessons must be about the English-speaking countries and not about the local cultures. For them, it is necessary to raise learners' awareness about how British or Americans live, celebrate, clothe, eat, and communicate with others. Raising such awareness would help learners to get interested in learning the language and its culture. However, three teachers emphasized that teaching cultural aspects should be well-studied and strategically taught. For them, it is hard for EFL learners at early stages to confront more than linguistic obstacles. One teacher reported that the only modification she would bring is reducing the number of sequences and units in the textbooks and replacing them by classroom activities that help learners be involved and interested in the EFL classroom. For her, their interest must be the motive for them to learn about the foreign culture.

Conclusion

The present chapter has provided an overview of the research design. Data have been collected from a questionnaire and an interview conducted with EFL middle schools. The chapter has also presented the data analysis, starting by the answers of the total number of participants on the questionnaire, and ending by the answers of first-year middle school teachers on the interview. After dealing with the research methodology and data analysis, the following chapter will provide the major findings from the analysis and discusses the results of the study. It will also provide some relevant implications and recommendations.

Chapter Three

Findings and Recommendations

Introduction

The present chapter aims at delivering a discussion and commenting on the findings of the previous chapter. First, it discusses the data of the questionnaire by analysing Algerian EFL teachers' answers. Second, the interview is analysed to stress out how first-level EFL teachers consider the cultural component in teaching English. This chapter concludes with providing recommendations to help raising awareness about integrating culture in textbooks, training teachers and dealing with learners.

3.1. Findings from Questionnaire

This section deals with the data yielded from the second chapter's analysis.

3.1.1 First Part: General Information

The majority of informants are aged between 30 to 40 years. This goes hand in hand with the second question that revealed: this category of teachers is permanent with a full-time job. Then, when asking about their years of experience, sixteen informants answered that they had 5 to more than 10 years of experience. This constituted roughly a percentage of 64%. This percentage demonstrated also the permanent teachers.

In another question concerning which levels of middle school informants teach, most of teachers taught more than one level and occasionally one (1) teacher holds responsibility of teaching three levels. That is, mainly, because teachers of middle schools are to teach two levels and more, especially the permanent teachers. Therefore, experienced teachers play a major role in teaching culture in most levels

3.1.2 Part Two: Views on Teaching Culture

This part discusses how EFL teachers consider teaching cultural elements in their classrooms.

First, to differentiate between the old and the new curriculum, teachers were asked which one they preferred, 52% of them chose the new one. Those in favour of the old curriculum asserted that activities were less complicated and organized and did not require more than three trimesters to finish the entire syllabus. Whereas, the remaining percentage (48%) explained that the new curriculum contained elements of culture mainly in the field of technology. Consequently, permanent teachers, who are the majority, do not consider the new curriculum perhaps for two reasons: the first, because they taught it more than five years and, for them, it proved fruitful to some extent. The second, perhaps because they are not familiar with teaching lessons that consist of cultural elements.

Furthermore, a percentage of 72% teachers do not consider adding, modifying or deleting parts from the syllabus because they think it is sufficient. However, those who said it was insufficient argued that more creativity (games and films) should be inserted in the syllabus as well as bringing new materials from the target language's culture to help learners grasp the lesson easily. Moreover, nine (9) informants confirmed that the new textbooks incorporate cultural implementations, while seven (7) teachers said that culture is excluded from both the old and new textbooks. This demonstrates two elements: new textbooks consider culture to some extent; those who believe that not all textbooks consider culture lack cultural awareness.

In the Fifth question, 64% of teachers argued that their students could not learn English without its culture; they justified that learning the target language's culture is important to know how natives think and communicate. Fundamentally, some idioms and expressions are imbued with culture; that is, a student cannot understand an idiom without referring to the culture of that language. Moreover, most of teachers project films with cultural aspects in their EFL classrooms, and the rest used the traditional method of reading texts and analysing them with learners. The lack of diversity of teaching methods would not help students gain more cultural awareness and

competence. Teachers have to opt for more creative approaches, such as the use of multimedia and internet (YouTube, pictures and recordings)

The questionnaire ends with two questions: first, teachers who were asked to evaluate the cultural knowledge of their students most of them (60%) said that their students do not possess the sufficient cultural capacity. This proves that not only teachers do not consider culture as important, but also learners are inactive and do not appreciate learning a new culture. This might be because learners have to build their cultural identity first then learn a new culture. Furthermore, teachers suggested that their institutions have to provide them with materials that are more authentic, documentaries and innovative tools. In addition, they incite their learners to engage in conversations with natives in order to exchange information concerning their cultures.

3.2. Teachers' Interview Discussion

The researcher interviewed ten (10) middle school teachers teaching first-year level classes. First almost all informants agreed on culture being a sum of beliefs, values and conventions organized by society. Most importantly, some teachers argue that culture is knowledge that facilitates communication; this goes in line with the assumption that culture is a knowledge transmitted from a generation to another (Webber, 2003). However, culture within an EFL context is referred to as a cultural competence that allows learners to understand the target language's culture and; hence, effective communication.

Commenting on the importance of culture, most of teachers emphasized the role of culture in teaching any foreign language as it carries information and meanings and delivers them through language. However, they argued that teaching first-year students' culture is not that important. Noticeably, those teachers did not deny the importance of culture, yet they do not think it is important in learning situations. That is to say, learners have to focus on enhancing their cultural

knowledge and shaping an identity; then, they would learn another culture through referring to their native one as some teachers suggested.

Furthermore, on the importance of teaching language or teaching culture, most of first year teachers seemed to agree on the fact that they should focus on improving their learners' skills as writing and speaking. Considering culture as a part of language, they argued that teaching language means teaching culture because languages reflect culture. Teachers' also stated that the new textbooks should be revised and cultural elements should be reinforced. For instance, when dealing with conversations, the characters should have British or American names as Emily or Ryan. In addition, sequences should be reduced and some activities should be replaced with ones that require learners to be more active and interested in learning foreign culture; simply because culture reinforces language and words are created to describe things that exist within any societies' cultures.

Dealing with culture in EFL classrooms is an intricate task that requires teachers who are well trained and aware of the importance of culture in teaching English. Teachers' opinions and knowledge about culture is summed in two opinions: those who believe that teaching culture to first year students is not important, and those who think that culture is taught through language; however, they all agreed on the fact that culture cannot be separated from language as it is crucial to facilitating communication with others.

3.3. Recommendations

This part is dedicated for recommendations; it seeks to deliver guidelines concerning the implementation of culture in EFL classrooms' lessons and textbooks through enhancing teachers' and learners' awareness of the importance of culture.

3.3.1 Textbook Design

In secondary school curriculum, there seems to be less emphasis on the cultural component of English. It is highly recommended that the syllabi should be revised and a lesson dedicated to defining culture must be inserted. In addition, textbooks should be re-designed so that they present culture along with language; for instance, teaching culture through literature and group activities would be fruitful with young learners who have a poor cultural competence. Textbooks are considered as the first source of teaching culture; for this, to emphasize culture, the following points are suggested:

- Lessons that portray the importance of culture should be added to the textbook design.
- The cultural element in activities should regard the foreign culture as an integral part of teaching English rather than an extra material
- Significant features in the foreign culture are not to be viewed briefly but should be focused on; such as, adding native people's names, holidays and idiomatic expressions.

3.3.2 Teachers' Training

Algerian teachers consider culture as an important element in learning English, however they are somehow hesitant when it comes to the actual integration of culture in their EFL classrooms. In addition, in chapter's two analysis, almost all teachers lack deep knowledge about culture and are not trained to teach it; therefore, the following lines deliver various recommendations concerning the improvement of teachers' knowledge on culture:

- Teachers are learners; for this, teachers should first focus on enhancing their cultural knowledge through reading foreign language literature, raising questions and encouraging -their learners to do further researches.

- Providing authentic materials can be used in bringing a real-life situation into the classroom; for instance, the use of video tapes or DVDs on computers would encourage learners to engage more in analysing and learning foreign cultures.
- Teachers should be aware of the fact that textbooks and syllabuses are not sufficient to teach about culture; therefore, teachers should add lessons, delete activities or even adapt them to be compatible with learners' competences and needs.

3.3.3 Focusing on Learners

A good grasp of English grammar, pronunciation and vast vocabulary is indeed necessary for learners to improve their skills; however, it is not sufficient to make communications on going and fluid. For this, learners should be guided to know when to be silent, when to speak, what to say, when to say it and how to say it. These elements culminate in what Dell Hymes (1972) communicative competence. Besides, learners need to widen their views on and learn on their own different topics across cultures; they have to also focus on the cultural element and not only the linguistic objects such as syntax or vocabulary.

To enhance learners' awareness of foreign culture, organizing calls on skype with native speakers would provide an excellent opportunity for them to learn culture from its natural source. Furthermore, learners should be encouraged to exchange cultural knowledge with natives through social media websites. In addition, reading several authentic materials such as magazines or newspapers would also be of a great benefit.

It should be noted, first, that introducing learners to a new culture should go in line with teaching them about their own culture. By this, their appreciation of what culture is will raise and they would focus on building their identity first. After that, learners will be able to recognize the significance of learning about their culture and foreign cultures. However, a wide exposure to "Western Cultures" might be harmful to learners; therefore, teachers should guide and present culture in a careful and objective way.

To conclude, the aim of school is not only to educate learners, but also to prepare them for real life situations that require the learner to be a skilful communicator. That is why learning culture is fundamental because it achieves harmony and unity between members of different societies and it forms individuals' identities and self-awareness.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and provided comments on the data yielded from the second chapter based on the variety of responses provided by EFL teachers. To begin with, the questionnaire was divided into two parts. First part mentioned briefly some general yet important information about the participants. The second part emphasized how teachers view cultural aspects in their classrooms. Moreover, it has explained teachers' comments on culture integration. It ended on providing some recommendations at three levels: bringing alterations into textbooks, training teachers and raising learners' awareness about culture.

General Conclusion

Relying on mixed method approach of utilizing a questionnaire for quantitative data and an interview for qualitative data, the present study has examined the cultural component in Algerian middle schools in EFL classroom specifically first-level classrooms. It has set three aims to achieve. The first aim is the importance of teaching culture in ELF classrooms, the second, the possibility of teaching English without its culture and the third, the effects of integrating culture on EFL learners. Based on the compiled data, the researcher has described teachers' answers then discussed them to reveal how EFL teachers view teaching culture.

Based on the findings of the second chapter, it is demonstrated that almost all informants view culture as an inseparable element from teaching language. However; first-level teachers argue that their learners should build their cultural identity first then learn about a target culture. In addition, Algerian EFL teachers hold the premise that culture is carried through its language and cannot be taught without it. Eventually, it is shown that integrating culture uncontrollably or subjectively may have negative effects on learners. Notably, the aforementioned findings validate the researcher's hypotheses.

The researcher has concluded that middle school teachers lack cultural awareness and the appropriate training for the purpose of integrating culture in their lessons. In addition, it is their responsibility to encourage learners to enhance their cultural competence and lead successful conversations with native speakers. For this, authentic elements should be made available for teachers and textbook content should be redesigned so that it include the cultural element of English.

Fundamentally, introducing learners to a foreign culture may fail or produce negative effects; therefore, learners' awareness of their own culture should be shaped first: because when they grasp their own culture and that they are a product of their culture, they would build a bridge to learn a foreign culture. Simply, they would refer to their own culture while learning a foreign

one. In addition, learning a foreign culture does not mean abiding to that culture and losing one's identity; it means knowing how to communicate, understand and treat people who have a different culture.

In summary, all the words that have been written about this topic, namely culture, remain the most challenging aspect of teaching a foreign language. All theories about culture teaching are subjected to further investigation since EFL classrooms differ in terms of learners' needs, capacities and even psychologies. Eventually, teachers and learners should consider the immense role of learning a language along with its culture without marginalizing grammar and other important linguistic elements.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Teachers Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire which is a part of a Master dissertation at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University, Mostaganem. Your insights and opinions are important for the completion of the study.

Part One: General Information

Gender: Male Female

Age:

You are a: Permanent teacher Part-time teacher

Years of Experience:

Class(es) you currently teach: 1st 2nd 3rd 4th

Part Two: Tick the appropriate answer and fill in when necessary

1- Do you prefer the old school curriculum or the new one? And why?

The old one The new one

Why?

2- When preparing a lesson, is the syllabus enough for you as a teacher or do you bring modification to it?

Enough Not Enough

If yes what other elements do you try to include?.....

.....

3- In your opinion, cultural implementations are more included in:

Previous version of the textbook None of them

Actual version of the textbook Both of them

4- Do you think that learning some cultural aspects about the target language is important?

Yes No

5- In your opinion, can we learn a language without learning about its culture? Why?

Yes No

Why?

6- Which activities with cultural aspects you practice in your class?

- Group discussions about target culture
- Using multimedia and internet
- Analyzing texts
- Using authentic materials when introducing cultural themes
- Watching videos talking about English speaking countries

7- Throughout your teaching experience, do you feel that students have enough cultural knowledge about the English-speaking countries?

Yes No Medium knowledge

If no, can you explain the reasons?

.....

8- What can you do to enhance students' cultural knowledge?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your collaboration!

Appendix 2

Teacher's Interview

Dear teacher,

You are kindly requested to answer this interview, which is a part of a Master dissertation at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University, Mostaganem. Your insights and opinions are important for the completion of the study.

- 1- How do you define culture?
- 2- Do you think culture is important when teaching any language?
- 3- Do you think that cultural aspects are included or missing in the current curriculum?
- 4- Do you find it difficult to teach a foreign culture?
- 5- Do you think that mixing between native and foreign cultures is beneficial to learners?
- 6- Do you think that teachers should focus on teaching language or on teaching culture?
- 7- If you were to bring any modifications regarding culture to the current textbook, what would you change?