

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
Kasdi Merbah University -Ouargla –  
Faculty of letters and Languages  
Department of English Language and Literature



A **Dissertation Submitted to** the Faculty of Foreign Languages in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of **Master in English**

**Entitled:**

**The Influence of Teaching Culture on EFL Students'  
Cultural Awareness and Oral Proficiency  
Case Study: Third Year and Master Students at KMUO +  
Third and Fourth Year Students at ENSO**

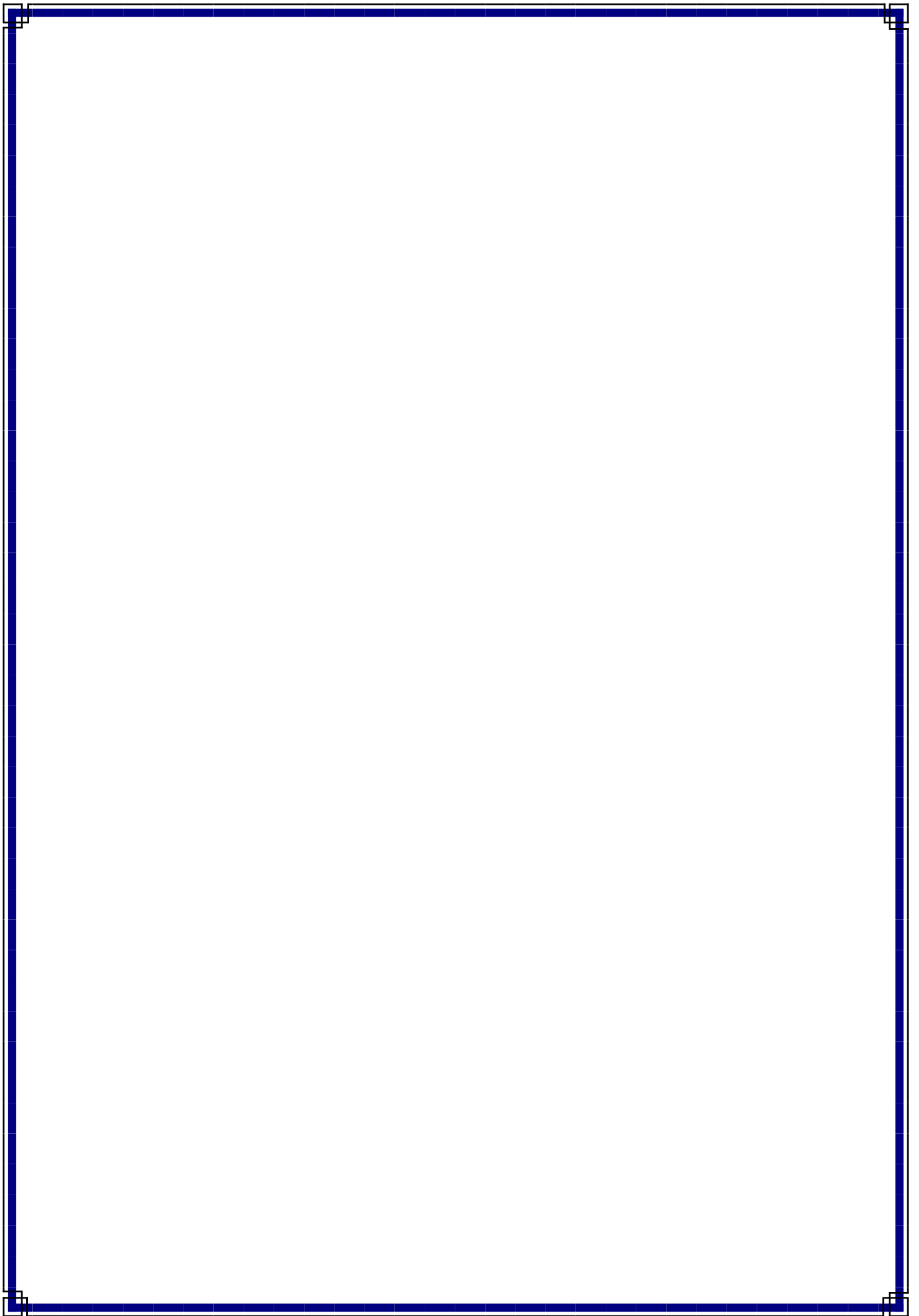
**Submitted by Zaara Hadjer**

**Board of examiners**

**Supervisor: Dr Sayeh Lambarek Samira**

**Examiner: Dr Belarbi Ahmed Nouredine**

**2019/2020**



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# *Dedication*

*To the soul of my father/grandfather Nouara Deradji wishing you were here with me...*

*To my mother Warda for her unconditional love, support, patience and encouragement ...*

*To my husband Khaled Redjem for his patience and great support it would not have been done without you...*

*To my brother Yacine and my son Abdelhay...*

*To my aunts Aziza, Masika, Houda, Wahiba, Leila, Karima and Chahra ...*

*To my uncles Samir, Said, Nabil and Zino...*

*To my friends and to you Imen*

*To the soul of my father in law Redjem Mohammed Tayeb...*

*Hadjer*

## *Acknowledgments*

**The prophet Mohammed ( PBUH) said:” He who does not thank people does not thank God”**

**“Showing gratitude is one of the simplest yet most powerful things humans can do for each other.” —Randy Pausch**

This work could not have been done without the help of Allah the Great and the Merciful, thank you for giving me the patience and power to continue.

First, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr **SAYEH LAMBAREK SAMIRA** for her kindness and great help, you are a true inspiration of a teacher.

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I thank al the teachers and the students who participated in this study.

I express my sincere gratitude to every person who ever participated in my journey of learning.

### **Abstract**

This study aims at investigating the role of culture teaching in enhancing EFL learners' cultural awareness and oral proficiency. To collect data two questionnaires were used, a students' questionnaire was distributed to 61 EFL learners (40 from ED at KMUO and 21 from ENSO) and a teachers' questionnaire that was answered by three culture teachers ( 1 from ENSO and 2 from ED at KMUO). Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the data. The results showed that both students and teachers are aware of the importance of culture teaching in EFL classes, in addition to revealing the transitive relationship between culture teaching, enhancing cultural awareness and hence learners' oral proficiency. This study also shed the light on the important role of the teacher. Finally, based on the data analysis a number of suggestions were made concerning teachers' role, students' role and activities to raise learners' cultural awareness and enhance oral proficiency.

**Key words:** culture teaching, cultural awareness, oral proficiency, foreign culture, culture class.

## **List of abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**FC:** Foreign Culture

**FL:** Foreign Language

**ENSO:** Ecole Normale Superieure of Ouargla

**KMUO:** Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla

**ED:** English Department

**TC:** Target Culture

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## **General introduction**

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## **General introduction**

### **I. Background of the Study**

Culture is a theory about the world and the people in it. It is the complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, costumes, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Awareness of FL culture should be viewed as an important component of EFL learning/teaching ( Karam, 2017).

Language and culture have an inextricable and interdependent relationship. Learning a foreign language without learning the culture can only produce a “fluent fool,” that is someone who speaks the language well but does not understand the social or philosophical context in which it exists. In this era of Technology, globalization, immigration and mass media, it is even more imperative for EFL teachers to equip students with high level of intercultural communicative competence ( Choudhury, 2013). As diafi (2017) claimed that both students and teachers consider culture teaching as an important element which develops communicative competence, enhance cultural awareness and helps to improve the learners’ English language abilities. According to Purba (2011) current EFL teaching is indeed culture teaching due to three reasons: (1) culture and language are inseparable; (2) an EFL teaching is a foreign culture teaching in order to facilitate the students to experience acculturation; and (3) a sound grasp of the background knowledge of the target culture is necessary for anyone to communicate successfully with the speakers of the language. To achieve that goal of cultural instruction, cultural activities and objectives should be carefully organized and incorporated into lesson plans to enrich and inform the teaching content. The use of authentic materials, proverbs, role-play, culture capsules, ethnographic studies, literature and films for presenting culture in the classroom is widely recommended.

Despite the importance of integrating culture in the FL class sometimes real life scenarios can show the opposite as Khemis (2015) research shows that the teaching of Target Culture is not taking the integral part of the language classroom and that learners are more interested in shaping the linguistic skills rather than culture. This makes culture marginalized at some degree especially with the poorness of the curriculum, the impediments of time, lack of materials and the total neglect of the practical learning of culture and its restriction only to a theoretical basis .which results a less effective teaching of culture.

## **II. Rationale:**

What mostly lead to conduct this study is mere personal interest coming from mainly being an EFL student hearing my mates complaining about the difficulties they face learning about the FC , as well as being displeased about how the FC is being taught in the FL classroom.

This research attempts to investigate the status of culture teaching at the Algerian university in general and at the University of Ouargla in particular, and to what extent does culture teaching help students enhance their cultural awareness and hence oral proficiency being the ultimate goal of language learning and teaching.

## **III. Objectives of the Study:**

This study aims at investigating the culture teaching techniques and strategies at the University of Ouargla. As well, it is attempting to find out to what extent culture teaching helps FL learners to enhance their cultural awareness and as a result improves students' oral proficiency. Finally, the research also aims at suggesting the most convenient way to teach culture based on the students' needs and the results of the data collected.

## **IV. Research Questions:**

In an attempt to reach the study objectives, a number of questions are to be explored and answered:

1. How important it is to teach culture to EFL students?
2. What is the role of the culture teacher?
3. In what way does culture teaching enhance learners' cultural awareness?
4. To what extent does culture teaching improves EFL learners' oral proficiency?

## **V. Hypotheses:**

For the sake of answering the above questions, a set of hypotheses are formulated:

1. It is fundamental to teach culture in ELT classes as language cannot be separated from culture considering it to be the fifth skill.
2. The culture teacher plays a major role as being the one to decide how and what to teach taking into consideration the cultural background of the students and to what extent they accept or not what is to be taught.
3. Culture teaching plays a vital role in enhancing EFL learners' cultural awareness through introducing students to the culture of the foreign language
4. Culture teaching improves EFL learners' oral proficiency to a very large extent as a result of the better understanding of the foreign culture in various fields.

In addition, considering the difficulty of teaching the foreign language inside the classroom different techniques and strategies must be used in order to achieve better results and keep students from feeling bored or out.

## **VI. Population:**

This study encompasses three categories of partakers :

1. Third and master students at Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla department of English language and literature.
2. Third and fourth license students of English at l'Ecole Normale Superieur Ouargla.
3. Teachers of culture at both KMUO and l'ecole normale superieur ouargla.

## **VII. Research Means:**

Two research tools were used in this study. A questionnaire was distributed to the students in addition to a teachers' questionnaire in order to collect the data needed to fulfill the study's objectives.

## **VIII. Structure of the Thesis:**

This dissertation is divided into two parts: a theoretical part and a practical part. The first part contains the review of literature and explanations of the main concepts, while the second part



constitutes a description of the methods and instruments used to collect and analyze data in addition to the final conclusion.

## **IX. Definition of Key Terms:**

**Culture:** as the definition in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, *culture is* "way of life: the costumes and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group: *European /Islamic/African/American, etc*" (p. 370).

**Cultural Awareness:** someone's cultural awareness is their understanding of the differences between themselves and people from other countries or other backgrounds, especially differences in attitudes and values.

**Oral Proficiency:** oral proficiency includes the ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in the target language. A high degree of oral proficiency implies having the ability to apply the linguistic knowledge to new contexts (topics) and situations (Omaggio, 1986 as cited in Stein, 1999)

## **Chapter one: Review of the Literature**

1.1. Introduction

1.2. Definitions of culture

1.2.1 Characteristics of Culture

1.3. Culture and Language

1.3.1 Definitions of Language

1.4. The Relationship between Language and Culture

1.5. The Significance of Incorporating Culture in the EFL Classroom

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1.8. Teacher's Role

1.9. Oral Proficiency

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Conclusion

## **Chapter one: Review of the Literature**

### **1.1. Introduction**

Culture and language relate in a way that made this relationship between them a matter of debate and controversy throughout time and among different scholars, what is certain is that these two are inseparable and interwoven so much that we can not mention one neglecting the other or diminishing its importance. Culture is considered to be the fifth skill of language besides reading, writing, listening and speaking, this high status of culture impose us to give it more and more importance in the process of teaching and learning a language. This chapter aims at showing the relationships between language and culture, the relationship between teaching culture and raising students' cultural awareness, and the relationship between cultural awareness and oral proficiency trying to prove this transitive relationship between culture teaching, raising students' cultural awareness and therefore raising their oral proficiency, this latter being the ultimate goal of learning and teaching language.

### **1.2. Definitions of Culture**

Culture is well known to be a hard term to define, it was defined in different ways by different scholars through history, these definitions carried multiple senses and usages making it impossible to establish one single definition for the term.

The so termed classic definition of culture was provided by the English anthropologist EDWARD BRUNETT TYLOR in his primitive culture, as

Tylor (1871,p1) argues that “ culture ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” This definition implies that the term culture covers several aspects of human life concerning internal and external traits such as the way of thinking, the way of viewing things and the way of performing things within a particular group of people that ultimately this group will be defined and known by.

similar to this definition is what Helen Spencer-Oatey stated in her book culturally speaking (2008, p 3) “ Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the

'meaning' of other people's behaviour. ” culture not only does it define individuals in groups but it also has an impact on how they see and interpret other people's behaviors as in refining their view of life and of others.

A more general definition of the term is that provided by Hofstede (1994, p5) “ (culture)... It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. ” arguing that Culture is learned, not inherited. It derives from one's social environment, not from one's genes.

As mentioned earlier it is quite difficult to provide one single definition for culture, a large number of definitions were provided by different scholars through history each with its own perspective and attitude, the above definitions view culture as a group of signs, symbols, morals, art, way of thinking relating it to society and to the surrounding environment which leads to its relation with language being a crucial part of societies.

### 1.2.1. Characteristics of Culture

Different scholars have provided us with various definitions for the term culture, these definitions implied that culture has a number of characteristics. The most important characteristics are determined by O'Neil (2012) as follows:

**Culture is Learned:** culture is not inherited, rather it is learned and acquired by people through their interaction with each other. Humans are genetically predisposed to rapidly learn language and other cultural traits.

**Culture Change (Dynamic) :** All cultural knowledge does not perpetually accumulate. At the same time that new cultural traits are added, some old ones are lost because they are no longer useful. **All cultures change over time**--none is static. However, the rate of change and the aspects of culture that change varies from society to society. Change can occur as a result of both invention within a society as well as the diffusion of cultural traits from one society to another.

**People Usually are not Aware of Their Culture:** The way that we interact and do things in our everyday lives seems "natural" to us. We are unaware of our culture because we are so close to it and know it so well. The common response in all societies to other cultures is to judge them in terms of the values and customs of their own familiar culture.

**We Do Not Know All of Our Own Culture:** No one knows everything about his or her own culture. In all societies, there are bodies of specialized cultural knowledge that are gender specific-- they are known to men but not women or vice versa. In many societies there are also bodies of knowledge that are limited largely to particular social classes, occupations, religious groups, or other special purpose associations.

**Cultures No Longer Exist in Isolation :** It is highly unlikely that there are any societies still existing in total isolation from the outside world. Even small, out of the way tribal societies are now being integrated to some extent into the global economy.

Culture is a constantly changing and transformed system of behaviors and traits.

### 1.3. **Culture and Language:**

#### 1.3.1. **Definition of Language**

Similar to culture language cannot seem to have one single crystal clear definition, scholars through the years have provided us with different definitions of language each according to their own point of view and how they see this human phenomenon.

human beings communicate with each other their thoughts, feelings, desires etc, using a system of codes and signs known as language as quoted from de Saussure's course in general linguistics (1959,p 16) "Language is a system of signs that express ideas", de Saussure considered language to be a system of signs, these linguistic signs are used as instruments for decoding and encoding meaning.

Language is an exceptional trait that mankind enjoys, it enables people not only from the same background, but also people from different backgrounds and cultures to communicate and understand one another.

### 1.4. **The Relationship between Language and Culture**

As already have been mentioned before language and culture cannot be separated from one another .language expresses culture showing its uniqueness and differences from other ones, as culture dives into the language to be a crucial part of it .the kind of relationship between these two

was subject of interest for many scholars in the fields of psychology, anthropology, philosophy etc, and not only in contemporary times but from ages ago.

Wardhaugh ( 2002, p219 cited Elmes, p12) reported that there appear to be three claims to the relationship between language and culture:

.The structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world or, as a weaker view, the structure does not determine the world-view but is still extremely influential in predisposing speakers of a language toward adopting their world-view

.The culture of a people finds reflection in the language they employ: because they value certain things and do them in a certain way, they come to use their language in ways that reflect what they value and what they do

. A 'neutral claim' which claims that there is little or no relationship between the two.

The first claim is highly associated to Sapir and Whorf, This claim is the basis for much research on the relationship between language and culture assuming that the structure of the language determines how people see the world.

According to **Khatib, Tabari, and Mohammadi (2016)**, It is generally agreed that language and culture are closely related. Language can be viewed as a verbal expression of culture. It is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties. Language provides us with many of the categories we use for expression of our thoughts, so it is therefore natural to assume that our thinking is influenced by the language which we use. The values and customs in the country we grow up in shape the way in which we think to a certain extent.

In his research about the relation between language and culture particularly the Albanian language **Krasniqi (2019)** found that language, apart from being a mirror that reflects a culture, behavior and management of the Albanian people in general, it also deals with the sounds, symbols and gestures that a nation, a tribe or a community uses as a means of communication. But if we go to a deeper level, language is also an expression of who we are as individuals, as communities or even as nations. Whereas, culture refers to dynamic social systems and shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes and values and above all, provides the environment in which language develops, even as it influences how these issues are used and interpreted.

## **1.5. The Significance of Incorporating Culture in EFL Classroom**

Considering the powerful relationship between culture and language, one have to say that including culture in EFL classes is a must.

According to Djebbari (2012) teachers should make culture teaching an integral part of language teaching to develop students' ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in various situations, hence, the reasons for implementing culture in the classroom is to enable students to take control of their own learning as well as to achieve autonomy by evaluating and questioning the wider context within which the learning of the target language is embedded. Along these lines, the main goal for foreign culture teaching is to develop students' knowledge about the target culture and to raise their cultural awareness and interest towards the people of the language they are learning and to understand the dynamic nature of the target culture, in other words, to develop real intercultural communication.

Purba (2011) argues that current EFL teaching is indeed culture teaching due to three reason: (1) culture and language are inseparable; (2) an EFL teaching is a foreign culture teaching in order to facilitate the students to experience acculturation; and (3) a sound grasp of the background knowledge of the target culture is necessary for anyone to communicate successfully with the speakers of the language.

Politzer, (as cited in Brooks, 1960, p 88-89) argued that "As language teachers we must be interested in the study of culture not because we necessarily want to teach the culture of the other country, but because we have to teach it. If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning; for unless he is warned, unless he receives cultural instruction, he will associate American concepts or objects with the foreign symbols".

Incorporating culture in FL teaching is an obligatory matter for the sake of better learning the foreign language, teaching language in isolation from its culture is a total waste of time and efforts being absolutely meaningless and useless for students will not be able to actually use the language or benefit from learning it.

### **1.5.1. Techniques for Teaching Culture**

Being aware of the importance of culture is the prior step to actually teaching it in classrooms for students. Many scholars debated about the teachability of culture in classes. Peterson and Coltrane (2003) suggested a number of strategies of teaching culture that may help teachers who are looking for some practical ways to integrate culture in their language lessons.

1. **Authentic Materials:** Using authentic sources from the native speech community helps to engage students in authentic cultural experiences. Sources can include films, news broadcasts, and television shows; Web sites; and photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochures, and other printed materials.
2. **Proverbs:** Discussion of common proverbs in the target language could focus on how the proverbs are different from or similar to proverbs in the students' native language and how differences might underscore historical and cultural background (Ciccarelli, 1996).
3. **Role Play:** In role plays, students can act out a miscommunication that is based on cultural differences.
4. **Culture Capsules:** Students can be presented with objects (e.g., figurines, tools, jewelry, art) or images that originate from the target culture. The students are then responsible for finding information about the item in question, either by conducting research or by being given clues to investigate. They can either write a brief summary or make an oral presentation to the class about the cultural relevance of the item. Such activities can also serve as a foundation from which teachers can go on to discuss larger cultural, historical, and linguistic factors that tie in with the objects. Such contextualization is, in fact, important to the success of using culture capsules.
5. **Students as Cultural Resources:** Exchange students, immigrant students, or students who speak the target language at home can be invited to the classroom as expert sources.
6. **Ethnographic Studies:** An effective way for students to learn about the target language and culture is to send them into their own community to find information.
7. **Literature:** Literary texts are often replete with cultural information and evoke memorable reactions for readers. Texts that are carefully selected for a given group of students and with specific goals in mind can be very helpful in allowing students to acquire insight into a culture.



**8. Film:** Film and television segments offer students an opportunity to witness behaviors that are not obvious in texts.

### **1.6. Cultural Awareness**

At the first glimpse learning or teaching a foreign language may seem very easy and clear as learning and teaching grammar, vocabulary, spelling, reading, writing etc, but that is not the case, things are much more deeper than this, to learn/teach a new language means to acquire knowledge about the people or the community speaking this language, to learn about their daily habits, their traditions, values, morals and so much more, in other words to be culturally aware of both your own culture and the culture of the other language, learning about the other culture is not that optional, it is to a large extent obligatory, because the lack of cultural awareness may cause problems in communication both while delivering or receiving messages.

As Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) argue that cultural awareness encompasses three qualities:

- Awareness of one's own culturally-induced behavior
- Awareness of the culturally-induced behavior of others
- Ability to explain one's own cultural standpoint .

FL teachers must spread awareness of the importance of being culturally aware, as well as using various methods and ways to incorporate and blend this culture teaching within language teaching, Hadley (1993, as cited in Shemshadsara 2012 ) asserts that cultural understanding must be promoted in various ways so that students are sensitive to other cultures prepared to live more harmoniously in the target language community.

Ibrahim A. El-Hussari ( 2007, p 450) argue that "cultural awareness is a process in which language learning offers an opportunity for students to develop a shared world of interaction and experience through discovering the meaning of text in relation to its context of situation. In this process of discovering meanings and practices, students negotiate and create a new reality by using their own frames of reference, deriving basically from their life world experience and socio-cultural background. "

To sum up, cultural awareness is a key concept in teaching/learning a foreign language, in the sense that both teachers and learners must give it much importance from the very beginning of the learning and teaching process.

### **1.7. Developing Cultural Awareness through Culture Teaching**

To start with, language teachers in general and culture teachers in particular must always tell and remind learners of the importance of culture and being culturally aware, the process of learning or acquiring if we may say the other culture starts by knowing and being familiar with our own culture, this will pave the way in the process of learning by comparing and noticing the differences and similarities between the two cultures concerning different areas such as norms, morals, laws, believes, costumes, habits, traditions and even religious matters.

As Cakir (2006, p 156-157) argued that Learners should be exposed to these distinctions as much as possible in the foreign language teaching classrooms. Therefore, the reasons for familiarizing learners with the cultural components should be to:

- Develop communicative skills
- Understand the linguistic and behavioral patterns both of the target and the native culture at more conscious level
- Develop intercultural and international understanding
- Adopt a wider perspective in the perception of the reality
- Make teaching sessions more enjoyable to develop an awareness of the potential mistakes that might come up in comprehension, interpretation, translation and communication

Hanvey (1975) has characterized four levels of cross-cultural awareness that EFL students go through. In the first level students gain awareness of superficial or very visible cultural traits: stereotypes, in the second level learners build awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one's own practices either through direct or secondhand experience. At the third level learners become more understanding of the target culture traits accepting them more intellectually, understanding events in the target culture's frame of reference. Finally, at the fourth level learners grow awareness of how another culture feels from the standpoint of the insider, the students are more familiar of how the people of the target culture feel, think, and behave, as in understanding the culture both intellectually and emotionally. This stage can be viewed as the level of empathy.

### **1.8. Teacher's Role**

A number of factors affect the process of language/culture teaching and learning, one of the most important ones is the teachers.

LEVERIDGE (2008) argues that Teachers must instruct their students on the cultural background of language usage. Language teachers must realize that their understanding of something is prone to interpretation. The meaning is bound in cultural context. One must not only explain the meaning of the language used, but the cultural context in which it is placed as well.

As Hoang-Thu (2010) added that Assuming that language teachers can naturally teach culture is a serious mistake, for defining what culture is not easy, and neither is deciding on what culture to teach. Furthermore, without proper training in instructional methods to teach culture, it is not likely that teachers can do the job of teaching culture as effectively as expected.

Kramersch (1993, p 205-6) argued that traditional thought in foreign language education has limited the teaching of culture to the transmission of information about the people of the target country, and about their general attitude and world view. Ignoring the fact that a large part of what we call culture is a social contrast, the product of self and other perceptions. This lead to the emergence of new thinking of language as a social practice suggesting new ways of looking at the teaching of language and culture, including the following principles:

1. Establishing a ‘sphere of inter-culturality’. Understanding a foreign culture requires putting that culture in relation with one’s own.
2. Teaching culture as an interpersonal process. through replacing the presentation/perception of cultural facts and behaviors by the teaching of a process that applies itself to understanding foreignness or ‘otherness’, because meaning emerges through a social interaction making it pointless to try to teach fixed, normative phenomena of language use.
3. Teaching culture as difference. Culture is not only national traits, other factors are of great importance such as age, gender, regional origin, ethnic background, and social class. National traits are but one of the many aspects of a person’s ‘culture’.
4. Crossing disciplinary boundaries. Teachers must broaden their knowledge to include, besides literature, studies by social scientists, ethnographers, and sociolinguists on both their society and the societies that speak the language they are teaching.

### **1.9. Oral Proficiency**

Communication is the ultimate aim of learning any language. Nowadays the whole world seem as a small village due to technology and globalization, people now interact with each other on an international scale. English through the years has gained a special status as both international language and a lingua franca, its status has attracted many learners of the language for different

purposes. What these learners must know is that knowing only the linguistic side of the language is not enough to use it appropriately, one should also give as much importance to its cultural background which is the deeper side of any language.

Speaking to someone who shares the same language and cultural background as you is the easiest thing in the world, the only concern you will have is to make your mind clear and try to understand the other person's view on whatever subject you are discussing. When one of these factors changes things get a lot more harder and complex, now you are not just simply chatting or arguing, besides trying to encode linguistic items you are also facing a bigger challenge trying to deliver your message as clear as possible through all those cultural obstacles and differences without insulting or touching any of other people's national or personal traits.

In the same sense Xue (2014) argue that in cross-cultural communication, linguistic knowledge alone is not enough in guaranteeing successful interaction with native speakers. Cultural mistakes are worse than linguistic ones because they tend to create misjudgment, or ill feeling between native and foreign speakers.

### **1.9.1. Definition of Oral Proficiency**

A learner's oral proficiency indicates to what degree this learner is able to realize his language skills.

Characteristics of speakers who are regarded as proficient are often termed as "good", "fluent", "knowledgeable", "bilingual", "competent" and so on. However, it is not always clear what speaking proficiency entails; the term may be used differently from researcher to researcher (Galloway, 1987; McNamara 1996 as cited in Iwashita 2010).

Ferisch (2015) argued that there are multiple characteristics of the skill to take into consideration, such as grammar, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and comprehensibility, as well as interaction with a partner. These are normally aspects in a final global rating of the proficiency.

Oral proficiency is hard to measure or decide upon. It is not something that can be precisely measured or calculated, this lead to the production of various definitions of the term by different scholars.

## **1.10. The Role of Cultural Awareness in enhancing Learners' Oral Proficiency**

A language learner can be culturally aware but not orally proficient, but a learner can never be orally proficient without being culturally aware. If the latter was the case there is a very high chance for a communication breakdown or failure to happen, a culturally unaware student will not be able to hold conversations with natives appropriately.

Cakir (2006) showed that in developing cultural awareness what we are after is the development of an awareness of sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences that might exist between the students' first language and the target language. Such awareness often help explain to both teachers and students why sometimes there is unintended pragmatic failure and breakdown in communication. If we are aware of it, it might be easier to find the appropriate remedy.

Cultural awareness plays a major role in enhancing FL student's oral proficiency. Learners must be aware that people are not the same, each having their own cultural background that is totally different from theirs in many aspects, this awareness is crucial when it comes to oral communication and proficiency.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, after all what have been mentioned in the literature review we can come to this general conclusion. Language and culture are two interwoven entities, one of them cannot be separated or dealt with neglecting the other, this chapter is conducted to serve the next one proving the relationships between teaching culture, enhancing cultural awareness and hence oral proficiency, the relationship between these elements is transitive.

Starting with the multiple definitions of culture by different scholars and its close relation to language, emphasizing the importance of incorporating culture in EFL classes and the significant role of the teacher, besides mentioning some techniques for culture teaching, to finally mention the relationship between teaching culture to enhance students' cultural awareness and oral proficiency.

This part was conducted under a theoretical framework. The next part will investigate the relationship between culture teaching, enhancing cultural awareness and oral proficiency in a more practical manner.

## **Chapter two: practical part**

### **Methodology and results**

Introduction

2. Methodology

2.1. Description of Instruments

2.2. Administration of the Instruments

2.2.1. Students' Questionnaire

2.2.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

2.3. Samples

2.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

2.4.1. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

2.4.1.1. Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaire's Results

2.4.2. Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

Conclusion

## **Introduction**

After the distribution of the questionnaires and the collection of data here comes the next step of analyzing and interpreting the collected information from both teachers and students. The researcher will try to investigate the status of culture teaching and its influence on enhancing student's cultural awareness and oral proficiency from both students' and teachers' perspectives.

In addition, the researcher will attempt to suggest ways of teaching culture for more efficient results based on student's needs from the data collected and the teacher's opinions.

## **2. Methodology:**

The descriptive approach was adopted for the sake of answering the research questions. The goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. This research is more concerned with **what** rather than **how** or **why** something has happened. Therefore, observation and survey tools are often used to gather data (Gall, Gall, and Borg, (2007) as cited in Nassaji (2015).

Travakoli ( 2012) claims that Descriptive research shares characteristics with both qualitative and quantitative research. Both of these methods were employed in this research paper. Noting that, quantitative research is expressed in numbers and graphs while qualitative research is expressed in words. It is used to understand concepts, thoughts or experiences (steefkerk, 2019).

### **2.1. Description of Instruments**

A teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire were used to collect data. A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Questionnaires can be thought of as a kind of written interview. They can be carried out face to face, by telephone, computer or post ( Mcleod, 2018).

Each of the questionnaires contained an introductory part which explains the purpose of the study for both students and teachers, they include both kinds of questions open and close-ended which enable us to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, letting the participants (teachers and students) give more detailed explanations and clarifications concerning the under investigated problem.

## **2.2. Administration of the Instruments**

### **2.2.1. Students' Questionnaire**

Due to the actual circumstances the students' questionnaire was distributed using google derive on Facebook for both third year and master students of the department of English and third and fourth year students of ENSO, after the students answer the questionnaire will automatically be sent to email.

### **2.2.2. Teachers' Questionnaire**

Due to the same circumstances a teachers' interview was converted into a questionnaire that was distributed via Email to three culture teachers, one teacher from the ENSO and the other two from the department of English at ouargla university in Algeria.

## **2.3. Samples**

The sample of this study constitute of third and master students at the department of English in ouargla university ,and third and fourth year students at ENSO. The large sample serves the purpose of the study and to make the results more generlizable and expressive, in addition to the participation of three culture teachers, one from ENSO and two from the department of English at Ouargla university.

## **2.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

### **2.4.1. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire consists of 21 items, it was addressed to third year and master students at KMUO ( 40 participants), and to third and fourth year students at l'Ecole Normale Seperieur of Ouargla (21 participants).

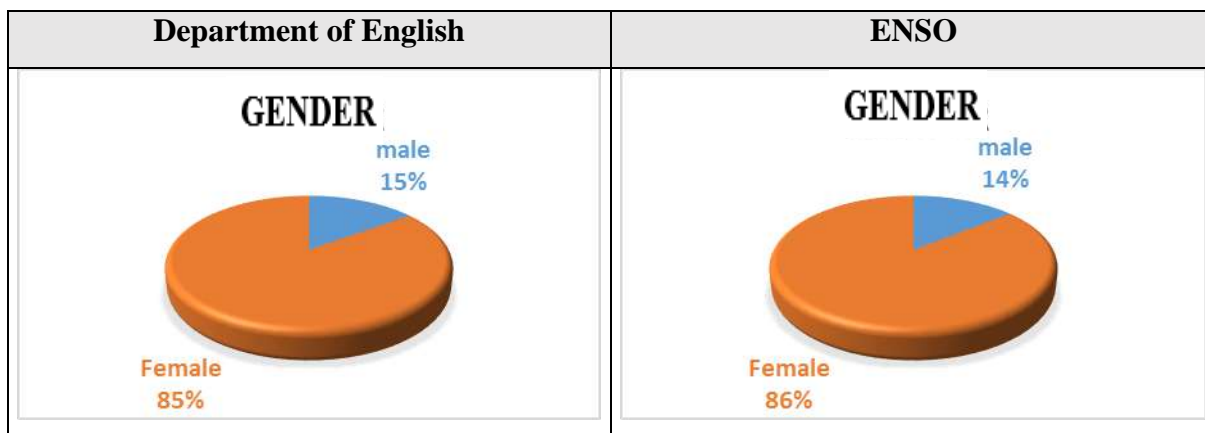
It attempts to investigate the status of culture teaching and to what extent it helps to raise students' cultural awareness and hence oral proficiency.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts in order to be more focused and specific on each aspect of the research.



**I. Personal Background:**

**Question 01: Gender**



**Figure 1: Gender Distribution**

The vast majority of the participants were females 85% in the English department and 86% in ENSO, whereas 15% of them were males in the English department while in the ENSO the males composed 14% of the partakers.

**Question 02: According to you the perfect language learner is?**

This question aims at getting to know what the students' opinions are about the perfect language learner in an attempt to figure out their view of language learning.

/	Department of English		ENSO	
<b>a. the fluent speaker</b>	24	60%	12	57%
<b>b. the good writer</b>	8	20%	8	38%
<b>c. someone who knows the grammar rules of the language</b>	34	85%	20	95%

**Table 1: The Perfect Language Learners**

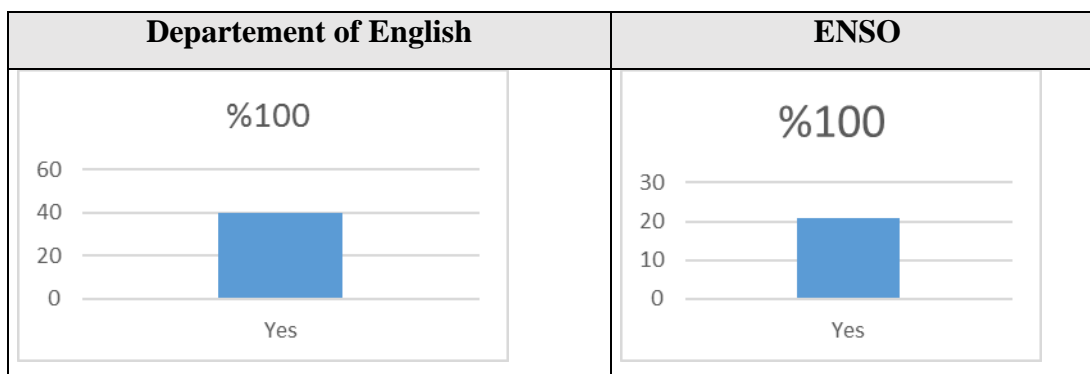
Concerning the ED students 85% of them believe that the perfect language learner is someone who knows the grammar rules of the language, while 60% think that the perfect language learner is the fluent speaker, and only 20% who do consider the perfect language learner to be the good writer.

As for ENSO students the vast majority of them as well (95%) visualize the perfect language learner to be knowledgeable of the grammar rules, whereas 57% of the students view it to be the fluent speaker, and only 38/ see it as being the good writer.

As we can notice that the majority of students give much importance to grammar over oral proficiency and less importance to writing, their view is a little bit far from what Stern (1983) argued that proficiency is the ultimate goal and learning outcome in which teachers, administrators, curriculum developers, test constructors, researchers, parents and of course students themselves are all equally interested.

## II. Teaching Culture in EFL Classroom:

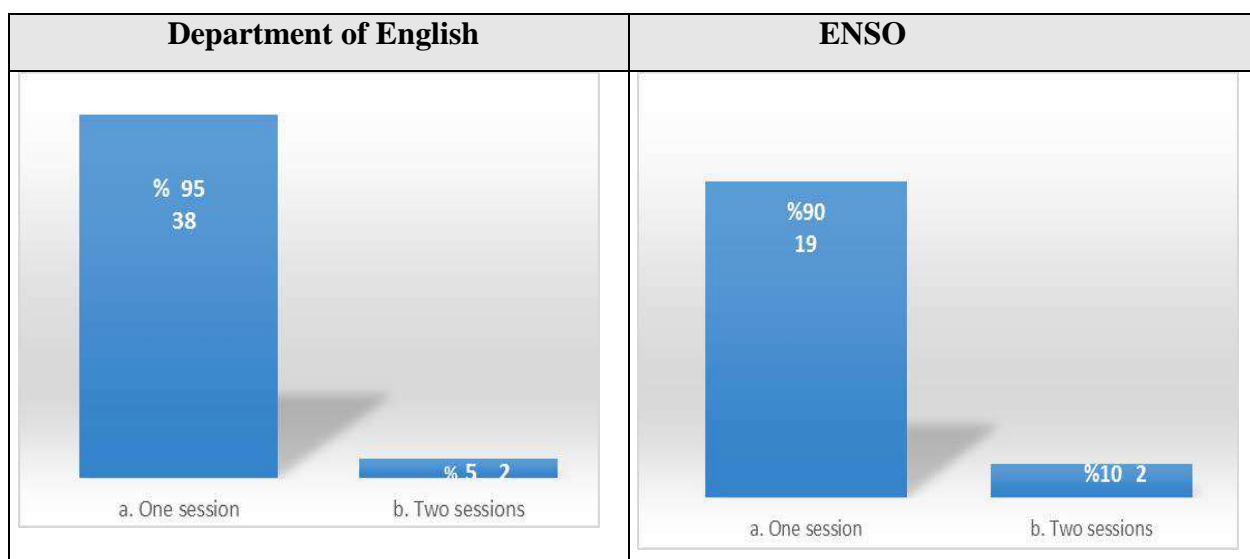
**Question 03: do you have a culture class?**



**Figure 2: Existence of Culture Class**

Both ED and ENSO students have a culture class.

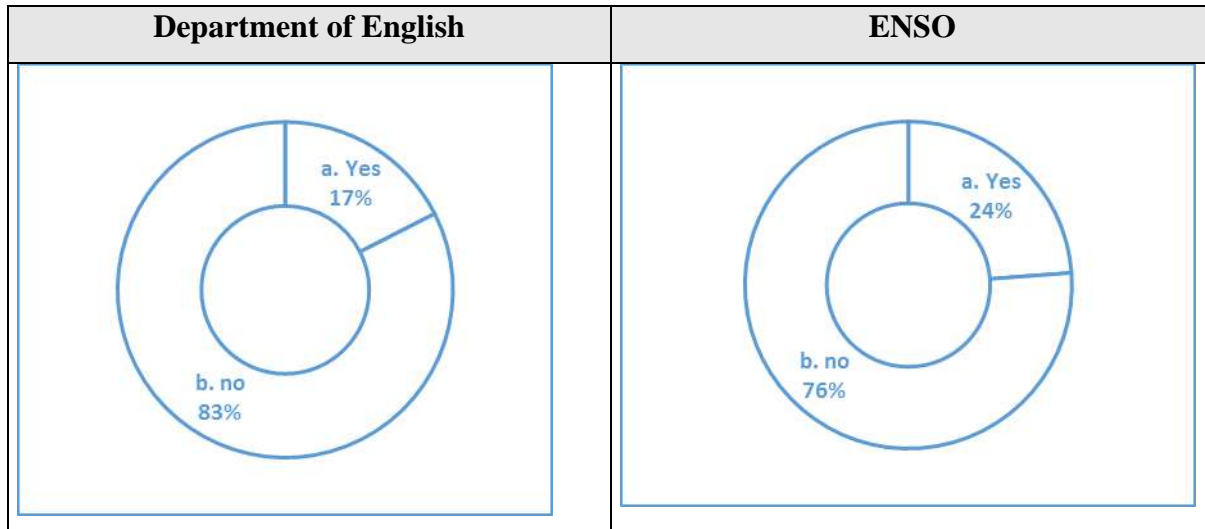
**Question 04: how many sessions are devoted to culture per week?**



**Figure 3: Number of Culture Sessions per Week**

Both in ED and in ENSO have one session per week of culture.

**Question 05: Do you think the time given is sufficient?**



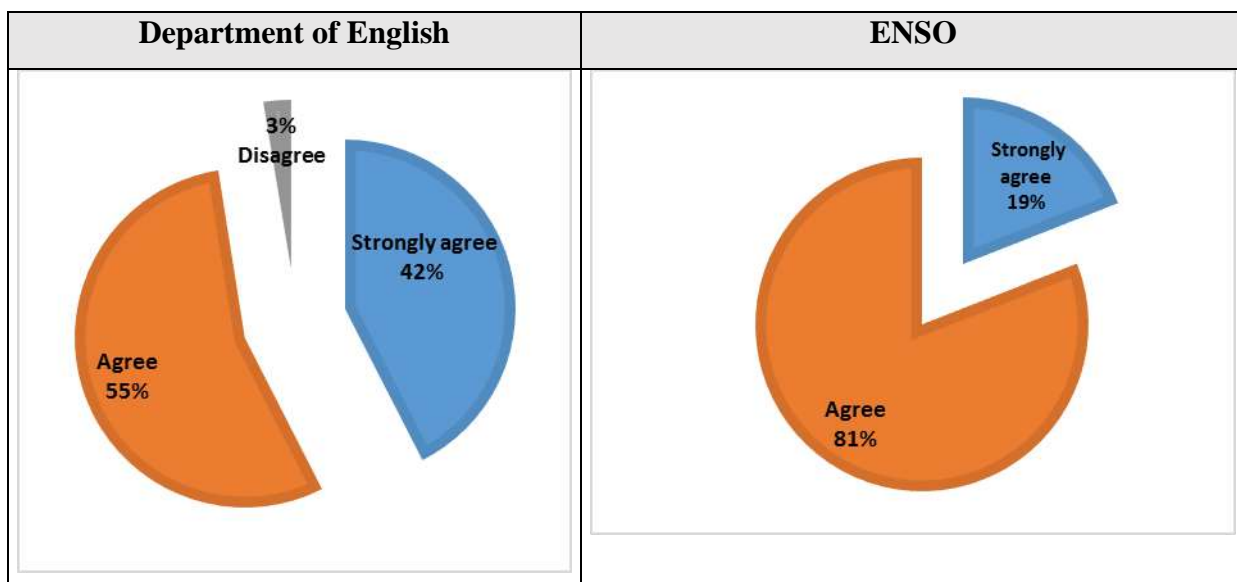
**Figure 4: Time Devoted to Culture**

When the students were asked about the time dedicated to culture per week being sufficient or not, in ED 83% of them thought that it was not enough while 17% were satisfied with it.

As for ENSO students 76% were not pleased with the time given to culture and 24% of them considered it to be enough.

As we can notice that the majority of learners consider one session per week was not enough for the culture class.

**Question 06: Do you agree that language cannot be taught isolated from its culture?**



### Figures 5: Teaching Language in Isolation

This question attempts at knowing the students' awareness of the relationship between language and culture.

55% of the ED students agree that language cannot be taught separately from its culture in addition to 42% who also strongly agree and only 3% disagree.

Concerning ENSO learners 81% agree on the idea that language and culture cannot be isolated from each other as 19% agree strongly.

We can tell according to the results that the students are highly aware of the relationship between language and culture as brown (2000) argues that: "a language is a part of culture ,and a culture is a part of a language ,the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture".

### Question 07: To what extent do you think a language learner must know about the target culture?

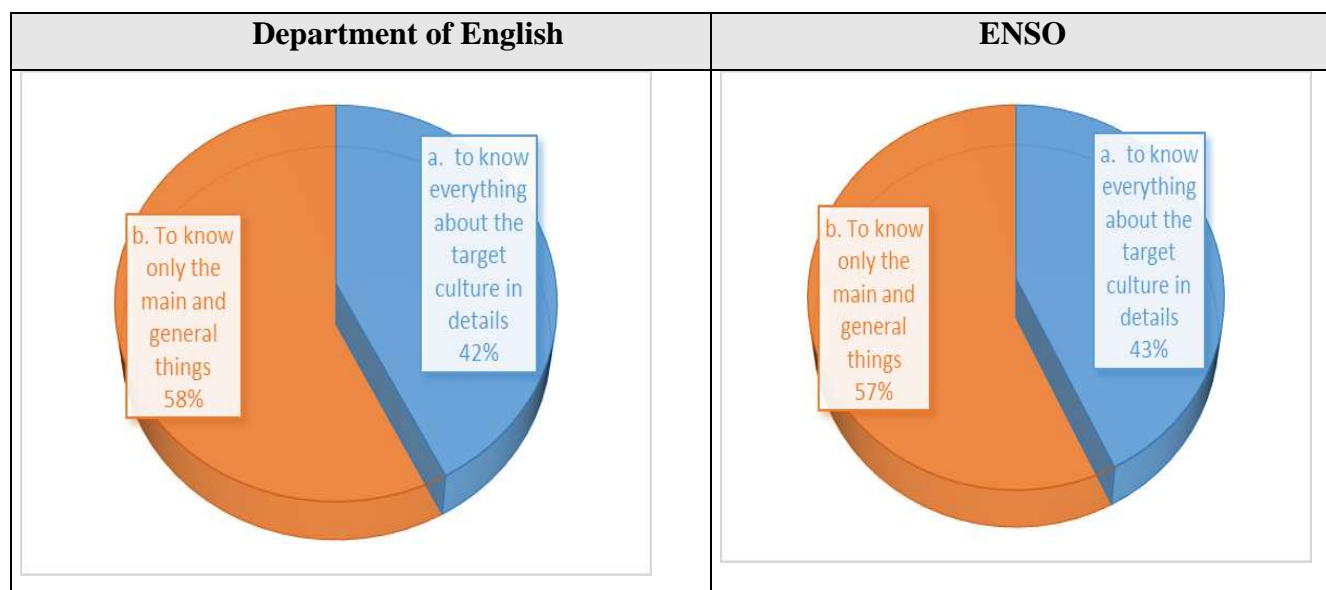


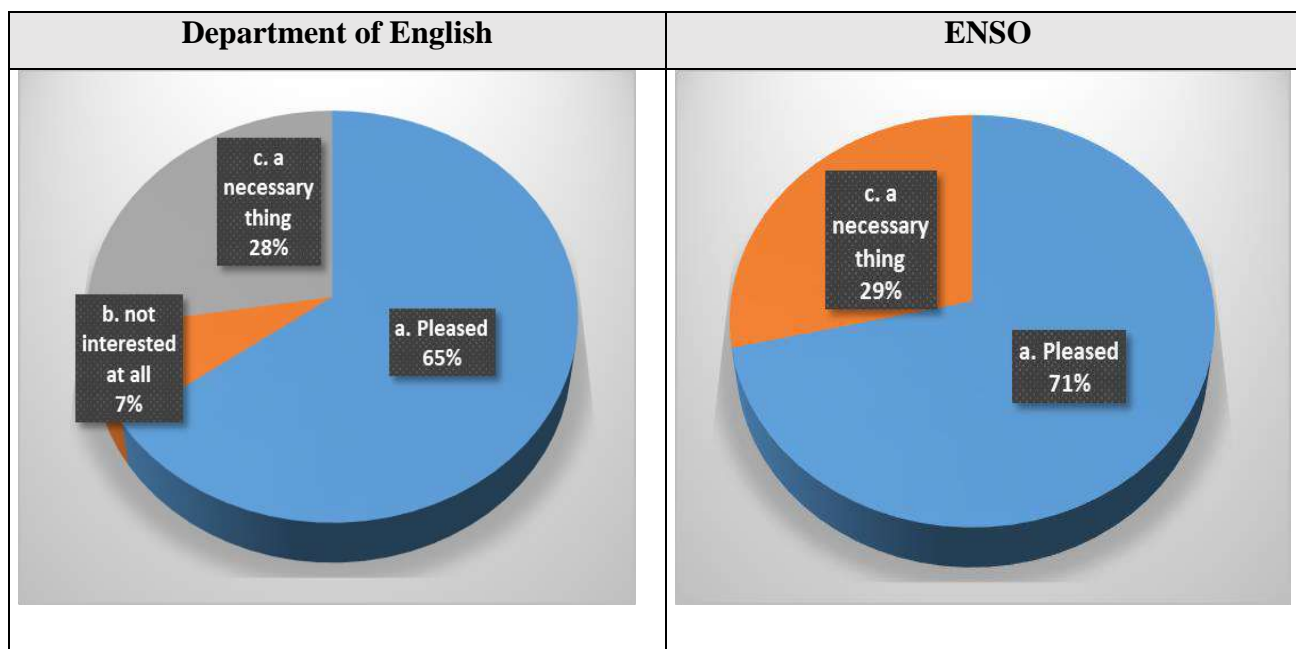
Figure 6: EFL Learners' Knowledge about the FC

42% of the students at the ED believe that a FL learner must know everything about the target culture in details, while 58% think that a learner should only know the main and general things about the target culture.

43% of the students at ENSO agree that a learner must be familiar with everything about the target culture in details, and 57% suggest that a learner is only to know the main and general things about the foreign culture.

As shown in the results we can say that almost half of the students prefer to know everything about the target culture , as more than half of them assume that knowing only the main and general things is enough.

**Question 08: How do you feel about learning other peoples’ culture?**



**Figures 7: Attitudes towards Learning FC**

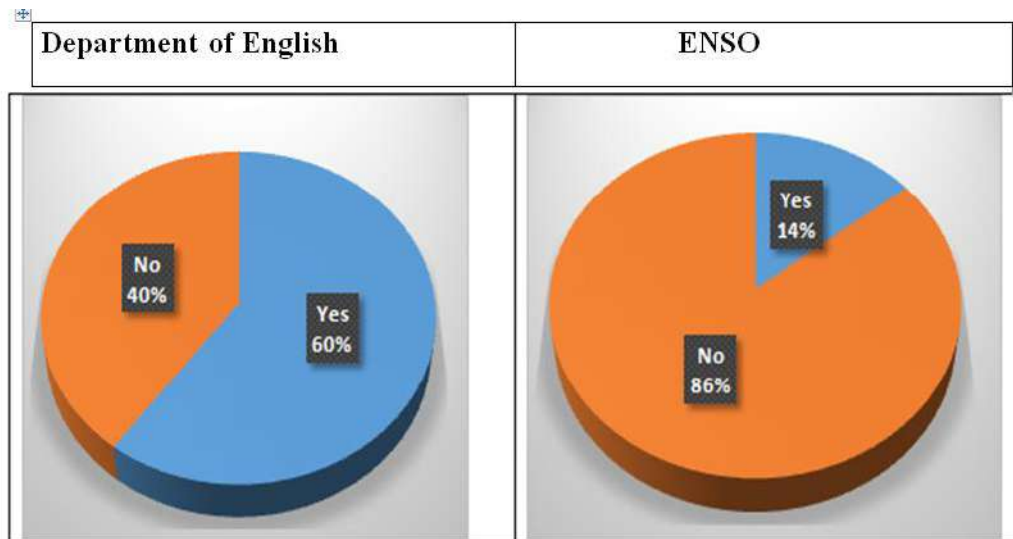
This question tries to identify students’ attitudes towards learning the target culture.

As we can notice that the majority of students (65%) are pleased to learn about the target culture, only 7% of them are not interested at all in learning about the TC, while 28% believe that it is a necessary thing.

Moving to ENSO students the vast majority 71% of them are pleased to know and learn about the TC, where 29% think it is a necessary thing to know.

We conclude that a high percentage of learners have no problem learning about the TC where the majority are pleased and the rest thinking of it as a must.

**Question 09: Are you satisfied with the syllabi of your culture class?**



**Figure 8: Syllabi of Culture**

The results of this particular question were quite different between the ED and the ENSO students. 60% of the ED students were satisfied with their culture syllabi and 40% of them were not pleased with it, as for ENSO students we can say it was the opposite where 86% were not satisfied with their culture syllabi and only 14% that were pleased with it.

**Question 10: What else would you like to be included in your culture class?**

	Department of English		ENSO	
<b>a. religion</b>	30	%75,0	1	%4,8
<b>b. laws</b>	13	%32,5	5	%23,8
<b>c. symbols</b>	7	%17,5	7	%33,3
<b>d. morals</b>	13	%32,5	10	%47,6
<b>e. costumes</b>	12	%30,0	6	%28,6
<b>f. habits and traditions</b>	30	%75,0	21	%100,0

**Table 2: What Students Want to be included in the Culture Class**

Concerning ED students much importance was given to habits, traditions and religion (75%), less importance were given to laws and morals (32%), as well as to costumes (30 %) and a very little interest in symbols.

Looking at ENSO students they completely were against religion to be included in their syllabi (4.8%), 100% all of them wanted to include habits and traditions into their culture syllabi, 47% wanted to include morals, 33% have chosen symbols, 28% picked costumes and 23% wanted laws to be added to their syllabi.

We can notice that the only huge difference between both students of ED and ENSO was in including religion to the culture syllabi.

**Question 11: What teaching tools or techniques are used in your culture class?**

	Department of English		ENSO	
<b>a. videos</b>	31	%77,5	13	%61,9
<b>b. Pictures</b>	13	%32,5	3	%14,3
<b>c. Games</b>	0	%0	4	%19,0
<b>d. Students' presentations</b>	7	%17,5	11	%52,4
<b>e. Role plays</b>	5	%12,5	0	%0
<b>f. Proverbs and idioms</b>	1	%2,5	3	%14,3
<b>g. handouts</b>	36	%90,0	16	%76,2

**Table 3: Teaching Tools used in Culture Class**

According to the results of ED, the most used tool is handouts and videos as well as pictures. While games, role plays, proverbs and idioms in addition to students' presentations are not used in class. As for ENSO we can notice a similar result where the most used tools in class are handouts and videos in addition to students' presentations, neglecting the use of picture, games, role plays, besides proverbs and idioms.

When students were asked: **Which of the above is not used that you would like it to be adopted?**

The majority of them went for students' presentations, role plays and videos. We can conclude that students better learn through more interactive and audiovisual tools.

**Question 12: What aspects of the target culture you would prefer to be included in the syllabi?**

Students want to include costumes, traditions, food, habits, morals, history, daily life and the relationship between culture and language.

**Question 13: According to you what helps you best to learn culture outside the classroom?**

	Department of English		ENSO	
<b>a. Reading books/newspapers/magazines</b>	10	%25,0	10	%47,6
<b>b. Films/TV shows/songs</b>	38	%95,0	20	%95,2
<b>c. Chatting with natives</b>	16	%40,0	6	%28,6

**Table 4: Outside Classroom Learning Tools**

This question aims at knowing the best way learners acquire the foreign culture, in order to incorporate it inside the culture classroom.

Concerning the ED students they acquire the FC best through films, TV shows and songs (95%), 40% learn through chatting with natives, while 25% acquire it best through reading books, newspapers and magazines.

As for ENSO students 95.2% of them grasp the FC through films, TV shows and songs, 47.6% learn through reading books, newspapers and magazines, whereas 28.6% acquire it via chatting with natives.

We can notice that the vast majority of students in both ED and ENSO learn through listening and watching, this results can be used to include more audiovisual activities in the FC class such as videos and listening.

**III. Developing Cultural Awareness :**

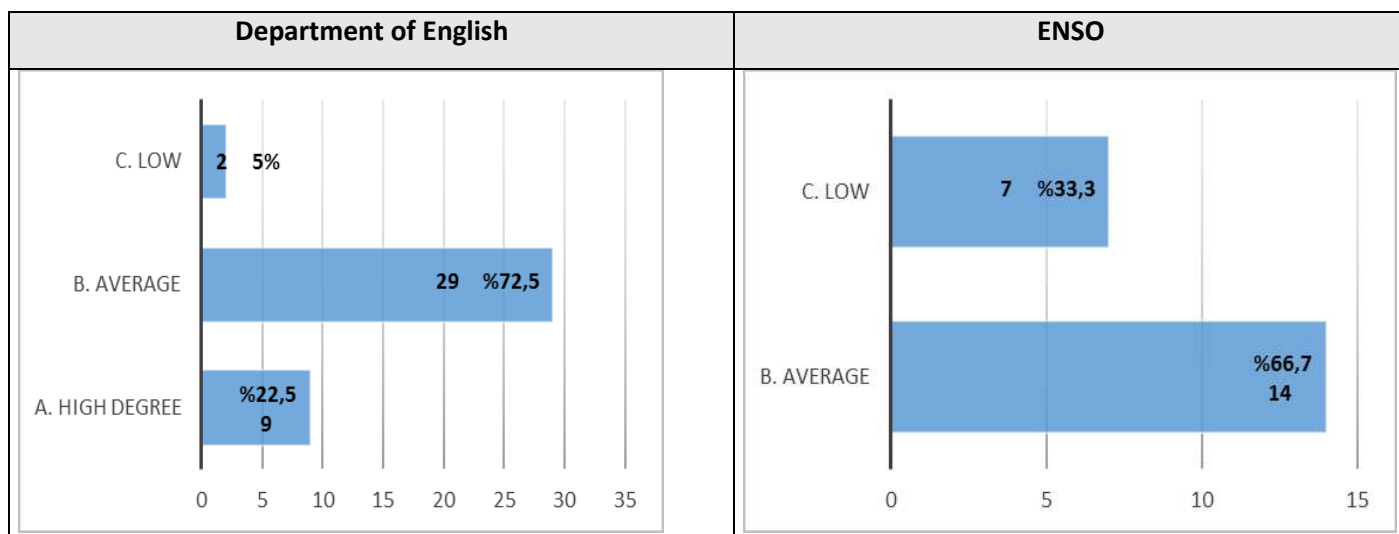
**Question 14: Define cultural awareness in your own words**

The goal behind this question is to estimate students' knowledge concerning the meaning of cultural awareness.

After reading students' answers we can say that the vast majority of them are quite aware of the meaning of cultural awareness, different definitions were given taking the same direction that cultural awareness is to be aware of the differences between cultures in habits, traditions, costumes, morals, food, music, way of life etc, in order to better communicate with people from different cultures. Only few are those who went too far in defining cultural awareness.



**Question 15: To what degree your culture class helped to improve your cultural awareness?**



**Figure 9: The Degree Culture Class Helped Learners**

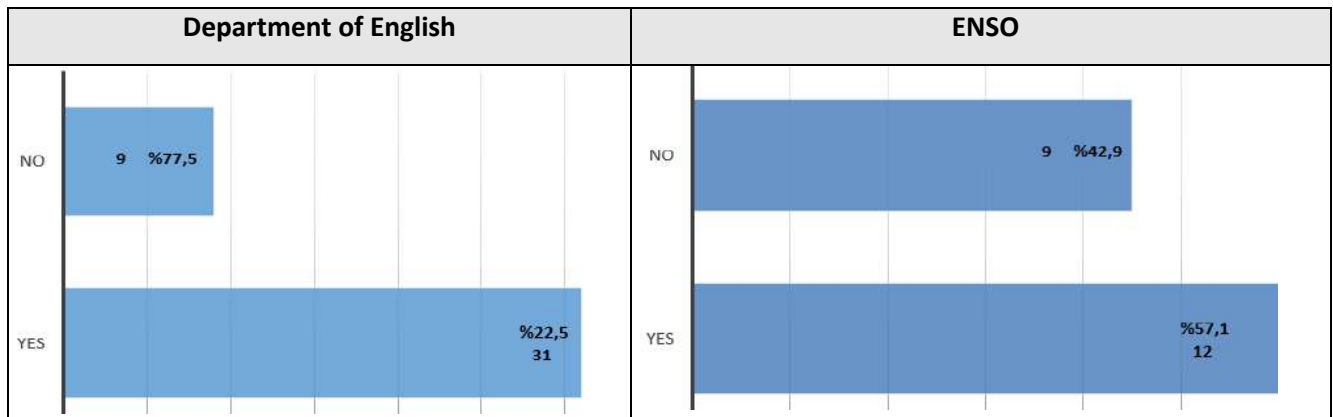
This question aims at estimating to what extent learners benefit from their culture class and if they think of it to be helpful or not.

Concerning students of the ED 72.5% of them say that the culture class helped them in an average degree in improving their cultural awareness, while 22.5% say it helped them in a high degree, and only 5% who believe their culture class did not help them in improving their cultural awareness.

As for ENSO 66.7% of the students believe that the culture class helped them in an average degree to improve their cultural awareness, while 33.3% of them think of the culture class not being helpful that much, and no one considered it to be highly helpful.

We can conclude that the vast majority of learners consider culture class to be helpful to an average degree. But, not that much helpful in improving their cultural awareness.

**Question 16: Do you consider yourself to be culturally aware?**



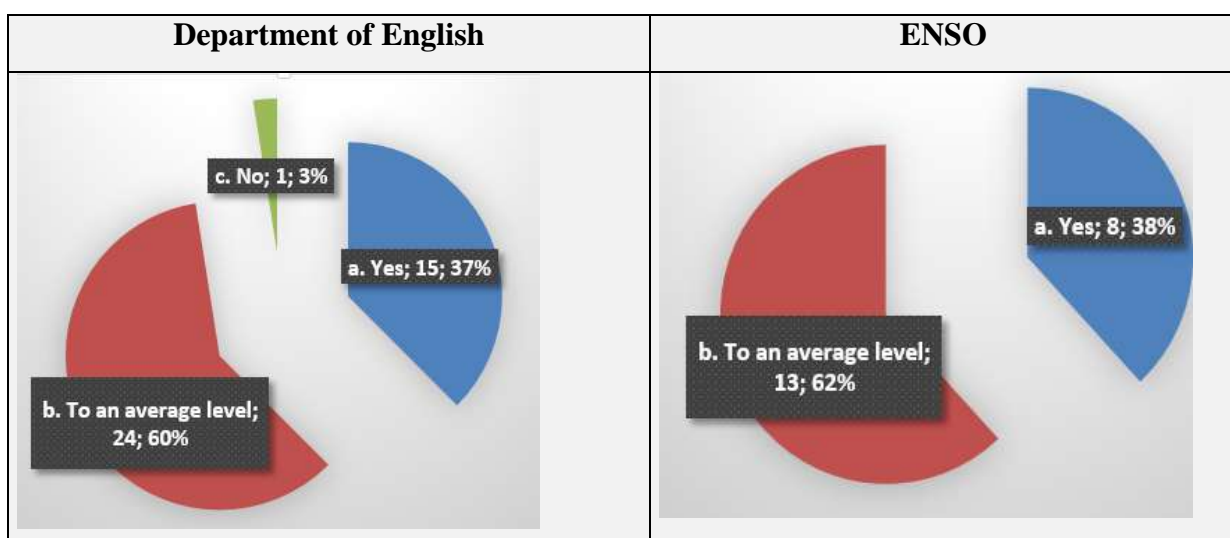
**Figure 10: Students' Cultural Awareness**

77.5% of the ED students believe themselves to be culturally aware, as 22.5% think of themselves as culturally unaware.

57.1% of ENSO students consider themselves to be culturally aware, while 42.9% of them do not see themselves to be culturally unaware.

We come to conclude that the majority of students consider themselves to be culturally aware.

**Question 17: Would you consider yourself to be aware of the cultural differences between your own culture and the target culture?**



**Figure 11: Students' Awareness of the Cultural Differences between the Target and Mother Culture**

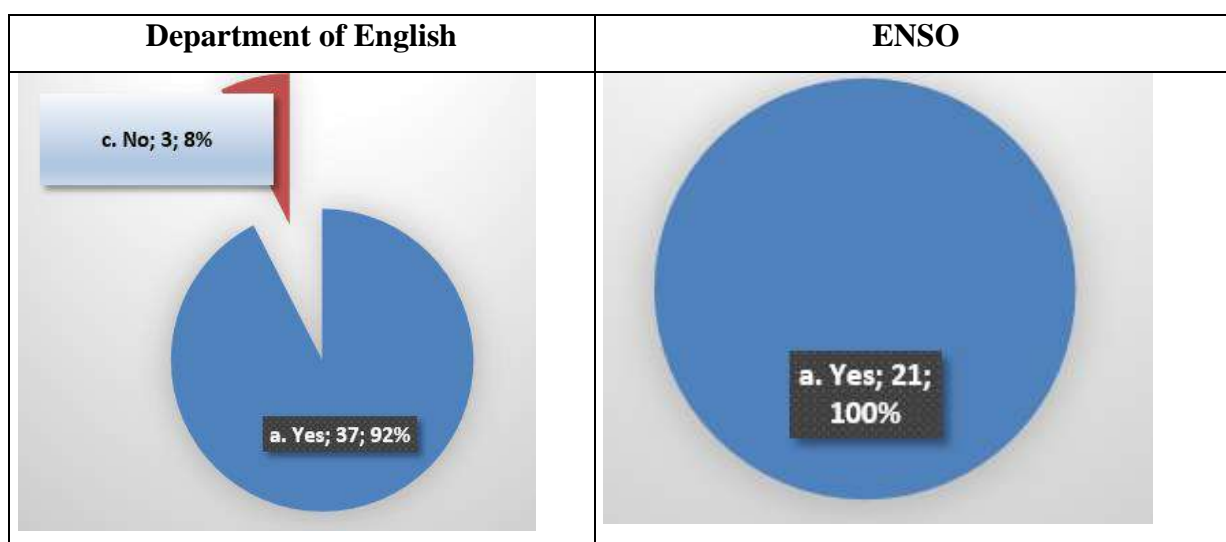
The aim of this question is to complete the previous one and confirm it.

15.37% of the ENSO students know the differences between their own culture and the target culture, 24.6% of them are aware of these differences to an average level, while only 1.3% of them are not aware of these differences.

8.38% of the ENSO students are aware of the cultural differences between their own culture and the target culture, whereas 13.62% of them are aware of the differences to an average level.

Most students are quite familiar with the differences between their own culture and the target culture.

**Question 18: do you think it is important to know about the differences between your mother culture and the target culture?**



**Figure 12: The Importance of Knowing about Cultural Differences**

This question aims at knowing whether students are aware of the importance of culture or no.

97.92% of the ED learners believe it is important to know about the differences between their mother culture and the target culture, whereas 3.8% think of them as not important to know.

100% of the ENSO students think it is important to know about the differences between their mother culture and the target culture.

We can say that the majority of students are aware of the importance of knowing the cultural differences between their own and the target culture.

IV. Developing Oral Proficiency:

Question 19: How would you describe your level of oral proficiency?

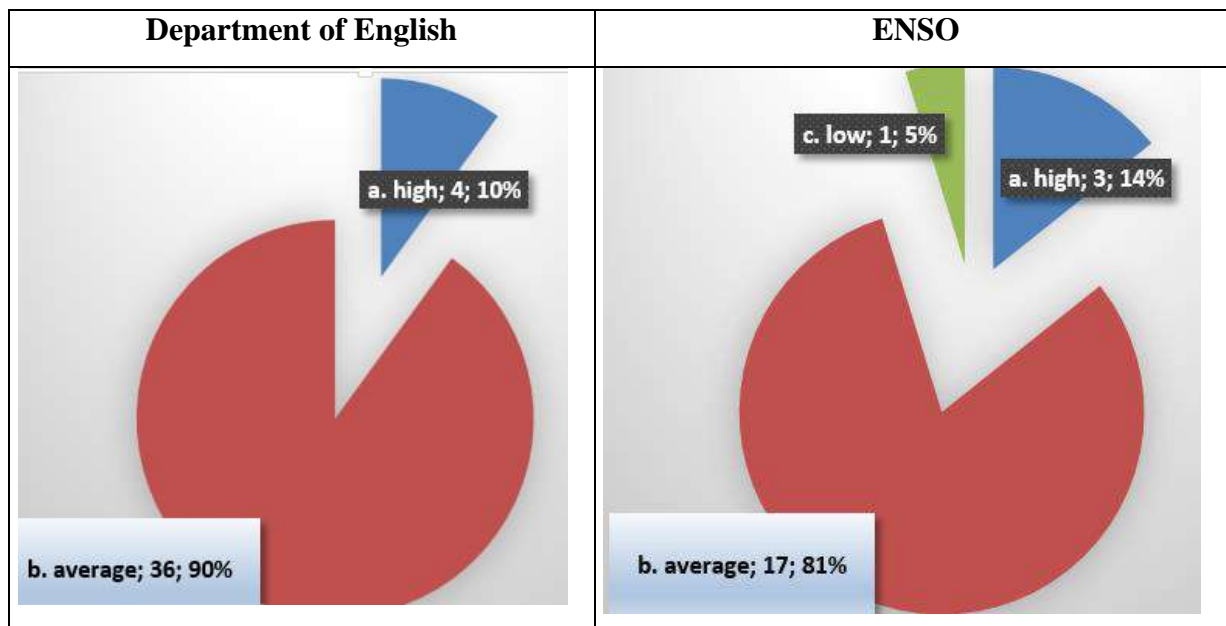


Figure 13: Students' Level of Oral Proficiency

Concerning the students of the ED 10% of them consider themselves as having a high degree of oral proficiency, while 90% of them think of their level of oral proficiency to be average.

As for ENSO students 14% of them have a high degree of oral proficiency, 5% have a low level while, 81% have an average level of oral proficiency.

According to the results the vast majority of learners have an average level of oral proficiency.

Question 20: In your opinion does cultural awareness affect the level of oral proficiency?

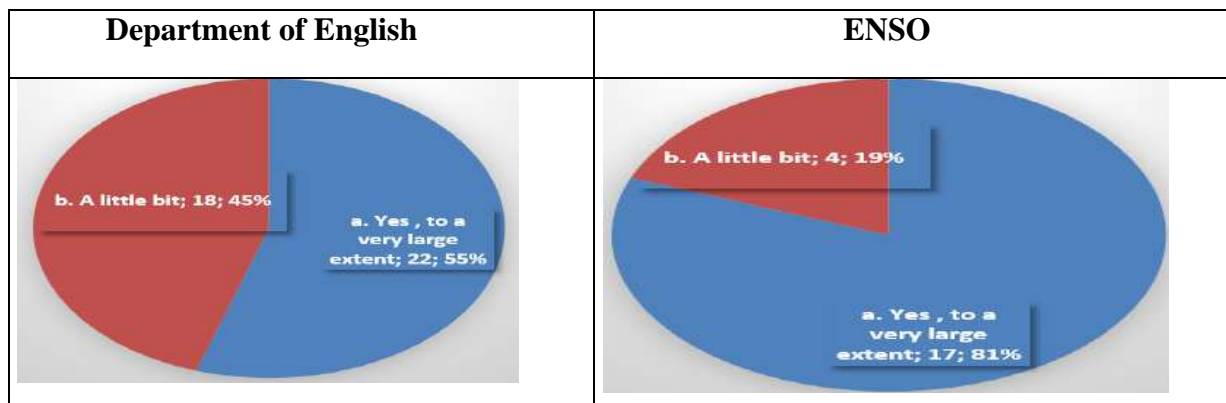


Figure 14: The Relationship between Cultural Awareness and Oral Proficiency

55% of the ED students agree that cultural awareness affect the level of oral proficiency to a very large extent, while 45% of them believe that it only affect it a little bit.

Concerning students of ENSO 81% of them believe that cultural awareness affect the level of oral proficiency to a very large extent, however 19% of the learners think its effect is little.

### **Question 21: In what way does cultural awareness affect the level of oral proficiency?**

Half of the answers were pointing to the fact that the knowledge of the cultural differences will help speakers to be more fluent and raise their self confidence because they know exactly what to say, when to say it and how to say it, when communicating with people from different cultures. The other half however they gave nonsense answers while other simply said that they do not see any relation between cultural awareness and oral proficiency.

#### **2.4.1.1. Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaire's Results**

As mentioned earlier, this questionnaire was distributed to 61 participants from both the English department at Ouargla university (40), and ENSO students (21), the majority of them were females. The questionnaire contains four parts for the sake of being detailed, organized and focused.

In the first part we wanted to know learners' idea of a perfect language learner, is it the fluent speaker, the good writer or someone who knows the grammar rules of the language. we discovered from their answers that they give more importance to grammar rules over oral proficiency which a little pit contrasts with the ultimate goal of learning a language as lie (2003) argues "language is communication, it naturally follows that the goal of language instruction is to equip the learners with the ability to use the language for communication".

Most of students think that one session per week is not enough for culture class and more sessions are needed. We noticed that the participants are aware of the importance of the relatedness between culture and language and that language cannot be taught in isolation from its culture. The learners are pleased to know about the FC but they don't want to know everything about it, only the main and general things, this can cause a problem for teachers concerning what to include in the culture class. Culture is taught through the use of handouts, videos, role plays and presentations which are almost the same tools preferred by students as they prefer the use of interactive and audiovisual instruments in class which gave us an idea of how they want to learn culture mainly through listening, watching and speaking. When asked if they were satisfied with the syllabi of the culture class ED students were satisfied while ENSO students were not.

Moving to the third part of the questionnaire which concerns developing cultural awareness .students are quite aware of the meaning of cultural awareness and they consider themselves to be familiar with the differences between their own culture and the target culture admitting the importance of knowing about these differences. Unfortunately, they do not consider their culture class to be helpful in improving their cultural awareness.

The vast majority of learners from both ED and ENSO have an average level of oral proficiency according to them, and they think that cultural awareness effects the level of oral proficiency to a very large extent.

To sum up, if we think of language as communication than the ultimate goal of learning and teaching a language must be to develop oral proficiency or communicative competence, to reach this goal we must consider both aspects of language linguistic and non-linguistic , the first one is clear and direct, but the second one is more complex and deep which concerns the cultural side of the language ( the non-linguistic items), here we must focus on culture teaching, developing students' cultural awareness to finally reach our goal which oral proficiency, proving this relationship was the very aim of this study.

#### **2.4.2. Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire**

In addition to students' questionnaire a teachers' questionnaire including 14 items was conducted to be answered by three culture teachers one of them from ENSO and the other two from the English department a kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla.

##### **Question 1: What is your educational degree?**

Two of the teachers have a PHD degree and the third teacher have a magister degree.

##### **Question 2: For how long have you been teaching culture in EFL classes?**

The three are full time teachers, the ENSO teacher have been teaching culture for 5 years, while the ED teachers they have been teaching culture for 6 and 19 years.

##### **Question 3: What is your attitude towards teaching culture to EFL students?**

Sharing the same opinion, the three teachers believe culture teaching to be a necessary thing. It is not a matter of pleasure or desire it is rather a must.

We can conclude that the teachers are very aware of the importance of culture.

**Question 4: Do you emphasize on telling EFL learners about the importance of culture?**

Two teachers emphasize on telling their students about the importance of culture all the time, as for the third teacher he tells them about it sometimes.

Teachers do spread awareness about the importance of culture to their learners.

**Question 5: What materials do you use or you think should be used to teach culture?**

Teachers use different materials to teach culture, different answers were provided as follows:

- . Handouts and illustrative documentary videos
- . Teaching culture through literature( movies, plays, songs, etc)
- . Authentic texts, textbooks, literary texts, playwrights and videos

**Question 6: In your opinion is it enough for learners to know about culture only in classrooms without being exposed to real situations with natives or visiting English speaking countries?**

Teachers do not think it is enough for learners to know about culture only in classrooms without being exposed to real situations with natives or visiting English speaking countries. When asked why they answered as follows:

. Culture is a living thing and students will be much more conscious about it when exposed to real situations with natives.

. It is not enough to restrict the teaching of culture and its discovery to the classroom only because culture is linked to both human linguistics and cultural behaviors.

**Question 7: Do you believe that EFL learners are culturally aware to the degree that enables them to hold conversations with natives without any communication breakdown?**

Two of the teachers think that EFL learners are not culturally aware to the degree that enables them to hold conversations with natives without any communication breakdown, however the third teacher believe that they can manage it to a certain degree.

This actually goes against what students think of themselves, they view themselves to be culturally aware as shows the results of Q 16 from students' questionnaire.

**Question 8: Do you think that oral proficiency has a close relation with cultural awareness?**

Two of the respondents view that oral proficiency has a close relation with cultural awareness to a certain extent, whereas the third teacher think them to be related to a very large degree.

We can say that the teachers admit the relationship between oral proficiency and cultural awareness.

**Question 9: Do you agree that a learner can be culturally aware and not orally proficient, but he/she cannot be orally proficient without being culturally aware?**

Teachers' answers were as follows: yes, no, yes and no.

We can conclude that they view cultural awareness to have an impact on learners' oral proficiency to a certain degree, but apparently it is not the only thing to determine it.

**Question 10: According to you what is the role of the culture teacher?**

Culture teachers play a vital role in the process of EFL teaching/learning. Teachers' answers show its significance, they were as follows:

- . To make students understand that culture is extremely bound up with language learning and teaching
- . Bridging the gap between learners' thoughts and a foreign culture
- . Make students know about the positive side of a foreign culture
- . Compare between their own culture and others' cultures
- . Language and culture can never be disassociated, this means that any language is full of human behavior and the learner should be invited to act within this language.

Teachers are quite aware of the role of the teacher and its importance.

**Question 11: Are you satisfied with what is being taught in EFL culture classes?**

Only one teacher seems to be satisfied with what is being taught in EFL culture classes, the other two teachers disagree. When asked why their answers were as follows:

- . We need more authentic materials
- . Because the content sometimes is irrelevant



In Q9 from students' questionnaire students were asked the same question if they were satisfied with their culture syllabi, ENSO students shared the same answer as the teacher from ENSO which was No.

**Question 12: Are you satisfied with the number of sessions devoted to culture?**

Both teachers and students share the same opinion concerning the number of sessions devoted to culture, they think one session per week is not enough, more sessions are needed.

**Question 13: What strategies do you personally use in teaching the foreign language culture?**

Teachers are free to decide what better way to teach culture, for this reason we do not find similar answers. One of the teachers' answers was giving handouts and tasks to be done at home besides classroom open discussions, another answer also focused on oral communication besides the use of videos.

**Question 14: Any further suggestions concerning culture teaching and how to increase students' cultural awareness for better oral communication?**

In this respect teachers recommend:

- . Watching movies and series can help much set the right awareness about the culture in question.
- . Students should read furthermore about a foreign culture.
- . Learners should focus on authentic materials used outside classrooms.

**2.4.2.1. Interpretation of the Teachers' Questionnaire's Results:**

In addition to the students' questionnaire, a teachers' questionnaire was used to collect more data about culture teaching and its role in enhancing EFL learners' cultural awareness and oral proficiency. Three teachers participated one from ENSO and the other two from the ED at Ouargla university, all of them are full time teachers with a very rich experience in EFL teaching and specifically culture teaching.

To start with, all of the teachers agree on the importance of teaching culture to EFL learners. They emphasize on telling students about its importance all the time. In teaching culture they use different materials such as: handouts, videos, movies, plays, songs, authentic texts, literary text etc.

They believe that culture is a living thing and we cannot restrict its teaching and discovery to the classroom, students must be exposed to real situations with natives because culture is linked to both human linguistics and cultural behaviors, this fact makes culture teaching in classrooms a very challenging and hard task for teachers.

The teachers think that EFL learners are not culturally aware to the degree that enable them to hold conversations with natives without any communication breakdown admitting the relationship between cultural awareness and oral proficiency thinking that a learner must be culturally aware to some extent in order to be orally proficient.

In their opinions the culture teacher' role is to Bridge the gap between learners 'thoughts and a foreign culture, to teach learners about the differences between their own culture and the target culture, and mainly to spread awareness about the importance of culture and its close relation to language.

When asked about the time and content of the culture class, teachers are not satisfied with both, one session per week is not enough, concerning the content they believe more authentic materials are needed as well as the choice of the content itself where sometimes is totally irrelevant.

One of the strategies used by the teachers is to give handouts and tasks to be done at home in addition to classroom open discussions, teachers tend to focus on oral comprehension to teach culture.

Finally, the questionnaire's results show that teachers give much importance to culture, acknowledging its relatedness to language and making sure students know how important culture is in language learning. Teachers are also aware of their role and its significance. Furthermore, they admit the relationship between cultural awareness and oral proficiency. Culture teachers suggest reading outside the classroom as well as watching movies and series, mainly to be exposed to authentic materials in order to improve cultural awareness and hence oral proficiency, culture teaching should not be restricted to the classroom, it is an ongoing process.

## Conclusion

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of culture teaching in enhancing EFL learners' cultural awareness and oral proficiency. In order to collect the data needed for this research, the researcher used two research instruments resembling in students' and teachers' questionnaires.

At first, one of the main questions of this research was about the importance of teaching culture in EFL classes. The results from both questionnaire showed that both students and teachers are aware of the importance of culture and the fact that we cannot separate the two from each other. Culture teachers also seem to be very conscious about their significant role in both spreading awareness among students about the importance of culture and concerning the materials and strategies used to teach culture.

Furthermore, analyzing the results we concluded that students and teachers admit the relationship between culture teaching and enhancing cultural awareness and the latter's impact on learners' oral proficiency. This leads to one of the most crucial goals of culture teaching and language teaching/ learning which is communicative competence.

To end with, the data collected from both teachers and students can lead us to know exactly what both need and expect from a culture class. These results can eventually lead us to make suggestions and recommendations for a more effective culture teaching and learning.

# General conclusion

## General Conclusion

What lead to this study is the main goal of teaching and learning a language which is communication. A number of things effect learners' oral proficiency, the one discussed in this research is culture teaching and the transitive relationship relating it with cultural awareness and oral proficiency. To reach this goal both teachers and students must be aware of the importance of culture and its close relation to language, each language has its own view of the world. This is a crucial matter for EFL learners and teachers to know. Being familiar with these cultural traits of a language can keep learners away from any communication breakdown with natives.

The researcher aimed at explaining all main elements of this topic. For which a case study within the descriptive approach including qualitative and quantitative methods was used to collect data and analyze them, in order to answer the following research questions:

1. How important it is to teach culture to EFL students?
2. What is the role of the culture teacher?
3. In what way does culture teaching enhance learners' cultural awareness?
4. To what extent does culture teaching improves EFL learners' oral proficiency?

For the sake of answering these research questions four hypotheses were formulated. The results of the data analysis showed that both teachers and students acknowledge the importance of teaching and learning culture, they are extremely aware of the relationship between it and language, EFL teachers are aware of their role in the culture class and its significance, they spread awareness among learners about the importance of culture, in addition to teaching the differences and similarities between mother and foreign culture, they use a number of tools and strategies to achieve a understanding and learning of the FC.

The two first hypotheses were confirmed. Leading to the third and fourth ones, EFL teachers and students admit the relationship between cultural awareness and oral proficiency, the latter is not completely determined by cultural awareness but it has a great impact on it. Finally we can say that

there is a kind of transitive relationship between culture teaching, enhancing EFL learners' cultural awareness and hence oral proficiency.

To end with, this research reached a number of valuable results concerning the teaching of culture and its impact on EFL learners' cultural awareness and oral proficiency. The topic needs more research and investigation, hoping this study can be a start point for further studies in the area.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The current study faced certain limitations that can result further studies. Due to the actual circumstances of the pandemic ( covid-19) the research faced some obstacles. First, converting teachers' interview into a questionnaire that was answered via email this was a lost actually, a face to face interview with teachers could have been a lot more useful to the research. Second, the disability to use libraries for more resources, all the recourses were found online. Third, contact and meetings with the supervisor were also via email, this prevents more discussions about the topic. Finally, the psychological status of the researcher due to this pandemic, leading to less concentration and underachievement.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

For the sake of enhancing EFL learners' oral proficiency through the teaching of culture and raising cultural awareness, here are some suggestions and recommendations that can help both students and teachers in EFL culture classes.

- One session per week for culture class is not enough, more sessions are needed.

### **Culture Teacher' Role:**

Teaching culture is not an easy task as it may seems, for which it is better if novice teachers can get the appropriate training before they start teaching culture to EFL learners. It will enable them to decide what to teach and how to teach it. Culture teachers have a significant part in which they must be aware of including:

- Spreading awareness among EFL learners about the importance of culture and its fundamental relationship with language.
- Explaining the differences and similarities between the two cultures to students, and making clear that there is no better culture and the differences must be respected and accepted as they are.
- Analyzing students' needs before the start of the course. In order to know what they are familiar with and what not, what strategy to use in class, and to figure out their attitudes towards learning the FC to act upon it.
- Choosing contents with what suits the learners and mainly their mother culture and cultural identity.
- Focusing on interactive activities to be performed in class with the use of authentic materials such as videos, recordings, book reviews etc.

Furthermore, teachers must encourage learners to know more about the FC outside the classroom through movies, songs, TV shows, series, reading books, online magazines, online newspapers, chatting with natives if possible. Culture is not restricted to the classroom only, it is to be learned in every way possible.

### **Students' Role:**

Any process of learning/teaching is contrasted of two parts. Students' role is as important as teachers':

- Students must be aware of the fact that a language cannot be separated from its culture, despite our personal attitude towards the FC as EFL learners we must learn it and give it its status.
- Learners must differentiate between learning a FC and adopting a FC, they are obliged to know it but not to adopt it.

## **Activities for Raising Cultural Awareness and Oral Proficiency:**

### ➤ **Activity 01:**

**Role Plays:** teachers can ask students to prepare short meaningful plays to be performed in class. The choice of the topic will be cultural based.

### ➤ **Activity 02:**

**Presentations:** each student can choose a topic of personal interest related to the FC in order to present it orally in the class. Students are free to use videos, pictures, audios, data shows etc.

### ➤ **Activity 03:**

**Classroom Open Discussions:** a topic of discussion can be chosen by the teacher or students to be discussed, the topic must be of relation to the FC.



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## Appendices

### Appendix I: Students' Questionnaire

#### Investigating the Influence of Teaching Culture on EFL Students' Cultural Awareness and Oral Proficiency

##### Dear students

I am hereby preparing for my master thesis investigating the influence of teaching culture on EFL students' cultural awareness and oral proficiency , I will appreciate your help in answering the following questions.

**Thank you in advance**

**Guidelines:** please tick (√) the appropriate box or boxes and write full statements whenever necessary.

#### I. Personal Background:

1. Gender:    a. male                      
                  b. Female
  
2.    According to you the perfect language learner is?
  - a.    the fluent speaker
  - b.    the good writer
  - c.    someone who knows the grammar rules of the language

#### II. Teaching Culture in EFL Classroom

3. Do you have a culture class?

a. Yes

b. No

4. How many sessions are devoted to culture per week?

a. One session

b. Two sessions

c. More

5. Do you think the time given is sufficient?

a. Yes

b. no

6. Do you agree that language cannot be taught isolated from its culture?

a. Agree

b. Strongly agree

c. Disagree

d. Strongly disagree

7. To what extent do you think a language learner must know about the target culture?

a. to know everything about the target culture in details

b. To know only the main and general things

8. How do you feel about learning other peoples' culture?

a. Pleased

b. not interested at all

c. a necessary thing

9. Are you satisfied with the syllabi of your culture class?

Yes

No

10. What else would you like to be included in your culture class?

a. religion

b. laws

c. symbols

- d. morals
- e. costumes
- f. habits and traditions

11. What teaching tools or techniques are used in your culture class?

- a. Videos
- b. Pictures
- c. Games
- d. Students' presentations
- e. Role plays
- f. Proverbs and idioms
- g. handouts

Which of the above is not used that you would like it to be adopted

.....

12. What aspects of the target culture you would prefer to be included in the syllabi?

.....

13. According to you what helps you best to learn culture outside the classroom ?

- a. Reading books/ newspapers/ magazines
- b. Films/ TV shows/ songs
- c. Chatting with natives

### III. Developing Cultural Awareness

14. Define cultural awareness in your own words:

.....

15. To what degree your culture class helped to improve your cultural awareness?

- a. High degree
- b. Average

c. Low

16. Do you consider yourself to be culturally aware?

Yes

No

17. Would you consider yourself to be aware of the cultural differences between your own culture and the target culture?

a. Yes

b. To an average level

c. No

18. Do you think it is important to know about the differences between your mother culture and the target culture?

a. Yes

b. No

#### IV. Developing Oral Proficiency

19. How would you describe your level of oral proficiency?

a. high

b. average

c. low

20. In your opinion does cultural awareness affect the level of oral proficiency?

a. Yes , to a very large extent

b. A little bit

c. No

21. In what way does cultural awareness affect the level of oral proficiency?

.....

**Thank you for your cooperation**



## Appendix II : Teachers' Questionnaire

### Dear teachers

This questionnaire is conducted to help me in my investigation concerning the influence of teaching culture on EFL students' cultural awareness and oral proficiency, answering my questions will be of great help to my research taking advantage of your experience as EFL teachers and culture teachers especially.

Thank you in advance

### 1. What is your educational degree?

a. Magister

b. Doctorate

c. professor

### 2. For how long have you been teaching culture in EFL classes?

### 3. What is your attitude towards teaching culture to EFL students?

a. Pleased

b. It is a necessary thing

c. Not pleased at all

### 4. Do you emphasize on telling EFL learners about the importance of culture?

a. Yes all the time

b. Sometimes

c. No I do not

**5. What materials do you use or you think should be used to teach culture?**  
.....

**6. In your opinion is it enough for learners to know about culture only in classrooms without being exposed to real situations with natives or visiting English speaking countries?**

a. Yes

b. No

c. somewhat

why?.....  
.....

**7. Do you believe that EFL learners are culturally aware to the degree that enables them to hold conversations with natives without any communication breakdown?**

a. Yes

b. No

c. To a certain degree

**8.**

**9. Do you think that oral proficiency has a close relation with cultural awareness?**

a. Yes, to a very large degree

b. Somewhat

c. No

**10. Do you agree that a learner can be culturally aware and not orally proficient, but he/she cannot be orally proficient without being culturally aware?**

a. Yes

b. no

**11. According to you what is the role of the culture teacher?**

.....

**12. Are you satisfied with what is being taught in EFL culture classes?**

a. Yes

b. No

Why?

.....

**13. Are you satisfied with the number of sessions devoted to culture?**

a. Yes

b. No, more sessions are needed

**14. What strategies do you personally use in teaching the foreign language culture?**

.....

**15. Any further suggestions concerning culture teaching and how to increase students' cultural awareness for better oral communication?**

.....

**Thank you very much**

## Résumé

Cette étude vise à étudier le rôle de l'enseignement de la culture dans l'amélioration de la conscience culturelle et de la maîtrise de l'oral des apprenants EFL. Pour collecter les données, deux questionnaires ont été utilisés, un questionnaire destiné aux étudiants a été distribué à 61 apprenants EFL (40 de l'ED au KMUO et 21 de l'ENSO). Et un questionnaire destiné aux enseignants auquel ont répondu trois professeurs de culture (1 de l'ENSO et 2 de l'ED au KMUO). Les deux méthodes qualitatives et quantitatives ont été utilisées pour analyser les données. Les résultats ont montré que les étudiants et les enseignants sont conscients de l'importance de l'enseignement de la culture dans les classes EFL, en plus de révéler la relation transitive entre l'enseignement de la culture, l'amélioration de la conscience culturelle et la maîtrise de l'oral des apprenants. Cette étude a également concentré sur le rôle important de l'enseignant. Enfin, sur la base de l'analyse des données, un certain nombre de suggestions sont faites concernant le rôle des enseignants, le rôle des élèves et les activités visant à sensibiliser les apprenants à la culture et à améliorer leurs compétences orales.

**Mot clé:** enseignement de la culture, sensibilisation culturelle, maîtrise de l'oral, culture étrangère, cours de culture.

## الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من دور تدريس الثقافة في تعزيز الوعي الثقافي لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية و كفاءتهم الشفهية. لجمع البيانات تم استخدام استبيانين ، تم توزيع استبيان الطلاب على 61 طالب من متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية (40 طالب من قسم اللغة الانجليزية و 21 طالب من المدرسة العليا للأساتذة بورقلة) و استبيان للأساتذة حيث أجاب عليه ثلاثة من أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية ( أستاذ من المدرسة العليا للأساتذة و اثنين آخرين من قسم اللغة الانجليزية بورقلة). لتحليل النتائج تم استخدام كل من الأساليب الكمية و النوعية حيث أظهرت النتائج أن كلا من الأساتذة و الطلبة يدركون أهمية تدريس الثقافة في فصول اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية، بالإضافة تم استخلاص العلاقة المتعدية بين كل من تدريس الثقافة ، تعزيز الوعي الثقافي و رفع مستوى الكفاءة الشفهية للطلبة. الدراسة الحالية أيضا سلطت الضوء على أهمية الدور الذي يؤديه الأستاذ. في النهاية و بناء على تحليل البيانات تم تقديم عدد من الاقتراحات المتعلقة بدور كل من الأستاذ و الطالب إضافة إلى بعض الأنشطة لرفع مستوى الوعي الثقافي للطلبة و تحسين مستوى الكفاءة الشفهية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تعليم الثقافة ، الوعي الثقافي، الكفاءة الشفهية، الثقافة الاجنبية، قسم الثقافة الاجنبية.