

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research



University of Tlemcen
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

**Intercultural Competence in the Algerian
EFL Classrooms at the Middle-level
Education: An Evaluation of “Spotlight on
English: Book Three”.**

**Extended Essay Submitted to the Department of English as a Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Language
Studies**

Presented by

Ms. Fatima Zohra BERRAMDANE

Supervised by

Dr. Boumediene BERRABAH

Board of Examiners

Dr. Abdellatif SEMMOUD	(MCA)	President	University of Tlemcen
Dr. Boumediene BERRABAH	(MCA)	Supervisor	University of Tlemcen
Dr. Nawal BENMOSTEFA	(MCA)	Examiner	University of Tlemcen

Academic Year 2016-2017

Dedications

First, I want to thank Allah for giving me strength and faith to finish this work.

*I dedicate this research work to my dear parents for their emotional support,
love, prayers and patience.*

*I am especially grateful to my lovely sister Samia and my dear brother
Mohammed Mehdi for their motivation and moral help.*

*A great thank to all my big family especially my grandmothers, my uncles and
their wives, my sweet cousins and my dear aunts.*

To all my best friends: Asma, Cherifa, Wahiba, Rim, Souad and Nassima.

To all my colleagues at Chikhi Moussa Middle School.

And to all those who I love but I did not mention their names.

Acknowledgments

First, my utmost gratitude and praise to Allah for helping and guiding me to realize this extended essay.

I would like to express my special thanks to my supervisor

Dr. BERRABAH,

for his endless help, guidance, encouragement, support and devotion of his precious time for the fulfilment of this research work.

Deepest gratitude is also expressed to the members of the jury, who accepted to devote some of their valuable time to read, evaluate and comment on this work.

I am also extremely grateful to all the respectful teachers in the English Department at the University of Tlemcen.

Enormous thanks to BELHADI SeifEddine whose kind patience, help and encouragement are so much appreciated.

Finally, special thanks should be expressed to all the middle school teachers who provided the necessary data which helped in the realization of this work.

Abstract

The present research work aims at investigating the development of intercultural competence in the Algerian EFL classrooms at the middle-level education. Accordingly, this issue is examined through an analysis of the cultural content of the third-year middle school textbook “Spotlight on English: Book Three” as well as the integration of the target culture within the process of teaching English as a foreign language. The premise is that the target culture is not well-covered in the textbook under investigation yet. Subsequently, it does not help develop EFL learners’ intercultural competence. In addition, EFL teachers at the middle-level schools neglect the mechanisms of teaching the culture of the target language. To validate these hypotheses, 25 third-year middle school teachers were chosen randomly to provide answers to a set of questions in a questionnaire as a tool of research on the one hand. On the other hand, a checklist for analyzing the cultural content of “Spotlight on English: Book Three” was set as the second instrument. The obtained results have not only revealed that the textbook does not offer enough materials to contribute in the improvement of the EFL learners’ intercultural competence, but teachers, themselves; do not give much importance to the integration of the target culture within the English language teaching process as well. Relatedly, the researcher provides some recommendations and suggestions for EFL teachers as for the introduction of authentic materials in the textbook in order to develop intercultural competence in the EFL classrooms at the middle-level schools.

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List of Abbreviations

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

General Introduction

General introduction

The tight relationship between language and culture in general and the integration of culture in English language teaching (ELT) in particular has long been recognized by scholars and educators. This will give learners of English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) both language mastery and cultural knowledge. As a matter of fact, foreign language learning/teaching process would be unsuccessful and ineffective without the introduction of culture in EFL classrooms.

In the same line of thought, textbooks are considered as one of the most important tools for foreign language teaching. They provide learners not only with linguistic knowledge, but with a variety of activities and genuine materials that cover target culture components. Thus, culture is a significant ingredient in EFL textbooks; and, the rationale is how to make EFL learners aware of the target culture and become competent in the use of language for effective communication. Moreover, the cultural content in EFL textbooks can also be a source for developing learners' intercultural competence and raising their cross-cultural communication as well. Many scholars namely Byram puts emphasis on the fact that intercultural competence has become a vital skill in such interconnected world. Henceforth, developing intercultural competence in EFL learners at all levels of education should be considered as a target.

There is no doubt, therefore, that EFL teachers also play a crucial role in the initiation of learners to the target culture. They (teachers) should function as mediators to install logic and balanced comparison between learners' own culture and the target language's one. To do so, they should be aware and well informed about different cultural aspects of the other culture in order to provide the chance for their learners to reflect, understand and respect other cultural identities. Consequently, they will promote learners' willingness to learn about the target culture and enhance their intercultural competence and intercultural skills.

This research work aims at analyzing the cultural content of third-year middle school textbook “Spotlight on English: Book Three” as well as the cultural component in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Arguably, this encounter plays a perennial role in enhancing EFL learners’ intercultural competence. Therefore, the premise is that culture is rarely dealt with in most EFL classrooms at middle schools. Besides, the cultural content of the textbook does not give learners the opportunity to reflect on their native culture as well as the target one. Yet, the intercultural perspective to culture teaching in EFL classrooms is disregarded by both textbooks and teachers as well.

For this and that, the formulation of the hypotheses below has been set

1. EFL teachers at middle schools often neglect foreign culture teaching.
2. Though “Spotlight on English: Book Three” includes some cultural aspects about the target culture, they are not enough for enhancing learners’ intercultural competence.

However, the following research questions have been put forward to verify the above allegations:

1. Do EFL teachers at middle schools know about and give importance to culture teaching?
2. To what extent is the cultural content of “Spotlight on English: Book Three” sufficient and suitable for developing EFL learners’ intercultural competence?

To examine the previous hypotheses, the researcher opted for two different research instruments: the teachers’ questionnaire and the cultural evaluation checklist.

The structure of this research work consists of three main chapters. The first one is devoted to the literature review of culture teaching and intercultural competence. It holds two main parts: The first part gives a general view about the relationship between language and culture as well as culture in foreign language teaching. It also highlights the importance of integrating the target culture in EFL

textbooks. The second part, however, highlights the concept of communicative competence, intercultural competence, intercultural communicative competence and other related components. It also discusses one of the most influential models of intercultural communicative competence: 'Byram's model'. The second chapter which represents the practical side gives a description of the research methodology including the research design and the research instruments as well as the sample population. In addition, it gives a detailed analysis of the gathered data. The third and last chapter is devoted to the interpretation of the obtained results in an attempt to validate the research hypotheses. Moreover, it provides some suggestions and recommendations on the basis of the findings.

Chapter One

Literature Review

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1.1 Introduction

The relationship between language and culture has long been a subject matter in the history of foreign language teaching and learning. The reason is that culture is a peculiar feature of human beings which is deeply embedded in language. Many scholars namely Kramsch and Byram reiterate that without culture, foreign language teaching remains inadequate and incomplete. Hence, foreign language learning seems aimless if the students do not possess enough knowledge about the way of life of the people who speak the target language. Therefore, besides acquiring linguistic ability, the learners should also develop their cultural knowledge as well.

The present chapter is devoted to elucidate the concept of culture. It tries to highlight the relationship between culture and foreign language teaching. Accordingly, it will trace the history of culture teaching, the common approaches to teaching it in foreign language classrooms as well as culture in EFL textbooks. It is also devoted to give an overview about Hymes' communicative competence and its components. In addition, it deals with intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence which was coined by Byram, one of the main scholars in the field of the cultural research.

1.2 Culture Defined

Due to its complex nature, culture has always been a difficult concept to define. Tylor (1871), a pioneer English Anthropologist, claims that "culture... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, law, morals, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Collins English Dictionary (1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, and 2003) defines culture from two different points of view:

From the sociological perspective, culture is the total amount of the inherited and innate ideas, attitudes, beliefs, values, and knowledge, comprising or forming the shared foundations of social actions. Likewise, from the anthropological and ethnological views, culture encompasses the total range of activities and ideas of a specific group of people with common and shared traditions, which are conveyed, and highlighted by members of that group.

Many people believe that culture refers to art, literature, customs and life style. These aspects are called observable signs of culture. Nevertheless, culture also involves invisible features like beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes. Moreover, Hudson (1980) views culture as “a social knowledge inherited by the human being within his social group”. Culture may also be used to refer to the way people think about and comprehend the world as well as their lives.

Furthermore, culture is generally divided into two main types: culture with capital “C” and culture with small “c”. The former refers to the bulk of literature and arts. While the latter includes the sum of attitudes, norms, values, i.e., the total way of life. (Richards and Schmidt, 2002:138)

Kramsch (1998:10) asserts that culture is “a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, and acting”. Thus, there is a set of standards and principles through which the individuals recognize themselves as members of a social group, living within the same area and sharing the same history as well as concepts, meanings and values.

1.3 Language and Culture

Language is first and foremost the basic means of communication. This aspect of human behaviour is illustrated by the well-known definition of the American Anthropologist Edward Sapir (1921) who claims that “language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.”

Language, on the other hand, is largely considered as the primary tool for the transmission of cultural knowledge. Therefore, language and culture are so interrelated that cultural knowledge is crucial for successful and effective communication in an individual's mother tongue as well as the target language. This relationship between language and culture has been described as "intricate and interdependent" (Mitchell and Myles, 2004:235)

In order to illustrate such connection, different metaphors have been used by many scholars, such as the concept "ice berg" in which language stands for the visible part while culture represents the concealed part.

To show the interrelatedness of language and culture, Brown (2007:189) claims that "one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture". In addition, Byram (1989) asserts that language is an instrument to express speakers' knowledge and how they perceive the world. He believes that language cannot be learnt without its culture since speaking a language means expressing its culture. Therefore, language reflects the way people think and live. In the same line of thought, Kramsch (1998) identifies three links between language and culture which may be summarized as follows:

- Language expresses cultural reality.
- Language embodies cultural reality.
- Language symbolizes cultural reality.

First, language expresses the speaker's beliefs and intentions about the real world. In this sense, people belonging to the same social group utter words which reflect their common experiences. Second, members of the same social group create experience through language. Relatedly, they convey meaning through the way they interact with each other via verbal and/ non-verbal messages. Hence, language embodies, and symbolizes cultural reality.

1.4. History of Culture Teaching

The British Council of Modern Studies (1918) was the first to insist on the necessity of teaching culture. The council stressed the “need for culture knowledge of a country and its people as parts of a second language education” (Stern, 1992:205).

Before 1960, many scholars believed that culture was not officially valued in language teaching. At that time, most of teachers focused only on teaching certain aspects such as history, art and literature of the target culture. Yet, by the beginning of the 1960's there was a shift in emphasis towards an Anthropological approach to the teaching of culture, i.e., daily life style. However, culture was separated from language learning and presented on courses known as: background studies, area studies and British life. In Germany, however, it was introduced under the name of *Landeskunde*; in France, as civilization and in Italy as *Civilita* (Byram, 1989: 58). In all these courses, culture was considered as “mere information conveyed by the language, not as a feature of language itself” (Kramersch, 1993: 8). Thus, culture teaching was seen as additional to language teaching and not as an integral part of it. In fact, it was until the 1980's that scholars such as Brook (one of the first scholars who focused on the significance of integrating culture in language education) developed successful ways to incorporate culture in foreign language teaching.

By the nineteenth century, culture started gaining ground with the emergence of the Reform Movement which is based on the idea that the linguistic system should be taught along with the linguistic system of teaching aspects of the target culture. From that time on, culture started to be felt necessary and important in the making of pertinent syllabi and the design of successful language courses.

1.5 Importance of Culture Teaching

Research in the field of culture teaching has shown that culture must be taught in language courses as it is a fundamental component of foreign language learning. Many scholars believe that possessing enough knowledge about the target culture is of crucial importance in the process of foreign language learning and teaching. Besides, Byram (1989) asserts that cultural awareness is necessary in language teaching for the reason that it leads to language proficiency. He adds that culture should be included in any language curriculum because language reveals the speakers' values and their views towards the world. Another primary aspect of culture teaching is to develop learners' abilities to communicate effectively in the different situations they may come across. Thus, teaching culture is certainly needed. Kramsch, (1998:10), claims that "language use has its own social grammar rules, settings, rules of speaking and norms of interpretation". Hence, foreign language learners have to be aware about the norms and the social meanings of the language they learn, so that to accomplish their communicative needs (Littlewood, 1981). Similarly, Wang (2008) states that "foreign language teaching is foreign culture teaching, and foreign language teachers are foreign culture teachers.". Such claim puts forward the perennial role culture holds in the teaching of second and foreign languages. Thus, culture should constitute an integral part of any teaching process of any language.

1.6 Culture in Foreign Language Teaching

Many scholars assert that cultural knowledge is undeniably an integral part of foreign language teaching and that culture must be integrated into the foreign language curriculum. Corbett (2003:26) explains that "the integration of culture into the language classrooms has a profound impact on the overall goals of the language curriculum, promoting us to reconsider why we are teaching learners to communicate in an L2 at all."

Moreover, foreign language learning includes not only knowledge of grammar, phonology, lexis, but also knowledge of different features and aspects of the target culture. Ultimately, “without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete” (Peck, 1998: 1). Besides, it is of high importance for learners to be more aware about the target culture and the role that it plays in their foreign language learning process as well as their language use in authentic and real life situations. Accordingly, teachers should take into consideration the learners needs in relation to the target culture.

1.6.1 Culture and EFL textbooks

Textbooks play a crucial role in the process of foreign language teaching among other teaching materials. They provide a wide range of topics, texts and new vocabulary. They also serve as a basic source for most language input and cultural content. For teachers, on the other hand, “the text book may serve primarily to supplement the teachers’ instruction” (Richards, 2001:1).

Richards (2001:12) asserts that textbooks:

- ✓ Provide structure and a syllabus for a program.
- ✓ Help to standardize instruction.
- ✓ Maintain quality.
- ✓ Provide a variety of learning resources.
- ✓ Provide effective language models and input; especially for teachers whose first language is not English.
- ✓ They can train teachers if they have limited teaching experience.

However, textbooks may have potential negative effects, such as:

- ❖ They may contain inauthentic language.
- ❖ They may distort content; for instance textbooks may present an idealized view of the world or fail to present real issues.
- ❖ They may not reflect learners’ needs and interests. (Richards, 2001:2).

EFL textbooks are designed to facilitate foreign language learning and teaching and because of the interconnectedness of language and culture, they should include aspects of the target culture. They should integrate cultural knowledge derived from real life situations. They should also be a reference source for activities and tasks that help learners to enhance their intercultural skills. Davcheva et al (2003: 91 mentioned in Sandorova, 2016:9) reported that EFL textbooks has a significant impact on the way of teaching culture in foreign language classrooms.

Several classifications of EFL textbooks have been proposed. For instance Cortazzi and Jin (1999:36) identify three types of textbooks according to their cultural content:

- Source-culture based textbooks.
- Target-culture based textbooks.
- International target-culture based textbooks. (cited in Zenagui, 2007:26).

The first type includes those textbooks which are designed at a national level for a given country. They aim at teaching the learners' local culture rather than the target one. Henceforth, they do not seek to develop learners' intercultural competence and cross-culture communication. The second type includes textbooks which focus only on the target culture. However, target-culture based textbooks are often criticized because of their commercial nature. The last type include a varied set of cultures of different cultures where English is the international language.

EFL textbooks should include explicit cultural knowledge to expose learners to a variety of values, perspectives, traditions, and peoples' perception of the world also to achieve intercultural competence and build cultural awareness (Hastoss, 2004:9, *ibid*). Thus, they should provide learners with useful and meaningful cultural content. In addition, textbooks should be designed in a manner that fosters reflection and comparison between learners' local culture and the target one. To do so, textbook designers should take into account authentic materials and avoid the use of artificial and unrealistic presentation of the target culture.

1.6.2 Approaches of Culture Teaching

From the early start introducing culture as an essential component, different approaches have emerged inoculating proper strategies according to various data and arguments. Thus, these approaches varied much in terms of the way, the amount and the extent to which learners of second and/or foreign languages should be exposed to culture. Below is a series of different approaches dealing with teaching languages and culture.

1.6.2.1 The Foreign-cultural Approach

It is based on the conception of the single culture whereby emphasis is put on the target culture. The foreign -cultural approach also called the mono-cultural approach (Byram and Fleming, 1998) is not concerned with the learners' own culture as it does not make any comparison between the two cultures. Thus, it focuses only on the foreign culture without dealing with the learners' culture nor the differences and similarities between the two. The main goal of such approach is to enhance the learners' communicative and cultural competence. However, it has been criticized because it does not focus on the relationship between the two cultures. The drawbacks of this approach led to the emergence of the intercultural approach.

1.6.2.2 The Intercultural Approach

This approach is modeled on the idea that any culture is effectively learnt through comparison between the target culture and learners' own one and developing their understanding of both. However, the central focus remains the target culture. It seeks to raise students' intercultural and communicative competences that will allow them "to function as mediators between the two cultures (Byram and Fleming, 1998: 244). According to the Institute of Specialized and Intercultural Communication, University of Warsaw the intercultural approach is concerned with:

- a. Helping learners to know how intercultural communication takes place.

- b. How social identities are part of all interaction.
- c. How their perceptions of other people and other people's perceptions of them influence the success of communication.
- d. How they can find out for themselves more about the people they are communicating with.

Furthermore, it helps learners to develop a kind of “reflective attitude” by recognizing similarities and differences between the two cultures. In this respect, the learners will avoid stereotypes and negative views about the target culture, i.e. identifying and accepting the aspects of the target culture. However, Risager (1998:246) maintains that “the intercultural approach is ineffective because it is “blind to the actual multicultural character of almost all existing countries or states”. Instead, the teachers, in a way, are compelled to use the multicultural approach since it encounters the whole parameters that guarantee an overall experience of culture diversities as a component of successful language learning.

1.6.2.3 The Multicultural Approach

This approach is based on the idea that various cultures may coexist within a single culture. It involves a specific emphasis “on the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the target country or countries and [on] relations between the target countries and the learners’ own and other countries” (Byram and Fleming, 1998:246 cited in Zenagui, 2007:19). Hence, just as the intercultural approach, comparison is crucial in the multicultural approach and it aims at raising reflective attitudes. However, for such an approach the target language is introduced to some learners as a first language and as a second language for others. Still, its aim is to develop students’ intercultural and communicative competence. This competence enables learners to use the target language as a lingua franca with the people who belong to the society where the language being learnt is spoken. In fact, by virtue of the rise of multicultural classes, this approach has been largely used almost all over the world. Such trend urged to bring into light a process of intercultural exchange and multi-dimensional-world culture.

1.6.2.4 The Trans-cultural Approach

The basic idea of this approach is that cultures in today's world are interwoven due to many reasons via globalization, tourism, world-wide communication and migration. In fact, the trans-cultural approach deals with foreign language as an international language. The reason behind is that foreign languages are spoken by many people as lingua franca. Its aim is to teach learners to use the target language for international communication. Accordingly, it is not paramount to associate the foreign language to any specific culture. However, this approach was criticized by Byram (1997:55) who argues that though it is possible to present topics which have a universal importance in all cultures, the trans-cultural approach has neglected those aspects which are related to a particular country. Besides it rejects the interrelationship between language and culture.

1.7 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach that represents a philosophy of language teaching which is based on the communicative use of language. It was developed in the 1970's as a reaction against grammar based approaches like grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods. It emerged due to an increasing dissatisfaction with those traditional methods which failed at promoting learners' abilities to use language for communicative purposes in real situations after years of language learning. Instead, students were in need to know how to use language rules effectively and appropriately while communicating. As a result, a shift of interest from the study of language in isolation to the study of language in its social context was really required (Savignon, 1983). Therefore, linguists agreed that it was high time to change foreign language teaching methods and to focus on communication instead of the learning of rules and structures. Hence, CLT is fairly a new approach to foreign language teaching and learning which enhances students' social skills besides grammatical rules. It teaches "how to say, when to say and where, in order to satisfy his daily needs as larger aim" (Patel

and Jain, 2008:94). That is to say, developing learners' communicative competence is the primary goal of CLT.

1.8. Communicative Competence

According to Hymes (1972), the concept of communicative competence arose from Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance. For Chomsky, competence refers to the shared knowledge of the ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community. This knowledge enables the individuals of a given language to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences based on a finite set of rules. Performance, alternatively, is the realization of the underlying knowledge in actual situations.

Hymes (1972) believes that "Chomsky's competence represents a Garden of Eden view point which dismisses central questions of use in the area of performance". In other words, performance does not completely reflect competence. Besides, competence is an idealized conception of language which is seen in opposition to the notion of performance.

Hymes, as cited by Ohno in 2002, claims that the social factors influence both the speaker's performance as well as his competence. He stresses that the rules of use are dominant over the rules of grammar and that Chomsky's view of competence is irrelevant to explain the relationship between what the speaker says and what he means. Therefore, the internalized linguistic system is controlled by the rules of speech. Accordingly, he identifies two types of competence: linguistic competence and communicative competence. The former involves the production and comprehension of grammatically correct sentences. The latter, on the other hand, deals with producing and understanding sentences that are appropriate in a given situation. Thus, Hymes coins the term of communicative competence and defines it as "knowledge of the rules for understanding and producing both the referential and social meaning of language". It is, therefore, "what a person needs to know in order to communicate effectively in culturally significant situations"

(Hymes, 1974:75).

Similarly, Hall (2002:105) states that communicative competence entails “both the knowledge and ability that individuals need to understand and use linguistic resources in ways that are structurally well formed, socially and contextually.” Hence, the concept of communicative competence is used to refer to what a speaker knows in order to communicate effectively in appropriate contexts. In addition, Richards (2006:3) points out that communicative competence includes the following aspects of language knowledge:

- ❖ Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions.
- ❖ Knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g. knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication).
- ❖ Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g. narratives, reports, interviews, conversations).
- ❖ Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one’s language knowledge (e.g. through using different kinds of communication strategies).

1.8.1 Components of Communicative Competence

According to Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence is composed of: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence. Canale (1983) added another element which he called “discourse competence”.

❖ Grammatical Competence

It comprises the knowledge of grammar, lexis, morphology, semantics, and phonology. i.e., it is “the knowledge of the language code” (Celce-Murcia, Dorney and Thurell, 1995:7). It is therefore the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences.

❖ Sociolinguistic Competence

It is the ability to use language appropriately with social meaning in communicative situations. It refers to the speaker's capacity to "produce and understand language in different sociolinguistic contexts" (Diaz -Rico and weed, 2010:58).

❖ Strategic Competence

According to Canale and Swain (1980:30), strategic competence is composed of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication. In other words, communicative competence is related to knowledge of how to handle breakdowns in communication.

❖ Discourse Competence

It involves knowledge of rules to accomplish coherence and cohesion in a spoken or a written text. Canale (1983:9) defines as the mastery of "how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different types of texts".

1.9 Intercultural Competence

By virtue of globalization, cultures from all over the world are brought together to be into closer contact and communication between people from different cultures has become indispensable. Yet, cultural diversity as well as intercultural exchange has been recognized as important sources for modern and social life. As a result, possessing knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and attitudes towards various cultures pave the way to the promotion of an intercultural competence. The latter assists interconnectedness between individuals from several cultures.

In this vein, Myer (cited in Zenagui, 2007:18), intercultural competence is "the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures".

Accordingly, intercultural competence refers to the total abilities of understanding and accepting people of different social identities and with other distinctive prospects.

In short, intercultural competence refers to the “individual’s ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries” (Byram, 1997:7). It involves an understanding and awareness of one’s own and other cultures. It promotes understanding and respecting people who have different cultural affiliations from oneself, all along, responding appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people. Yet, establishing positive and constructive relationships with such people is another parameter. (Council of Europe, 204:16-17).

In its wider sense, intercultural communication includes the use of different linguistic codes contacts between individuals who do not share the same system of values. Therefore, intercultural competence is a term which inserts that capacity that learners need to acquire intercultural skills for cross-cultural communication (Beneke, 2000:108-109).

1.9.1. Components of Intercultural Competence

According to Deardorff (2006) intercultural competence is composed of:

I. Knowledge:

- a) Cultural self-awareness: the individual’s ability and his view towards the world are determined by his own culture.
- b) Culture specific knowledge: having insight and information about other cultures such as: values, beliefs, customs, traditions, history...
- c) Sociolinguistic awareness: learning language skills and how to adjust one’s speech for the sake of accommodation.

II. Skills:

- a) Listening, observing and interpreting: it refers to the fact of being patient and observant.
- b) Analyzing, evaluating and relating: viewing and identifying the world from other cultures' points of view.
- c) Respect: to appreciate and admire other cultures and to avoid prejudice and judgements.

III. Internal outcomes:

The previously mentioned attitudes, knowledge skills lead to internal outcomes. The latter consists of flexibility, adaptability, and empathy and ethno- relative perspective.

IV. External outcomes:

These characteristics are validated by external outcomes which attribute to the individual's observable behaviour and ways of communication. They represent the visible proof of intercultural competence.

1.10 Intercultural Communicative Competence

Byram (1997) coined the concept of intercultural communicative competence so as to make a distinction between the two notions intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. In detail, intercultural competence refers to the ability of communicating with people from different cultures, whereas intercultural communicative competence is defined as the ability to understand cultures, including one's own, and to use this understanding to communicate with people from other cultures successfully. As an illustration, ICC may include understanding how gestures and the distance between speakers vary from culture to culture. In fact ICC, which is a key to successful intercultural communication, is considered as an extension of "communicative competence" (Hall, 2002: 109). It covers knowledge of other cultures, attitudes to other cultures and the skills of communications with people from other different cultures. According to Fantini

(2005), ICC is a set of complex capacities necessary for effective and appropriate interactions with other speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

1.10.1 Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

The most influential model of ICC is the one developed by Byram (1997) in which he explains ICC in terms of a set of factors or “savoirs”. It shows that ICC is supported by specific attitudes, knowledge, skills and cultural awareness as it is shown in the figure below.

	<p>SKILLS interpret and relate (savoir comprendre)</p>	
<p>KNOWLEDGE of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (les savoirs)</p>	<p>EDUCATION political education critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager)</p>	<p>ATTITUDES relativising self valuing others (savoir être)</p>
	<p>SKILLS discover and/or interact (savoir apprendre/faire)</p>	

Figure 1.1 Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997)

Byram believes that cultural awareness (savoir s'engager) is the fundamental element. He asserts that it is essential to see one's world from the outside and to develop critical as well as self-reliant thinking. Hence, the more the attitudes are positives the better the knowledge and skills are attained. According to Byram, attitudes of curiosity, openness and readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own are crucial for reaching effectiveness in any intercultural interaction.

The second important factor is knowledge (les savoirs) and it is of two types; “knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor's country” as well as” knowledge of the

processes of interaction at individual and societal levels” (Byram, 1997:35). In the EFL classrooms, for instance, learners will be more familiar with cultural aspects, historical events, symbols morals and beliefs of their own culture as well as the ones of target culture. Therefore, knowledge takes into consideration both the linguistic system and cultural knowledge during an intercultural communication.

The third factor is skills which he has divided into two types. First, there are skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*) which have been defined as “the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one’s own”. Second, skills of discovering and interacting (*savoir apprendre/faire*); they are understood as “the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction” (ibid).

The last factor is the critical cultural awareness which embraces a critical evaluation of the foreign culture taking into account one’s own and how it affects his views of other people.

In the EFL classrooms, the role of the teacher is to develop these savors and to explain for his learners how intercultural interactions take place and the different ways based on which the social identities influence these interactions.

1.11. Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter, one can figure out that incorporating culture in foreign language teaching is of crucial significance. Yet, the teacher should consider an appropriate approach and give much importance to it. Moreover, culture is deeply embedded in all features of human life including language. Thus, an understanding of the relationship between culture and foreign language teaching devotes to an effective language use. Additionally, the importance of developing intercultural competence of EFL learners at the middle schools should be taken into

consideration. For this reason, teachers as well textbooks have to provide the necessary and varied knowledge about the target culture.

Having agreed about the importance of culture within foreign language learning, the researcher has elaborated an analysis of the cultural content of the textbook “Spotlight on English: Book Three” and has set a questionnaire to the concerned teachers through the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Chapter Two: Research Methodology and Data Analysis

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2.1 Introduction

The current chapter is devoted to giving a general idea about the research methodology followed in the present research work. It attempts to investigate culture teaching to third-year middle school learners, the question: to what extent does “Spotlight on English: Book Three” offer cultural knowledge and yet, what role it plays in promoting intercultural competence? Besides, this chapter is also concerned with the description of the research instruments that were used to carry out this study, namely a teachers’ questionnaire and a cultural evaluation checklist. The aim behind is to handle an analysis of the cultural content of “Spotlight on English: Book Three” textbook. Furthermore, it presents the data analysis procedures that have been applied for analyzing the gathered data.

2.2 Research Design

While conducting this study, the researcher generally goes through the phase of research design. Yet, to achieve appropriate results a combination of research instruments is needed. A research design includes a general guideline of data collection and the procedures through which the data is to be analyzed. Consequently, the information obtained provides an answer to the research questions. In this respect, McMillan and Schumacher (1993:31) explain that the aim of the research design is to “provide the most valid, accurate answers as possible to research questions”.

In foreign/second language, research is divided into two main paradigms: qualitative research and quantitative one. In the same line of thought Aliaga and Gunderson (2002), (cited in Daniel Muijis 2004:1) claim that quantitative research is to explain a phenomenon based on collecting numerical data which will be analyzed later on using statistics. In other words it is used to quantify the problem by generating numerical data (it can be transformed into statistics). Qualitative research on the other hand is an exploratory research which provides insights into the problem.

2.3 Research Instruments

This research work has been conducted through the use of a questionnaire which was given to middle school teachers of third year and a checklist for the evaluation of the cultural content of “Spotlight on English: Book Three”.

2.3.1 The questionnaire

The questionnaire is first and foremost the primary tool that researchers often take into account when conducting any research work. The questions should be short, simple, and clearly worded. It should also begin with an introduction that elicits the topic, the purpose of the questionnaire and the consent of the informants and contain clear instructions. Questionnaires are generally easy to undertake and to analyze. Additionally, it is efficient as it provides qualitative and quantitative data if the questionnaire includes both open and closed questions. Therefore, one should bear in mind that the quality of the data gathered is bound to the quality of the questions used. A well designed research questionnaire should avoid:

- Double-barreled questions.
- Leading questions which make the respondent choose answers from a list of responses that are nearly the same as if the researcher wants the respondents to give a specific answer.
- Personal views and subjectivity.

It is worthy important to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire.

Advantages:

- The data collected is easy to analyze.
- Data can be quickly gathered when the sample is large.
- Respondents can answer anonymously which may produce honest answers.

Disadvantages:

- Answers might be inaccurate if the respondents misunderstand the questions.
- The respondents may lack the motivation to complete the questionnaire.
- It is time consuming.

2.3.2 Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is composed of 17 questions which aimed at gathering information about the importance and aims of culture teaching in ELT, how culture is viewed by middle school teachers, how they can develop their learners’ intercultural competence and issues related to culture teaching in EFL classrooms.

The participants are 25 third year middle school teachers. They were chosen randomly from different middle school in Tlemcen and its neighboring areas.

2.3.3 Analysis of the Questionnaire

Question1: What is your qualification?

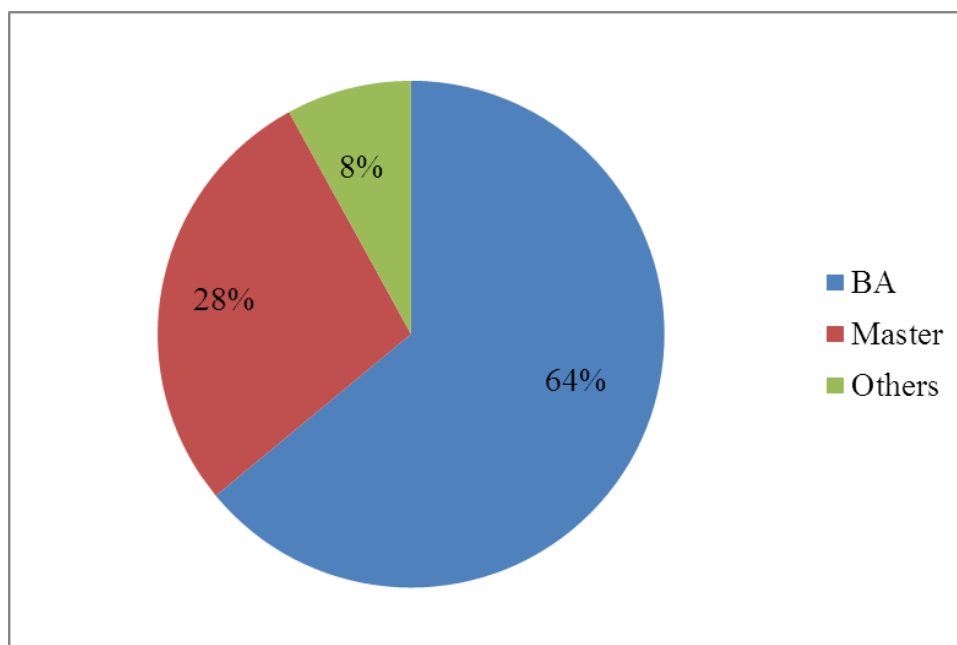


Figure 2.1. Teachers ‘Qualifications.

The data obtained revealed that 64% of the teachers have a BA, 28% have a

master degree and 8% have other certificates (ITE). Thus the majority hold a BA.

Question 2: Are you male or female?

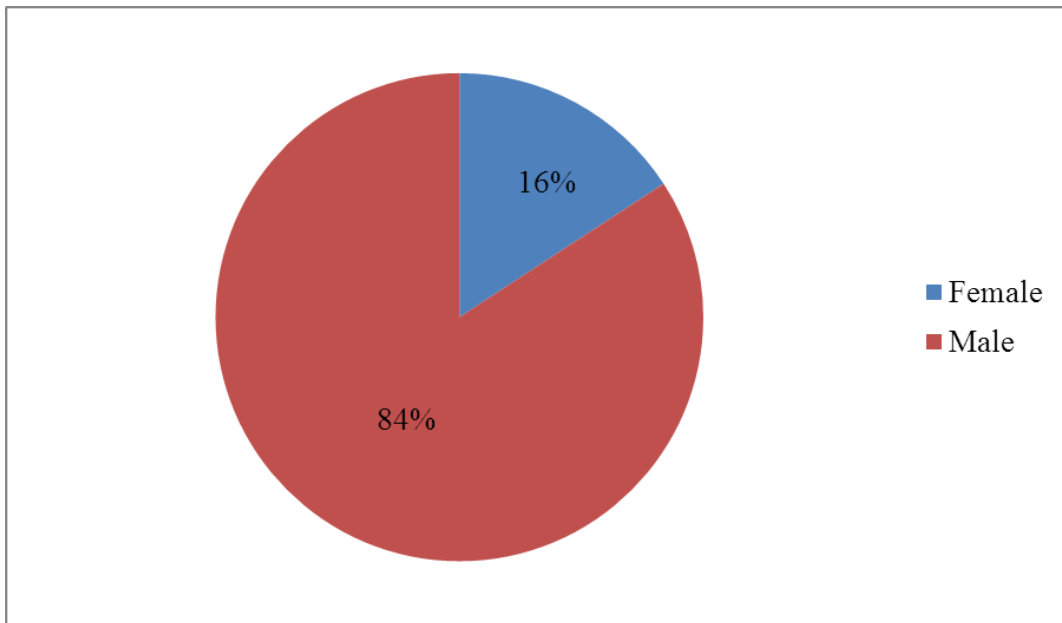


Figure 2.2. Teachers' Gender.

From the above figure, it can be noticed that the majority of the sample are female teachers (60%) as opposed to male teachers (40%).

Question 3: How long have you been teaching English?

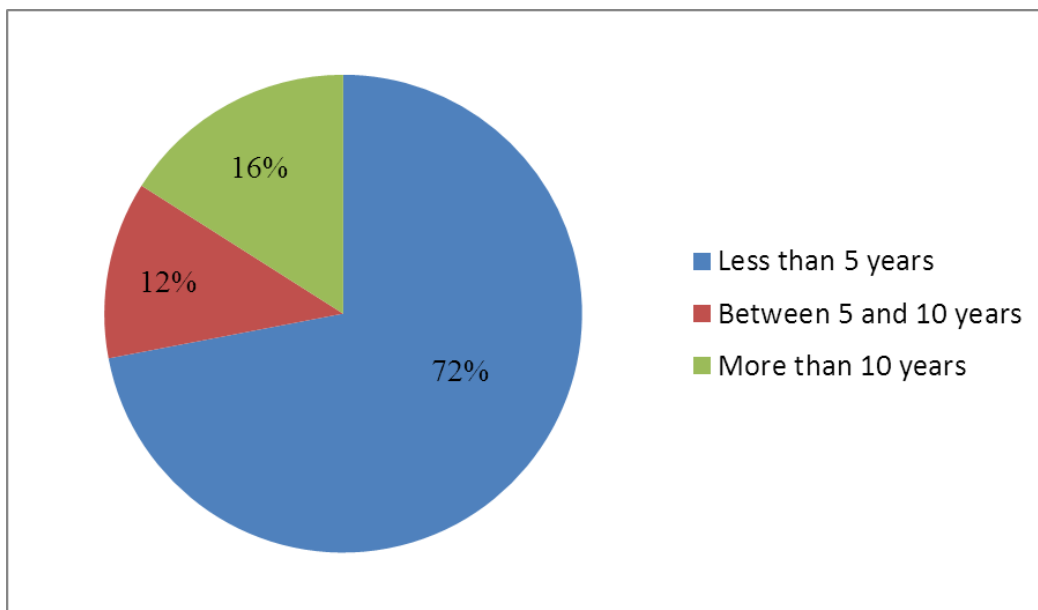


Figure 2.3. Teachers' Teaching Experience.

The figure demonstrates that 72% of the teachers have less than 5 years of experience, 12% of them have between 5 and 10 years of teaching and 16% have more than 10 years of experience.

Question 4: Do you think that it is important to include features of the target culture in ELT?

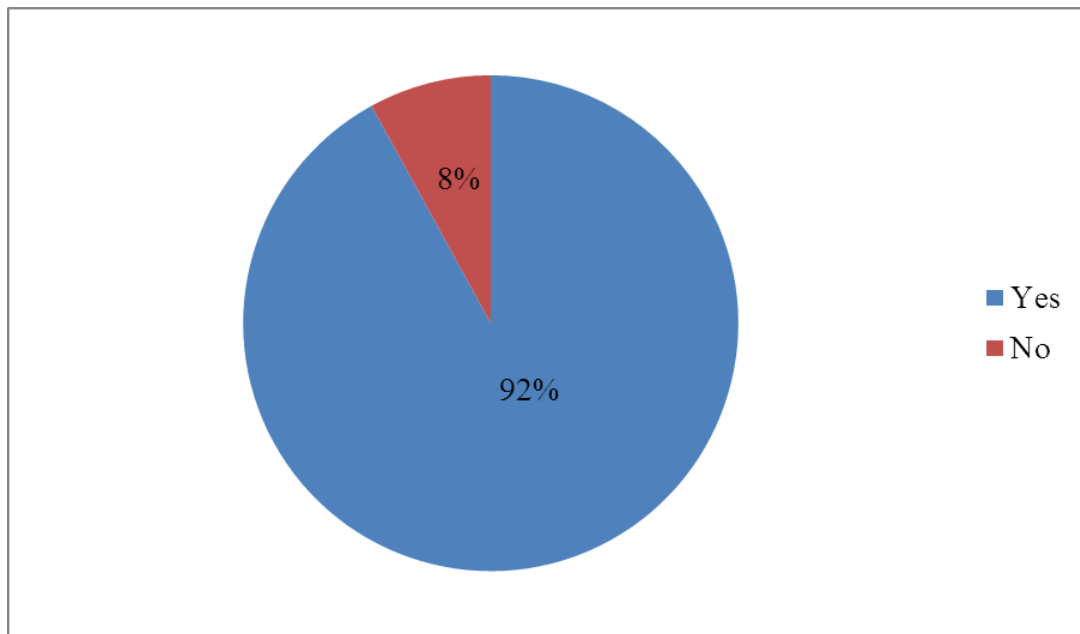


Figure 2.4. Importance of Including Features of the Target Culture in ELT.

Through the figure above, it is clearly stated by almost all teachers (92%) that it is of crucial importance to include features of the target culture in ELT, while 8% said that it is not necessary to include aspects of the target culture in foreign language teaching.

Question 5: If your answer is yes, what are the aims of introducing the target culture in ELT?

The teachers claim that culture should be introduced in ELT for the sake of promoting understanding, tolerance and openness towards the target culture. Yet, this will lead to the reduction of prejudices and stereotypes. In addition, it helps to raise learners' cultural awareness, develop their intercultural skills, as well as making them more familiar with the other culture.

Question 6: How would you define the concept of culture?

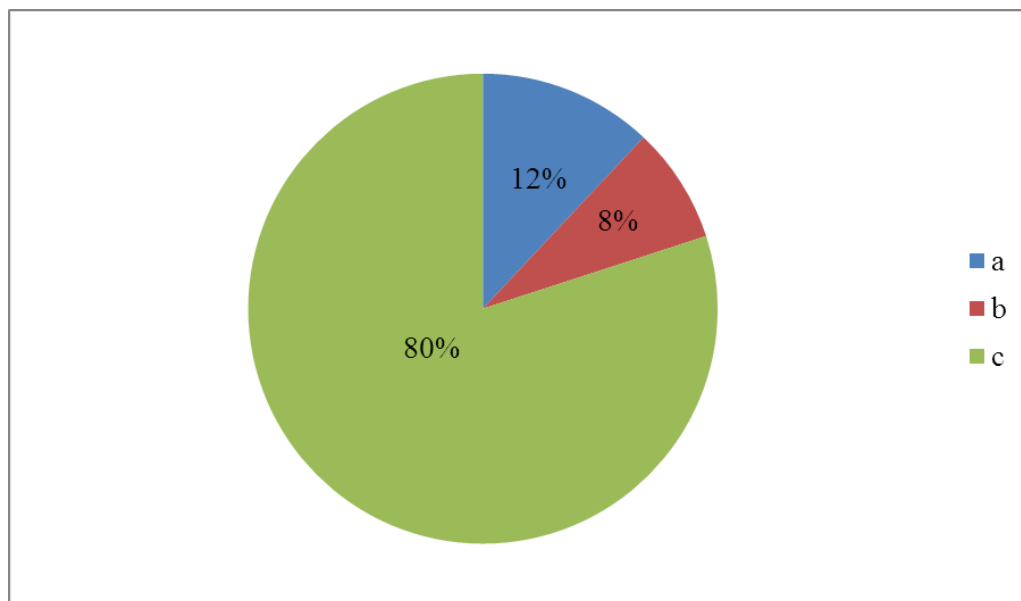


Figure 2.5. Teachers' Definition of Culture.

Concerning the definition of the concept of culture, three teachers representing 12% of the total number of teachers claimed that culture is the set of artistic achievements, customs and general civilization of a country or a group of people. Two teachers representing 8%, on the other hand, answered that culture refers to the way of life common between a group of people linked by shared distinctive features characteristics, activities, beliefs and behaviours. The remaining teachers (20) representing 80% pointed out that in fact culture involves both definitions. The answers of this question are summarized in the following pie chart.

Question 7: Do you think that teaching culture is an important part of teaching English as a Foreign Language?

The teachers' answers of this question are represented in the following table.

Answers	Yes, very important	Yes, important	No, not important
Number of teachers	07	15	03
percentage	28%	60%	12%

Table 2.1. The Importance of Teaching Culture.

Question 8: Please justify your answer?

The teachers who state that culture is a very important part of teaching the English language believe that language cannot be taught without its culture. As it contributes to the development of learners' cultural knowledge and their views towards the others. Moreover, they consider that the integration of culture assists successful cross-cultural communication. While, other teachers declare that it is important to include culture along with ELT because it enhances foreign language learning process, it promotes tolerance and acceptance as it gives learners the chance to learn about the target culture. However, the remaining teachers argue that it is not important to teach culture along with the English language for the reason that it is better to focus only on the language also because they believe that the foreign culture is a threat to the learners' own culture.

Question 9: How often do you discuss cultural issues in your class?

The results of this question are represented in the table below.

Option	Number of teachers	Percentage
Always	01	04%
Sometimes	18	72%
Rarely	06	24%
Never	00	00%

Table 2.2.Frequency of Discussing Cultural Issues in ELT Classes.

Question 10: Do you face difficulties when explaining cultural issues?

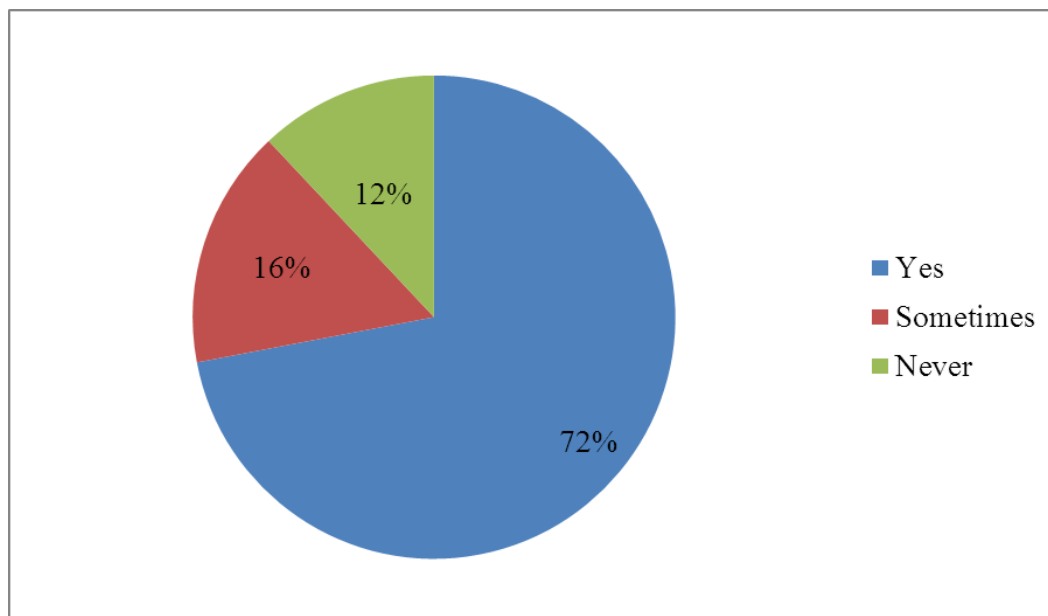


Figure 2.5.The Frequency of Facing Difficulties when Explaining Cultural Issues.

The data obtained revealed that 72% of the total number of the teachers (18) answered by yes, 16% of them claim that sometimes they face difficulties when explaining cultural issues, while three of them (12%) pointed out that they have

never faced problems when presenting cultural aspects.

Question 11: Do teachers fear (some) cultural shocks related to rituals, religion....?

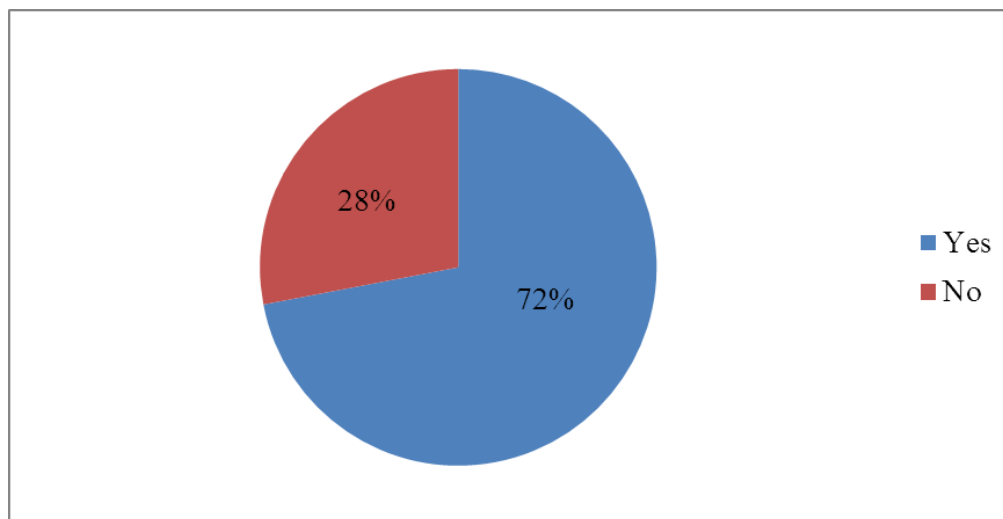


Figure 2.6. Teachers' Fear of Cultural Shocks.

The figure above shows that 72% of the teachers answered by yes and confirmed that they do fear some cultural shocks related, especially, to religion and rituals. Notwithstanding, 28% answered that they do not have fear problems related to cultural shocks.

Question 12: Do your learners possess willingness to learn about the target culture?

The teachers' answers are provided in the following table.

Answers	Yes	No
Number of teachers	15	10
Percentage	60%	40%

Table 2.3. Learners' Willingness to Learn about the Target Culture.

Question 13: Do you think that Algerian middle school teachers are well informed about the culture teaching approaches?

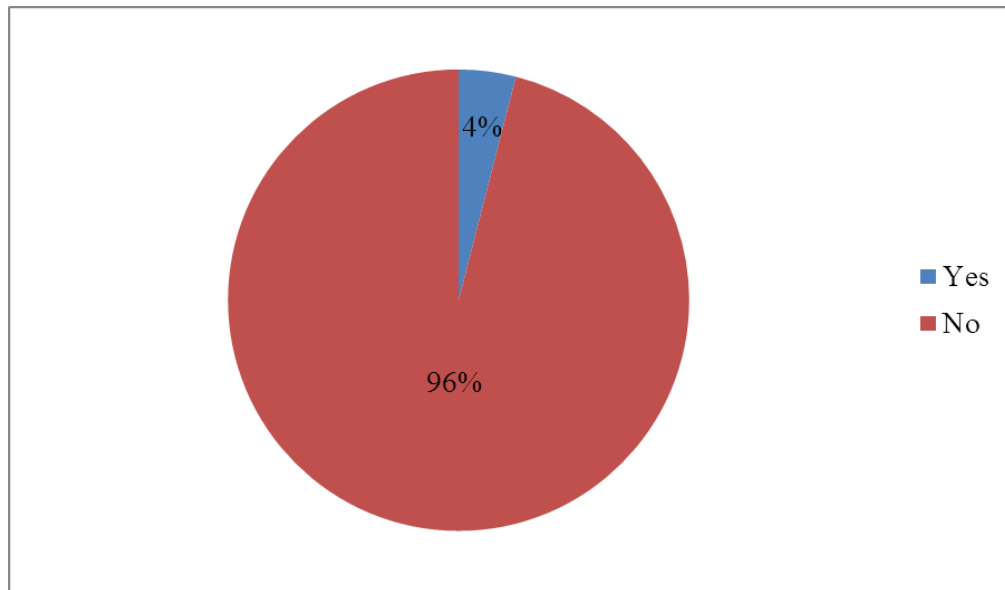


Figure2.5. Teachers' knowledge about Culture Teaching Approaches.

Responses to this question showed that the majority of teachers (96%) said that Algerian Middle School teachers are not well informed about the target culture. In contrast, only one teacher confirmed that middle school teachers in Algeria are knowledgeable about the other culture. So, there is a lack of cultural background accordingly.

Question 14: Do you think that culture occupies an important place in the teaching of English at the middle education level?

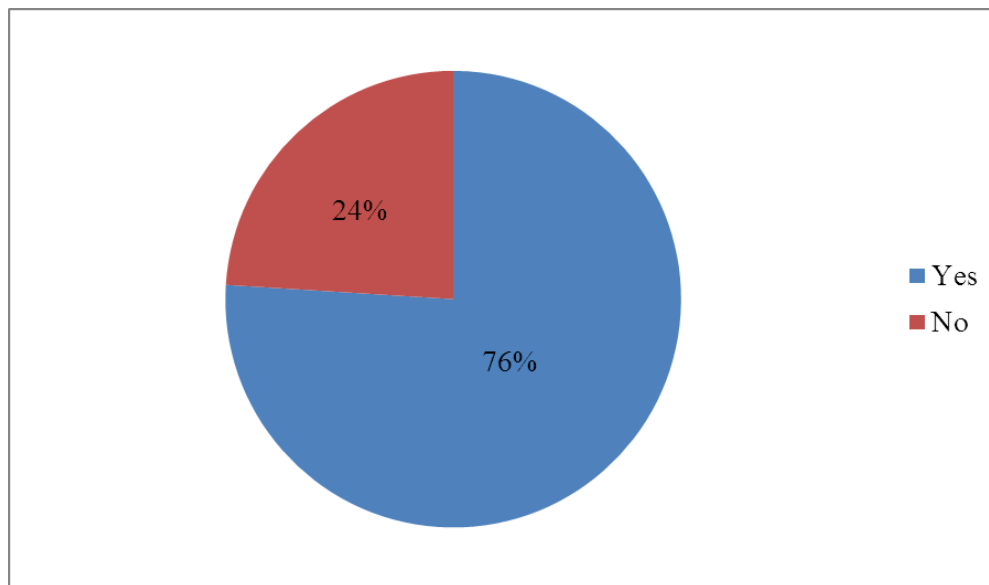


Figure.2.6. The Place of Culture in ELT at the Middle School.

From the figure above, it can be observed that nineteen teacher (76%) claim that culture does not occupy an important place in the teaching of English at the middle level. However, only six teachers (24%) confirm that culture is of crucial importance in ELT at the middle level.

Question 15: Does the textbook “Spotlight on English: Book Three” offer enough reading materials introducing the target culture?

Answers	Yes, a lot	Yes, enough	No, not enough
Number of teachers	1	3	21
Percentage	4%	12%	84%

Table.2.4. Textbook and the Target Culture.

The table indicates that the majority of the respondents (84%) state that “Spotlight on English: Book Three” does not offer enough reading materials about the target culture. However, three teachers (12%) claim that it affords enough

knowledge about the target culture. While only one teacher believes that the textbook contains a lot of reading materials which introduce the target culture.

Question 16: How could the EFL teacher develop his learners' intercultural competence?

Most of the teachers' answers are as follows:

- ✓ Through projects and researches about the target culture.
- ✓ Discussion and interaction.
- ✓ Motivating learners to learn about other cultures.
- ✓ Teaching English along with culture.
- ✓ Comparison between the learners' local culture and the target one.
- ✓ Through videos, literature, songs, movies, documentaries and presentations.

Question 17: what could you suggest as an additional asset to cultural components of the textbook?

The responses of this question were quite similar; the teachers state that it is necessary to enrich the textbook with more cultural components and illustrations about the target culture such as food, arts, life style, holidays, customs, proverbs and other items. Moreover, they believe that the textbook needs to be updated and it should involve comparison between the local culture and the target one.

2.4 Cultural Evaluation Checklist of EFL Textbooks

A checklist is a tool which allows the researcher to highlight issues related to his topic. It contains one or more categories into which checklist items are classified. According to the British Columbia Institute of Technology (2010), "a checklist is a tool for identifying the presence or absence of conceptual knowledge, skills, or behaviours". Hence, a checklist includes a set of items to be checked.

Several checklists have been developed by many experts within the aim of analyzing the cultural load and the intercultural dimension of EFL textbooks. Huhn,

1978 (as cited in Sàndorova, 2014) provides a set of criteria which he believes any textbook should contain:

1. Cultural information should be accurate and contemporary.
2. The question of stereotypes must be handled critically.
3. It must provide a realistic picture of the foreign society.
4. It must be free from ideologies.
5. Facts should not be presented in isolation.
6. The historical material should be presented explicitly.

Byram (et al 1994) on the other hand, provides the following checklist for evaluating the cultural content of textbooks.

- ✓ Social identity and social groups.
- ✓ Social interactions.
- ✓ Belief and behaviour
- ✓ Social and political institutions.
- ✓ Socialization and the life cycle.
- ✓ National history.
- ✓ National geography.
- ✓ Stereotypes and national identity. (Cited in Liu, 2016:843).

2.4.1 The Cultural content of “Spotlight on English: Book Three”

“Spotlight on English: Book Three” is the textbook used for teaching English to third year middle school learners in Algeria. It is composed of four file and each file is divided into three sequences at the end of which there is a section for culture teaching. The latter has been called “snapshots of culture”. The target cultural aspects tackled after each file (snapshots of culture) are presented in the following table:

The file	Snapshots of Culture	The illustration
File One	Guards or Bear Killers.	A photo showing the British Royal Guards near Buckingham Palace.
File Two	Meet Britain: Nessie the monster Hogmanay celebration “Auld Lang Syne” song.	A picture showing Nessie the monster of the Scottish lake “Loch Ness”.
File Three	Comprehensive Schools in Britain.	Three photos taken from Harry Potter’s movie.
File Four	English in the world.	A map showing the distribution of the commonwealth countries. A table showing the difference between the American English and the British English.

Table 2.5. The Cultural Content of “Snapshots of Culture” Section.

Checklist of Evaluating the Cultural Content of “Spotlight on English: Book Three”:

To analyze the aspects of the target culture, including snapshots of culture section, available in the third-year middle school textbook “Spotlight on English: Book Three” and based on Byram’s criteria of textbook evaluation, the following checklist has been conducted:

- Does the textbook make any reference to social, regional or ethnic groups in the target culture?
- Does it include the different levels of formality of interaction?
- Does the textbook afford knowledge about people’s social life, beliefs, morals and daily routines?
- Does it include aspects of social and political institutions?
- Does the textbook refer to socialization and life cycle (schools, families ...)?

- Does the textbook provide information about historical events and symbols?
- Does it provide learners with knowledge about the geography where the target language is used?

2.5 Analysis of the Results

The textbook in general is effective in giving learners' information about the geographical area where the English language is spoken. For instance, the book contains a map showing UK and USA on page 134. It also makes reference, to some extent, to the political institutions of the target culture. In detail the textbook contains a text about Washington D.C which talks about the ruling system of USA and the White House as well. As for historical events and symbols, snapshots of culture of file one on page 39 is a good example of introducing one of the main symbols of England which is the royal British soldiers well-known as "The Life Guard". As far as the historical events are concerned, the textbook provides learners with some information about the Status of Liberty and Tower Bridge and the date of their construction. Moreover, there are also short passages about the history of some English-speaking countries on page 134. Social, regional and ethnic groups are also presented since a whole sequence is devoted to New York and its boroughs. Although it is not authentic, the textbook affords a text about comprehensive schools in Britain on page 111 and school reports on page 110. Furthermore, the book proposes good examples showing the different levels of formality of interaction such as a dialogue between a headmaster and two teachers in the staff room on page 16 and one between pupils at the playground.

However, the textbook has its limitations. For example it does not provide learners with any knowledge about the social life, beliefs, daily activities and morals of the target culture though they are among the main elements that should be present in FL teaching materials.

The results obtained are presented in the table below:

The Checklist Questions	No	Yes	Pages
Does the textbook make any reference to social, regional or ethnic groups in the target culture?		✓	132-133-170
Does it include the different levels of formality of interaction?		✓	16-17-18-24- 26-27-56-57
Does it afford knowledge about peoples' social life, beliefs, morals and daily routines?	✓		
Does it include aspects of social and political institutions?		✓	141
Does the textbook refer to socialization and life cycle (schools, families...)?		✓	110-111
Does the textbook provide information about historical events and symbols?		✓	39-74-77-94- 96-100-134- 135-145
Does it provide learners with knowledge about the geography where the target language is used?		✓	64-132-133- 134-138-149

Table .2.6.The Checklist Results.

2.6 Conclusion

The second chapter of this extended essay attempted to provide a general view of the research design and the data collection instruments. In addition to the analysis of the data which has been obtained by means of a questionnaire and a checklist for evaluating the cultural content of the third year middle school textbook “Spotlight on English: Book Three”.

The following chapter will be devoted for the interpretation of the results to approve or disapprove the hypotheses and as a last step it will provide some helpful suggestions and recommendations.

Chapter Three

Data Interpretation and Recommendations

Chapter Three: Data Interpretation and Recommendations

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3.1 Introduction

The third chapter of this extended essay aims at interpreting and discussing the main findings obtained from the textbook analysis and the teachers' questionnaire in relation to the already raised problematic and hypotheses. It also states some recommendations and suggestions concerning the teaching of culture in EFL classrooms at the middle-level education and the improvement of the cultural content in "Spotlight on English: Book Three" and their role in developing learners' intercultural competence.

3.2 Data Interpretation

The teachers' questionnaire and the evaluation checklist of the cultural content of the textbook provided a great amount of data about culture teaching in EFL classrooms at the middle level and the extent to which the cultural content of "Spotlight on English: Book Three" develops the learners' intercultural competence.

3.2.1 Data Interpretation of the teachers' questionnaire

Teachers' responses of questions 4, 5 and 7 show that the majority of the teachers consider that the target culture is an important element in English language teaching as it promotes cultural awareness and develops learners' intercultural competence. They also believe that language cannot be taught without its culture and that the integration of some cultural features within the process of language teaching/learning contributes to successful cross-cultural communication. This shows that EFL teachers at middle school level are aware about the target culture and its importance.

However, the teachers respond to questions 10, 11, 12, 13 showing that they do not always tackle cultural issues; this can be explained by the fact that they lack knowledge about the target culture and the different culture teaching approaches. In addition, the teachers claim that they fear cultural shocks especially those which are

related to religion. This fear justifies the fact that they face hurdles in explaining culture related issues. Henceforth, culture does not possess a good status in ELT at the middle level as it was confirmed by the teachers. To conclude all what has been said one can notice that culture teaching in EFL classes at the level of middle schools is unfortunately neglected. Therefore, the first hypothesis guiding this research work is approved.

The 15th question implies that third year middle school textbook “Spotlight on English: Book Three” does not provide learners with enough knowledge about that target culture as it does not afford abundant reading materials that presents the elementary aspects of the target culture.

3.2.2 Data Interpretation of the Checklist Results

The results of the textbook analysis show that culture does exist to some extent in “Spotlight on English: Book Three”. For instance, items related to countries and geographical locations are taken into account in the examined book. This kind of information might be fruitful for learners as they enable them to know more about the regions where the target language is spoken. It also gives insight into symbols and historical events like the famous British guards “Life Guards” which are charged with guarding the royal residences and castles such as Buckingham Palace.

However, there is a great lack of the integration of some cultural elements such as food, customs and other aspects which means that less importance is given to culture teaching along with the process of English language teaching/learning. In most cases, learners are expected to read a text or to listen to a script and to do the activities which focus only on grammar or vocabulary. Yet, learners are not given the opportunity to explore and analyze the target culture nor to contrast and compare it with their own one. The cultural load of the examined textbook does not give learners the chance to reflect on their own beliefs, values and attitudes nor on the ones of the target culture. As a result, learners do not have the possibility to go deeper beyond their personal interpretations. Besides, the intercultural perspective

to culture teaching is disregarded by the textbook designers as the cultural content is presented in a very traditional and static way as it does not foster cross-cultural communication in realistic settings. This, with no doubt, will not promote open-mindedness, cultural awareness and acceptance towards the target culture. Furthermore, the results of textbook evaluation revealed that it lacks some cultural features such as food, social life, idioms and proverbs. Another shortcoming is that the textbook does not reinforce comparison between the learners' native culture, which rarely exist in the book, and the target one; also mediation across culture is not given any importance.

To sum up, based on the results of the textbook analysis and the teachers' answers of the 15th question of the teachers' questionnaire confirmed the second hypothesis which claims that "Spotlight on English: Book Three" does not afford enough materials that enhance learners' intercultural competence.

3.3 Recommendations

3.3.1 Developing Learners' Intercultural Competence

Byram et al (1997) believe that teaching a foreign language within an intercultural framework helps learners to gain linguistic competence as well as intercultural competence which has been defined as "the ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality" (Byram et al 1997:5). Therefore, promoting intercultural competence in foreign language classes will:

- ✓ Prepare learners for a better interaction with other people from other culture.
- ✓ Ensure understanding and acceptance about the target culture.
- ✓ Help learners to figure out the similarities and differences between their own culture and the target one.
- ✓ Develop their cultural awareness and curiosity to learn about other cultures.

3.3.2 The Use of Authentic Materials

Authentic materials are said to be the best way for developing learners' intercultural competence as they bring reality into the classroom and create a connection with the real-life of the target culture. Besides, using authentic materials for culture teaching will result in creating a motivational atmosphere where learning about the target culture can take place. Authentic materials include printed, audio, and visual materials. Audio materials may include TV shows, news, movies, cartoons, telephone conversations, music, radio programmes, etc. Visual materials involve drawings, magazines, photos, postcards... Printed materials on the other hand may include texts, books, brochures, cards, short stories etc.

According to Richards (2001:264), authentic materials are useful because:

- They have positive effect on learner's motivation.
- They provide authentic cultural information about the target culture.
- They provide exposure to real language.
- They relate more closely to learner's needs.
- They support a more creative approach to teaching.

There are plenty of authentic materials that might be suitable for introducing the target culture to EFL learners at middle school levels. However, the teacher should be aware when selecting his materials. Reid (2014:3) points out that, "the authentic materials need to be culturally appropriate, but at the same time comprehensible for learners of English as a foreign language". Therefore, authentic materials should be chosen on the basis of learners' interest, age as well as the objectives of the curriculum.

Authentic materials play a chief role in increasing learners' motivation to learn about and discover the target culture. For example, the teacher may bring a video about celebrations and festivals in the target culture; he invites his learners to watch it first and then opens the door for discussion and debate, after that he asks his learners to compare and contrast their native culture with the target one and to

figure out the differences and similarities. In addition, using authentic materials reveals that teachers are aware about the changes that are taking place in EFL methods and approaches especially those which concerns culture teaching.

3.3.3 Developing EFL Textbooks

Textbook as one of the most important authentic materials may contribute a lot to the target culture teaching. Yet, for a successful culture learning in EFL classes the textbook should provide learners with a wide variety of cultural elements of the target culture. The cultural content of the textbook, on the other hand, has an impact on the learners' perception of the target culture as well as the whole culture teaching/learning process. It has also a fundamental role in shaping their attitudes toward the target culture. Therefore, textbook designers should develop an increased awareness of the integrity of language and culture and the necessity of enhancing learners' intercultural competence and fostering intercultural skills. They should create relevant topics and set appropriate activities which fulfill the objectives of the curriculum, meet the learners' needs and suit their interests.

Textbooks should reflect the target culture and be a source for cultural background such as history, life-style, food, proverbs, literature, music, celebrations, etc. Textbooks should also function as a mirror of learners' own culture to encourage contrast and comparison between the two cultures. Consequently, learners will get the chance to enrich their knowledge about the target culture, build understanding and cultural awareness and of course their intercultural competence. So, it is up to the textbook and curriculum designers to reconsider the promotion of intercultural competence in EFL textbooks at the middle education level.

3.3.4 The Role of EFL Teachers in Teaching Culture

EFL teachers should take culture teaching in their classes seriously as part from English language teaching. The aim behind is to expose their learners to the target culture and to make them more familiar about it. Teachers should set clear aims and useful strategies so that to raise their learners' awareness about the target

culture to avoid misunderstanding and negative attitudes towards it. Seelye (1974) cited in Turkan and Celik (2007:5), claim that there are a set of goals that teachers should bear in mind while teaching culture. First, they should show interest and curiosity towards the target culture. Second, they should ensure their learners recognize that social factors such as age, gender, social class, and ethnicity influence how people use the language. Thirdly, they should explain for their learners that language use in the target culture changes according to different situations.

Hendon (1980:197) cited in Roby (1992:4) asserts that:

Every foreign language classroom should be a “cultural island” alive with colorful posters and pictures ... A bulletin board is useful for posting current events; advertisements, comic strips, cartoons and other items of interest ... A map of the foreign country and a wall calendar on which students could mark the foreign holidays also belong in every language classroom.

Hence, the EFL teacher should seek the way to implement culture in his English teaching process. He should also create a favourable environment that bridges the gap between the learners’ native culture and the target one. The aim behind is to promote learners’ willingness to learn about the target culture, building intercultural skills and also accepting otherness. Moreover, they should be mediators between the local culture and the target one.

3.3.5 Enhancing Learners’ Motivation

Needless to say that motivation is the innate driving force for sustaining one’s goals. In EFL classrooms, being excited to learn about the target culture is the observable result motivation. It has an immense influence on learners’ willingness to know more about other’s way of life, beliefs, civilization and any other cultural aspects. Increased motivation in the classroom enables learners to build positive attitudes towards culture and create meaningful context full of awareness, open mindedness, desire and curiosity about the target culture.

Therefore, if teachers mix culture and language learning in terms of lesson plans and teaching materials it really increases interest and motivation of learners. Yet, planning activities and lessons that suit learners' interests is crucial for encouraging and challenging them to discover the target culture. Making use of such techniques will really raise enthusiasm and active participation in EFL classrooms in our middle schools.

3.3.6 Comparing Learners' Culture with the Target One

Comparing learners' native culture such as practices, traditions and other cultural aspects with the target one is one of the main techniques for developing learners' intercultural competence. Learners will be given the chance to explore the similarities and differences that exist between the two cultures.

For instance, the teacher may ask his learners to compare ways of expressing politeness between the target culture and their home culture. He may ask them to discuss it in groups to enhance their English speaking skills, write about it in a collaborative composition or simply by presenting it through role-play.

3.3.7 Strategies and Techniques for Teaching Culture

Brian Cullen (1994) proposed a list of useful techniques and strategies that may be used in EFL classrooms for a better culture teaching. The most appropriate ones are as follows:

- **Quizzes:** they are a very helpful technique to check learners understanding for what has been taught and also for assessing learners' acquisition of new information.
- **Action logs:** they are a kind of notebooks in which learners write some information concerning what they have achieved and learnt.
- **Research:** it is considered as a powerful tool since it stimulates learners' interest. For instance the teacher may ask his learners to search for information about any given topics of the target culture such as food, customs, traditions, etc. Once in the classroom, the learners present their

works and give explanations about what they have found to their classmates and answer their questions.

- Cultural islands: the EFL teacher should bring the target culture into his language classroom by creating an authentic environment. He may use posters, flashcards, maps, and pictures to enrich his learners' "mental image"; this will encourage them to learn more about the foreign culture.
- Culture capsule: this technique is very is very successful for culture teaching. It is a short description of a given cultural aspect of the target culture, for instance, weddings, festivals, family, food or any other cultural component. It should be followed by a comparison between the learners' native culture and the target one to discover the similarities and the differences between the two cultures.

Besides this variety of techniques the teacher may use other strategies such as role play and cooperative learning.

3.3.7.1 Role play

Incorporating role-play in the foreign language classroom is a good way for preparing learners to real life communication. It is an engaging activity that challenges learners to develop their cultural background as well as their intercultural skills and competences. The learners may tackle different situations like "at the restaurant", "at the hotel", "checking at the airport", etc. Seelye (1983: 213, cited in Huang 2008) claims that

through role play L2 learners can experience many kinds of situations in which they will use the language; and as they develop a sense of mastery in them, they should be able to apply the language more easily in new situations.

Ladouse (2004:7, *ibid*) on the other hand points out that role play is a very useful technique as it promotes interaction in the classroom and increases motivation and interest.

Kodotchigova (2002) identifies six major steps that any role play should go through which are as follows:

a) A situation for a role play:

The teacher should select a situation for a role play. However, it should be chosen based on the learners' levels, interests and teaching objectives. For a role play the material that EFL teachers may use could be play-scripts, cartoons, movies, etc. The selection of the situations and the speech of the role play may be done by the teacher himself or by a collaboration between the teacher and his learners as well so that to involve them in their learning process.

b) Role play design:

After selecting the context of the role play, the teacher should come up with ideas, vocabulary and sentences that are involved in the role play. But, the teacher should take into consideration the language proficiency of his learners. It should be more simple and relevant for their level.

c) Linguistic preparation:

After selecting the suitable role play, the teacher should introduce the new vocabulary and sentences as well as the useful expression. This will make learners more confident to act out the role play.

d) Factual preparation:

In this step the teacher provides learners with information and clear description about the role play. The purpose behind is that learners can identify the characters that are involved in the role play.

e) Assigning the roles:

The teacher should assign the roles for his learners according to their abilities their personalities as well. For instance, a group of shyest pupils may not present a successful role play. At the beginning level and in order to make things clear, the teacher may act out a role in front of his learners as a model then he should give the

floor to his learners to practice their roles.

f) Follow up:

Once the role play is finished, the teacher should ask his learners to express their opinions about their role plays and to discuss what they have learnt. As a last step, the teacher should evaluate the effectiveness of the role play and check if his learners have really understood and assimilated the newly learnt vocabulary and situations during their performances of their role plays. However, he should not point every mistake otherwise the learners will feel disappointed, less confident and less willing to do other role plays.

3.3.7.2 Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is an effective method for learning in EFL classrooms as it encourages learners to discuss what they have learnt and to learn from each other's point of view. It also put the learners at the centre of the learning/teaching process. Jacobs (2004) identifies a set of principles of cooperative learning which are:

- a. Heterogeneous grouping: the teacher should group his learners in mixed groups in terms of abilities.
- b. Group autonomy: this principle encourages learners to rely on themselves rather than being dependent only on the teacher. Therefore, the teacher may interfere in case the group is facing some difficulties.
- c. Individual accountability: encouraging individual accountability in groups, every learner will learn and share his knowledge and information with his classmates.
- d. Positive interdependence: when positive interdependence exists among the members of the group, they can notice what may help one of their classmates and what may hurt him. Yet, the principle of one for all and all for one raises among the learners to share a common goal.

- e. Cooperation as a value: this principle ensures that cooperation is also part of the content to be learnt rather than only a way of learning.
- f. Equal participation: cooperative learning offers ways for promoting equal opportunities to participate in the group.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter attempted firstly to interpret the gathered data and then to give a set of suggestions and recommendations for the sake of integrating cultural content in both “Spotlight on English: Book Three” textbook of third-year middle school level as well in the process of English language teaching.

In fact it has been found that EFL teachers at middle school are not well informed about the target culture teaching. Accordingly, the latter is not always dealt with within the process of teaching. As for the textbook, though it contains some cultural knowledge about the target culture it is not enough to raise learners’ cultural awareness towards the target culture as it does not help enhance their intercultural competence.

Yet, these findings led the researcher to give a set of recommendations concerning the textbook. In addition, a variety of techniques and strategies that contribute to the development of cultural awareness and intercultural skills and intercultural competence of EFL learners at the middle level education have been proposed. It also creates a favorable atmosphere in which learners enjoy learning about the target culture and discovering its components.

General conclusion

General conclusion

Foreign language teaching is such a complex process that includes not only the structural and linguistic aspects of the language being taught but also its culture. Therefore, it would be irrelevant if the learners know nothing about the people who speak this language and the country where it is spoken. Consequently, Algerian EFL textbooks as well EFL teachers should give importance to culture teaching. Whereby, this research work is an attempt to carry out an analysis of the cultural content of third-year middle school textbook “Spotlight on English: Book Three” to check whether it provides enough knowledge about the target culture as being part and parcel of the language components within the process of learning. So, not only teachers and learners should hold interest in culture as an integral part of their English teaching and/or learning process, but pedagogical materials, such as textbooks and the like, should constitute a support for the sake.

This research work is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter was primarily concerned with the theoretical background. It gave an overview about culture and its close relationship with language, and then the researcher attempted to highlight the importance of culture teaching, its history and its main approaches. It also tried to shed some light on the place of culture in foreign language teaching in general and EFL textbooks in particular. In addition, the researcher presented a review about intercultural competence and its components. The second chapter was devoted to give a description of the research methodology carried out in this study as well as the analysis of the collected data. The last chapter dealt with the discussion and interpretation of the main results in addition to some suggestions and recommendations.

In sum, the present research work endeavoured to answer two main research questions; the first one investigated whether EFL teachers at the middle-schools integrate features of the target culture within their English language teaching process. The researcher hypothesized that the target culture is neglected in EFL classrooms at the middle-schools. The second question examined if the cultural content of the third-year middle school textbook “Spotlight on English: Book

Three” is suitable for developing EFL learners’ intercultural competence. The hypothesis related to this question state that though the textbook contains some cultural knowledge about the target culture however, it is not enough to promote and enhance intercultural competence in EFL learners. The obtained results revealed that the hypotheses were confirmed. Therefore, regarding that EFL teachers at the middle-level education often neglect culture teaching and that the target culture is not well covered in the textbook, the researcher proposed some suggestions that may contribute to the development of EFL learners’ intercultural competence in EFL learners sufficiently.

The obtained results revealed that the hypotheses were confirmed. Thus, EFL teachers at the middle-level education often neglect culture teaching and the target culture is somehow poorly covered in the textbook. For this and that, the researcher proposed some suggestions that may contribute in the improvement of EFL learners’ intercultural competence.

For sure, this study has got some limitations and shortcomings. First, some teachers did not have the desire to help in answering the questionnaire. In addition there were some contradictions found in some teachers’ answers. Despite these limitations, the present study will pave the way for further researches about the importance of teaching culture by remodeling the cultural content of EFL textbooks as well as developing learners’ intercultural competence in general.

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Appendices

Appendix1

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is part of a research work. Its purpose is to analyze the cultural content of “Spotlight On English: Book Three” textbook of 3 MS. I am mostly interested in your experience in teaching at the middle level. You are kindly invited to answer it, the information you provide will be a valuable contribution to my research.

1-What is your qualification?

BA

Master

Others

specify.....

2-How long have you been teaching English?

Less than 5 years

between 5 and 10 years

More than 10 years

3-Gender

Female

Male

4-Do you think is it important to include features of the target culture in ELT?

Yes

No

5-If your answer is “yes”, what are the aims of introducing the target culture in ELT?

.....
.....
.....
.....

6-How would you define the concept of “culture”?

a. The set of artistic achievements, customs and general civilization of a country or a group of people

b. The way of life common between a group of people linked by shared distinctive features characteristics, activities, beliefs, behaviors,

c. Culture is both a and b

d. Others, please specify

.....
.....
.....
.....

7-Do you think that teaching culture is an important part of teaching English as a Foreign Language?

Yes, very important Yes, important No, not important

8-Please, justify your answer.

.....
.....
.....
.....

9-How often do you discuss cultural issues in your class?

Always Sometimes Never

10-Do you face difficulties when explaining cultural issues

Yes Sometimes Never

11-Do teachers fear (some) cultural shocks related to rituals, religion...?

Yes No

12-Do your learners possess willingness to learn about the target culture?

Yes

No

13-Do you think that Algerian Middle School teachers are well informed about the culture teaching approaches?

Yes

No

14-Do you think that culture occupies an important place in the teaching of English at the middle level?

Yes

No

15-Does the textbook “Spotlight on English” offer enough reading materials introducing the target culture?

Yes, a lot

Yes, enough

No enough

16-How could the EFL teacher develop his learners’ intercultural competence?

.....
.....
.....
.....

17- What could you suggest as an additional asset to cultural components of the textbook?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix 2

The cultural evaluation checklist:

- Does the textbook make any reference to social, regional or ethnic groups in the target culture?
- Does it include the different levels of formality of interaction?
- Does the textbook afford knowledge about people's social life, beliefs, morals and daily routines?
- Does it include aspects of social and political institutions?
- Does the textbook refer to socialization and life cycle (schools, families ...)?
- Does the textbook provide information about historical events and symbols?
- Does it provide learners with knowledge about the geography where the target language is used?