The Acquisition of Cultural Awareness by the Algerian Learners of English as a Foreign Language

The Case of 1st and 3rd Year LMD Students at the University of Constantine

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Master Degree in Language Sciences

Submitted by   Supervised by

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

The memory of my dearest grandfather Bentebibel Abdelkader . I wish that you were with me, now, 'Sidi'. The fruit of this work would not be possible without your upbringing; you taught me to trust myself and to rely on it so that to achieve what I wish. I am proud to be your granddaughter and lucky to live with you.

My grandmother 'Sakina' for your endless love and constant prayers. May God bless you 'Mema'.

My beloved parents 'Abderrahim' and 'Salima'; the best gift I have ever got. No word in any language worldwide would represent your favour on me or express my feelings towards you , and my brothers Abdelali, Djamel-Eddine , and Mohamed for your support .

My best aunt 'Siham'. Thank you for your kindness, sympathy, and encouragement that you provide me with from the outset of my studies at the University.

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Abstract

The present research attempts to evaluate the Algerian learners' of English as a foreign language at the Department of Foreign Languages, University Mentouri, Constantine cultural awareness acquisition. Developing cultural awareness means gaining positive attitudes about the target language people through developing a sense of empathy towards cross-cultural differences, an understanding and appreciation of one's own culture as well as that of people belonging to different cultural backgrounds, hence achieving successful intercultural communication in the target language. This is with regard to the close relationship between language and culture and the constant attempt of foreign language teaching professionals (as the case in Algeria) to develop learners' language proficiency and intercultural communicative competence. The research results would, in turn, help to get deep insights on the cultural dimension of teaching foreign languages in Algeria and formulate some possible suggestions, accordingly.

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General Overview

Recent methods and approaches to teaching foreign languages have shifted their attention from the linguistic dimension to the cultural dimension of the language being taught. In fact, culture has become a crucial element in the teaching of a foreign language. Many people have come to realize that culture has to be taught simultaneously with the language rather than separately as an isolated course about the English historical and geographical factual knowledge.

This new insight into the integration of culture in the teaching of foreign languages is the result of the awareness of the interconnectedness between language and culture, on the one hand, and the role culture plays in communication on the other hand. This relationship is believed to be intricate at different levels. Teachers, therefore, are required to impart their learners with adequate cultural knowledge about the foreign country which may help promote their intercultural communicative competence and language proficiency.

Acquiring linguistic knowledge about the target language, i.e. vocabulary items and grammar rules, is no longer sufficient. This can easily be noticed with Algerian learners of English who experience problems in real communication using the target language especially with its natives despite their acceptable level of linguistic competence. The Algerian learners, then, can hardly communicate with English people because of their unawareness of the cross-cultural differences with regard to the English beliefs and world views. This would, in turn, influence their language proficiency in communication and their attitudes towards the target language and people.

Cultural awareness is another new concept introduced into the field of foreign language teaching. It is believed to be a crucial element in the enhancement of intercultural

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communicative competence. It helps learners to develop a deep understanding of cross-cultural variations including respect and appreciation of foreign cultures and to gain new insights and views about the target culture rather than sticking to the common negative stereotypes about that culture. In this respect, holding positive attitudes about the target culture would help the learners in their progress of learning foreign languages by enhancing their proficiency and mastery of the foreign language.

Taking into consideration the crucial role of attitudes and cultural awareness in the development of foreign language learning, the present research tends to investigate and evaluate the cultural awareness of the learners and their attitudinal dimension towards the English language and people as well as its impact on their language proficiency.

Statement of the Problem

The main goal of teaching a foreign language is developing the learners' intercultural communicative competence, a newly gained insight in foreign language teaching that appeared in tandem with culture integration in the process of teaching a foreign language after the dissatisfaction with the results of communicative language teaching.

With regard to Algeria where English is a foreign language and the educational authorities aim at helping the learners achieve intercultural communicative competence, the learners often fail to hold a conversation in English with native speakers in real situations. To compensate for this failure, learners generally resort to their native linguistic rules and cultural conventions which further worsen the situation.

This is supposed to mean that being able to communicate in a foreign language does not involve a mere acquisition of some useful vocabulary items and grammar rules, it also requires knowledge about paralinguistic elements and the cultural background. This is so

because communication requires comprehension and production, a need to understand and be understood by others both at the linguistic and conceptual level.

Accordingly, learners of foreign languages are supposed to be aware of the cross-cultural differences in order to develop a sense of acceptance and appreciation of the foreign culture. In this respect, the present research investigates two correlated points: The Algerian learners' attitudinal viewpoints towards the English culture and the impact of cultural awareness on their language proficiency development.

Aim of the Study

Regarding the emphasis on language proficiency as the fundamental aim in foreign language teaching / learning and the shift of many recent teaching methods and approaches to the focus on the cultural aspect of the foreign language being taught, the main aim of this study is to investigate the Algerian learners' cultural awareness being supposedly the core of their successful communicative performance and language proficiency development.

Additionally, the objectives of this study relate to :

1. A diagnosis of the students' attitudes towards the foreign language culture and its people and its influence on their learning process.

2. An investigation of the learners' cultural awareness impact on their language proficiency.

In doing so, the research results would provide the foreign language teaching professionals with some insights into the role of culture integration in the process of teaching English and its importance in raising the students' cultural awareness both of their own and the foreign culture.

Research Questions

The present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1- What do Algerian learners perceive their relationship with the English culture and people?

2- What are their attitudes towards the English language culture and people?

3- Does the lack of cultural awareness account for their failure in language proficiency achievement?

Hypothesis

Taking into consideration the interconnectedness between language, culture and communication, and the aims of foreign language teaching professionals to achieve the students' intercultural communicative competence, the hypothesis of this research states that:

Imparting the Algerian university learners of English with both linguistic and cultural knowledge about the English language could enable them to develop both cultural awareness and a deep understanding of cross-cultural differences, two crucial elements in enhancing language proficiency.

Means of Research

To verify the soundness of this hypothesis and to obtain reliable data that serve the study objectives, a test is used to collect data. The test is in the form of a Discourse Completion Task. It mainly aims to evaluate the learners' cultural awareness and behavioural patterns.

Structure of the Dissertation

This research work is composed of two main chapters. The first constitutes a theoretical framework on which the second chapter will be based. Moreover, each chapter will be divided into two sections.

The first section in the first chapter, on the one hand, will investigate the close relationship between language and culture from different perspectives, especially that of foreign language teaching. It will highlight the different definitions of culture, the relationship between language and culture, the cultural dimension in foreign language teaching wherein the different methods and approaches conception about teaching culture with language will be presented. It concludes with the role of culture integration in teaching a foreign language.

The second section, on the other hand, will deal with the main topic of this research, cultural awareness as a prerequisite for language proficiency achievement. It starts with giving various definitions of cultural awareness and some different views about it. Then, an examination of the relationship between cultural awareness and attitudes to intercultural communicative competence will be provided. It concludes with two recent culture teaching models which stress cultural awareness as a key element in developing the learners' language proficiency.

The second chapter will be devoted to data analysis and interpretation. In the first section, a description of the research tool, the participants, administration of the test, and the procedure to be followed in the analysis of the data will be presented. The second section will present an analysis of data and the results reached. These results will be given in tabular format followed by some possible interpretations, discussions, and conclusions that would account for formulating some suggestions concerning culture in foreign language teaching.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

Section One: Culture from Foreign Language Teaching Perspectives

Introduction

The present section deals with the concept of culture in the foreign language teaching profession. It gives a definition of culture, investigates the relationship between language and culture from different perspectives and attempts to highlight the cultural dimension in different foreign language teaching approaches, particularly, the communicative approach. It, then, switches to demonstrate the importance of integrating culture in teaching a foreign language and the need for a change of concern from communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence.

1.1.1. Definition of Culture

Culture has been the object of study of many disciplines. Interest in the study of culture is manifested not only by scholars of Anthropology, as it was commonly thought, but by different scholars from a variety of disciplines such as Ethnography, Sociology and Cultural Studies as well. All these scholars have attempted to investigate the scope and function of culture within different social groups and communities. Consequently, a large number of definitions of culture were suggested, but each focuses on a particular aspect in relation to a particular domain of study. Sometimes, different definitions have been suggested by different scholars within the same field.

To start with, in the field of Anthropology, there were many attempts to define culture and delimit its scope. Tylor (1871:1), an anthropologists by training, perceived culture as "a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other

Capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society ". Implied in this definition is the belief that culture encompasses many aspects that form the fabrics of a given society. More importantly, the focus is on patterns that members of a given society should follow to maintain their relationships. It, therefore, refers to the norms established in societies and which govern their members' behaviour.

Another anthropologist, Geertz (1973), saw culture from a different angle. For him, culture is of a symbolic nature and has a symbolic function; a similar view to that of Hall (2002). It "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about attitudes towards life " Geertz (1973: 89). Concealed in this definition are some key notions which need to be highlighted. First, there is the idea of whether culture (knowledge) is acquired or inherited. In this respect, unlike Tylor who believed culture is acquired, Geertz believed that it can be both. The other notion implied in Geertz's definition is that of making sense (i.e. meaning) of the different patterns which enable members of a given society to communicate appropriately in their social environment. This idea could have some implications for people working in the foreign language teaching profession which is an important concern of the present research in the sense that learning a foreign language requires an awareness of the symbols and codes of its culture that may contribute to successful communication.

Other researchers like Harris (1999), Cushman et.al (1988) divide culture into two aspects: The conceptual reality and the phenomenal one. The former relates to beliefs, values, perceiving directions; the latter represents the behavioural patterns of a given society based on cultural dimensions. Following the same line of thought, Goodenough (1957:74) posited a comprehensive definition of culture which runs as follows :

Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them.

This definition is in line with the topic of the present research which is based on what is commonly referred to, within foreign language teaching discourse, as big C and small c culture. Big C culture refers to formal or achievement culture while small c culture refers to the daily life behavioural patterns, attitudes and beliefs. This is supposed to mean that big C, as its name suggests, relates to what a given society has achieved in arts, literature , music, as well as its geography and history (the traditional conception of culture), whereby the learners are usually filled with some useful basic information to understand the other cultural aspects (behaviours, concepts). Small c, on the other hand, refers to the beliefs and perceptions influenced and shaped by culture. This latter conception is fairly new and is considered of more importance in the field of foreign language teaching because it meets one of its basic aims, namely, to make students able to communicate successfully and appropriately in the target language and particularly with its natives.

Culture, then, is a quite difficult word to define. Scholars, during centuries, have not reached a consensual definition; each perceived it from his angle. The aforementioned and most significant ones are those which perceive it as behaviour, knowledge , symbol or sign, and a tool of communication expressed in language; the view which implies the existence of a relationship between language and culture

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1.1.2 The Relationship between Language and Culture

For a long time, the relationship between language and culture has been one of the main interesting studies for many researchers. The issue relates, mainly, to whether language and culture are two closely related entities or not. Yet, most of the research has investigated their inseparability, each from its perspective.

The relationship between language and culture is sometimes considered from a cognitive viewpoint. Sapir and Whorf hypothesis is the major one. Prior to the formulation of this hypothesis, Boas (1911) advocated the view that language is necessary for the human thought. He reached this conclusion on the basis of his works on translation and transcription of native texts where he noticed the way different languages classify the world differently. He argued, then, that understanding a given culture requires, in the first place, a mastery of its language .

In the same vein, Sapir (1949) underpinned Boas' view but emphasized the formal systematic aspect of language or what is known as '*the classificatory and organizing nature of language*' (Lucy, 1992:26) in the sense that language is composed of formal linguistic elements arranged in a specific way by nature, permissible to channel thought. Thus, he concluded that linguistic differences generate differences in conceptualization between cultures.

Later, Whorf (1956:213) appeared to vindicate this view arguing that "[…] the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds". This means that perceptions of the external world are determined by the language used which implies that difference between languages is the cause of differences in perceptions, thought and culture. Language structure affects its speakers' way of thinking and behaving in real life situations.

More important, Sherifian (2007:34) in his book '*Applied Cultural Linguistics*' suggested the view that "The distinctiveness of any culture is deeply embedded in the social and conceptual basis of language" and gave an example of the conceptualization difference of the term 'face' between English and Persian . This term in English refers to a body part of human beings, while in Persian, it has other connotations which are socially based such as the image of a person or a family or a group and may even be used where a damage to one's honour is caused (approximately similar to the Arabic conceptualization of the same term).

The relation between language and culture has also been examined from a functional and pragmatic view mainly by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) in their Speech Act theory and Grice (1975) in his work on Cooperative Principle. Speech Acts refer to the "actions performed via utterances" (Yule, 1996:47). This means that when uttering a sentence (the locutionary act), the speaker has an intentional meaning (the illocutionary act or illocutionary force) he wants to convey. The reaction of the hearer or the effect of the illocutionary act on the hearer is called the perlocutionary act. This interpretation or comprehension is based on shared cultural knowledge between the interlocutors which makes successful communication between them possible because the utterance itself is culturally loaded.

This idea of mutually shared knowledge between the interlocutors in communication was also, as stated previously, developed by Grice (1975) in his notion of Cooperative Principle, in which conversation is said to be a joint effort between the speaker and the hearer. Additionally, four maxims that help in making a successful conversation were set: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. The interlocutors are, thereby, held to make their speech concise, precise, clear, truthful and relevant. Moreover, he argued that violating one of these maxims causes misunderstanding between speakers, i.e., being ambiguous or inappropriate in one's speech may make the hearer feel stuck and may cause communication to break down as

asserted by John Graham (1995: 317) that "cultural differences between joint venture partners and managers can cause divisive, even decisive problems".

Seen from another perspective, the relationship between language and culture is better considered when looked upon from two different angles; culture in relation to language and language in relation to culture. The former proposed three kinds of relations between language and culture: language as being a part, an index and a symbol of culture; similar to Kramsch's (1998) view where language is said to express, embody, and symbolize cultural reality; a view which was also supported by Karen Risager (2006).

At this point of the discussion, one can say that the close relationship between language and culture was investigated from a variety of perspectives. From a cognitive viewpoint, language affects the way of thinking and perceiving the world ,whereas, from a functional or pragmatic standpoint, language and culture are intertwined in conversations. Understanding a language, therefore, involves understanding the language itself and an awareness of its culture. Thus, teaching a foreign language involves the integration of its cultural aspects, a newly gained insight into the teaching approaches to foreign languages which is also the main concern of the present research.

1.1.3 Cultural Dimension in Foreign Language Teaching Approaches

The interconnection between language and culture has led scholars to reconsider the integration of culture in foreign language teaching syllabi .There were variations among the teaching approaches in their conceptions of the cultural dimensions in teaching foreign languages, albeit implicitly, till the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching where culture gained more interest on the part of both scholars and teachers alike and became an explicitly stated aim in foreign language teaching,(summarised from Richards and Rodgers,2001):

To start with, within the Grammar Translation Method, culture was totally disregarded except for the information on the target language country history and geography which help the students to understand the literary texts designed for reading. Focus, instead, was mainly laid on teaching grammar with the help of translation.

As far as the Direct Method is concerned, despite its focus on everyday language in developing oral skills useful for communication, it did not make a significant progress or provide a noteworthy change in the integration of culture in teaching foreign languages.

Additionally, the proponents of the Audio-Lingual Method which appeared in the sixties with their emphasis on the use of dialogues most of which were culturally contextualized and many were loaded with daily life cultural aspects made an important shift towards the cultural dimension.

During the seventies, there was a growing awareness of the necessity to move from developing the students' linguistic competence to the development of their communicative competence. The aim, then, was to enable learners to use language for communicative purposes, i.e., the ability to use different language structures to express certain functions in different social situations rather than a mastery of pure linguistic structures.

As a result, the term communicative competence was developed by the proponents of the communicative approach which appeared in the late sixties in Britain and spread all over the world in the early eighties. Their main claim is that language is mainly used for communication and that linguistic competence is just one aspect of language use and there remains a more important aspect, namely communicative competence. This was the outcome of the increased need for travel and communication at that time in Europe which was characterized by the social and economic changes. This new approach, unlike its

predecessors, is of an eclectic nature. It is a hybrid approach that gained its insight from different disciplines, mainly Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Anthropology, Philosophy, and Psycholinguistics. The most important ones are the linguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives, whereby concepts of competence and socio-cultural and functional dimensions of language are derived respectively from Chomsky's work (1957), Hymes (1972) with Halliday (1975). The basic aim of this approach is the achievement of communicative competence. This term was coined by Hymes as a reaction to Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence wherein successful communication entails not just linguistic knowledge of the forms and meanings of vocabulary items, but also the rules of using those linguistic structures in different contexts to fulfil different functions that language can put to perform in different social situations. Hence, the interlocutors (the students in this context) need to know about the grammar and vocabulary of a given language as well as when, where, and how to use this knowledge. Thus, the social component of language which was neglected for a long period of time is now gaining a wide currency. Expressed differently, believing in the efficacy that the socio-cultural knowledge can draw upon the linguistic knowledge in achieving successful communication in the target language, the learners should be taught the sociolinguistic rules of appropriateness in different cultural contexts. Gumperz & Hymes (1964: vii) have clearly explained that while defining communicative competence as "what a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings" .This approach revolved around teaching the language usage and use; it shifted from focusing on forms and meanings to that of use in an effective and purposeful way while communicating or engaging in social interactions. It, hence, has three principles: communicative, task, and meaningfulness principles (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Culture, in this approach, seems to have a great importance and significance in the teaching process in comparison to the precedent methods of teaching because of its role in communication, on the one hand, and the use of authentic

texts and the focus on the social situations while teaching language functions, on the other hand.

Theoretically speaking, as previously stated, culture won a wider currency in communicative language teaching. Yet, practically, this approach revealed inefficiency in making the students communicate successfully and achieve language proficiency. Thus, a shift from communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence, that gives more focus on culture in practice, seemed necessary.

1.1.4 The Importance of Culture Integration in Teaching Foreign Languages

Educationists have worked on other concepts, apart from that of communicative competence, which, hopefully, would help the students to communicate effectively in the target language with people of different cultural background. Intercultural communicative competence was seen to solve the problem, thus, become the most recent aim of many teaching methods and approaches.

Communicative competence, a long time before the emergence of intercultural communicative competence, has witnessed successive developments in many of the researchers' works. Among these researchers are Hymes (1972) and Gumperz (1982).

First it appeared as a reaction to Chomsky's notion of competence; the abstract knowledge a native speaker has about the linguistic system of his/ her language, his linguistic theory and his distinction between language structure which is stored in mind (competence) and actual language use in real life situations (performance). Accordingly, knowing a language, and for that matter, being competent in it, involves mastering its grammar rules, as believed in Grammar Translation Method.

Later, a call to enlarge the notion of competence to include the social and cultural dimensions of language was made by Hymes (1972) who believed that communication involves, in addition to linguistic competence, knowledge about who says what, how, when and where. Hence, enhancing learners' communicative competence   necessitates the inclusion of cultural aspects of the language being taught. This is so because communication is a matter of meaning negotiation between the interlocutors that takes place in a given social context. Hence, competency can be revealed in the ability to apply linguistic knowledge that conveys a social meaning, appropriately, in a social context rather than producing accurate and correct grammatical structures. Similarly, Paulston (1992) said that communicative competence is not a mere linguistic interaction in the target language, but involves, she (1992:37) penned:" knowledge of the rules for understanding and producing both the referential and the social meaning of language". Competence in a given language is not confined to the knowledge of its linguistic structures, but encroached upon it to the socio-cultural one. Hymes (1972 :281) set four elements by which the learners acquire knowledge of language use that make them competent" whether and to what degree something is formally possible […],feasible[…],appropriate in relation to the context[...],done, actually performed, and what it's doing entails". In the same vein, he argued that an utterance is not a purely linguistic expression. Instead, it entails some social and cultural elements that explain its occurrence (as investigated in the second part); a borrowed idea from the works of Searle (1969) and Austin (1962) on Speech Acts.

Halliday (1975) looked at communicative competence from a socio-semiotic point of view. That is to say, a competent speaker is the one who knows the grammar rules of his language as well as the social context in which it is used, since what is said is not what is meant unless moulded in its appropriate context. He stated that language as social semiotics

reveals the communicative need of the given social context. This means that each society has its specific language used in particular context. Hence, teaching learners a foreign language must take into account the social rules that guide its use.

Additionally, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed four components of communicative competence which imply a significant reference to the cultural aspect of language: grammatical competence deals with grammar rules, phonology, morphology ,semantics, and lexis of the language (Chomsky's competence) ; discourse competence relates to the coherence and cohesion of spoken language; sociolinguistic competence focuses on the appropriateness of language use in social contexts and strategic competence which refers to different communicative strategies used in solving communicative problems.

At the end, Van Ek (1987) proposed a sixth component to be included within communicative competence, namely the socio-cultural component. More importantly, this socio-cultural competence was called socio-cultural awareness where the focus is on the socio-cultural context in which the language is used.

However, despite all these works, communicative competence has shown many drawbacks that led to its replacement with intercultural communicative competence, in addition to many new ideas about the nature of communication as a mutual understanding between the interlocutors as advocated by Grice (1975) and Gumperz (1982), and as a personal process that relies on one's personality and use of specific strategies to maintain relationships and express personal readiness to communicate rather than a mere imitation of the native speaker being the students' model.

Intercultural communicative competence, as its name suggests, is an expansion of communicative competence whereby the cultural element is added, or rather emphasized. It is

believed that what is necessary for establishing successful relations and communication is the knowledge about oneself and others with the recognition of the potential strategies and skills of interaction .Intercultural communicative competence was coined with Michael Byram (1998: 9) and supposed to mean "[…] knowledge of one, or, preferably, more cultures and social identities and […] capacity to discover and relate to new people from other contexts […]". Accordingly, intercultural competence comprises three elements, two of which were missing in communicative competence.   These are skills and attitudes, in addition to knowledge, though perceived differently. In explaining that, Byram (1997: 123) set five savoirs which intercultural competence involves:

- Savoirs, refers to knowledge of oneself and the others' identities of social groups, and rules of interaction;

- Savoir comprendre, refers to the skills of comparison, interpreting, and relating, i.e., ability to interpret events from other cultures and relate them to one's own;

- Savoir apprendre /faire refers to skills of discovery and interaction, ability to seek out knowledge about cultural beliefs and cultural practices;

- Savoir s'engager refers to critical cultural awareness a following step after achieving cultural awareness ; the topic of the present research; or the ability to evaluate critically one's own and others' beliefs and perception;

- Savoir etre relates to openness and readiness; willingness to relativise ones own values.

In analyzing this model, the first element refers to the notion of knowledge mentioned above, the three next elements to the skills, and the last one to the attitudes. Knowledge, here, unlike in communicative competence, focuses mainly on the cultural aspect of the society

rather than the sociolinguistic and pragmatic one. Skills, too, take a different dimension from that perceived in communicative competence where the focus is on maintaining relationships via interpretation and relation, discovery, and evaluation rather than achieving appropriate linguistic behaviour. Additionally, attitudes, the most important of all, are considered as the foundation of intercultural communicative competence. These refer mainly to openness, curiosity and willingness or readiness to interact and deal with people from other cultures. This entails the ability to decentre oneself, to accept and adapt to new different cultural situations, that is to say, the capacity to assimilate, develop feeling of empathy and sensitivity to others and appreciation of their views at the expense of traditional stereotypes and prejudice.

Following the same direction, Maria Jose Coprias Aguilar (2007:68) saw that achieving intercultural communicative competence means "developing attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures, promoting the ability to handle intercultural contact situations, promoting reflection on cultural differences or promoting increased understanding of *one's* own culture".

A similar view to Byram is that of Fantini (2000) who set five elements that serve in the development of intercultural communicative competence, namely awareness, attitudes, skills, knowledge and language proficiency.

All in all, intercultural communicative competence relates to the learners' personality and psychological factors that enable them to achieve cultural awareness; the subject of the present research as a first step towards interculturality and a key element in achieving successful communication in the target language especially with its natives.

Conclusion

Culture is a vague term that has gained many researchers' attention to define it and delimit its scope. This is because of its correspondence with the society that holds it and which proves its correlation with language at different levels. This correlation has inspired educationists in foreign language teaching to investigate the necessity of teaching culture with the language and to provide appropriate materials particularly Communicative Language Teaching in its premise of communicative competence that calls upon sociolinguistic dimensions of the language and later with intercultural communicative competence in place of communicative competence . The achievement of intercultural communicative competence designates some factors mainly cultural awareness; the main topic of this research which will be dealt succinctly in the second chapter.

Section Two: Cultural Awareness

Introduction

After investigating the necessity of culture integration in foreign language teaching, dealing with the role of cultural awareness in enhancing language proficiency and achieving effective communication is the main concern of the present chapter. Thus, this chapter will deal with such matters as definition of cultural awareness, views about cultural awareness, and the necessity of cultural awareness in building language proficiency and its role in shaping the learners' attitudes. The chapter concludes with two recent models of teaching culture that give importance to cultural awareness as crucial for language proficiency development.

1.2.1 Cultural Awareness

1.2.1.1 Definition

The constant attempt of foreign language educationists and scholars to improve the students learning ability and achievement has led to a new notion known as cultural awareness. This recently- integrated concept in the teaching field has gained grounds in the various works of many scholars who attempted to delimit it and, by the same token, investigate its importance, or its lack thereof, in intercultural communication. Cultural awareness, as its name suggests, comprises two elements; culture and awareness.

To start with, awareness is a term used in cognitive psychology, and is introduced to the field of foreign language teaching, as well . Initially, one's individual ability to analyze, compare and hypothesise signifies his awareness. It was put that it is most apparent in the form of cognitive and behavioural changes within individuals. In foreign language teaching

scope, awareness is related to the cultural aspect of the foreign language. Thus, achieving this type of awareness, ie, cultural awareness, involves some cognitive and behavioural changes.

Cognitive changes refer to the understanding of one's own cultural beliefs and behaviours as well as those of the target language culture and manifest itself, most, in showing respect to that culture and successful management of intercultural communication where one's behaviour is expected to be culturally appropriate. This view was advocated by Byram (1991) in his model of teaching culture (See following pages). He believed that the "culture awareness component is concerned with non-linguistic dimensions of culture and more focused on the question of change from mono-cultural to intercultural competence" (Byram,1991:24). In addition, Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) had a similar conception. For them, cultural awareness is thought to be closely linked to intercultural communicative competence. Accordingly, cultural awareness is closely linked to language learning ; the common means of communication, Shaules (2007), tacitly, expressed that when he said that meeting someone with a different cultural background means meeting his world view as well. Cultural awareness is, then, intrinsic to the learning process of any language.

Moreover, cultural awareness focuses much more on the learners' attitudes. It is concerned with their attitudes towards the target culture and its people or what is referred to by many researchers as 'cultural sensitivity'. Among them are Tomalin and Stempleski (1993:5) who defined it as "the sensitivity to the impact of culturally induced behaviour on language use and communication". Thus, the term sensitivity implies that learners need not only to be knowledgeable about other 'cultures and civilisations', but to develop the willingness to 'decentre' themselves from their own culture and the capacity to deal with ethnic, social and cultural differences. This, in turn, will enable them to understand others' feelings and attitudes towards them, to develop empathy, acceptance, appreciation of the

foreign culture and their own and to move from the stage of ethnocentrism to ethno-relativism as well (Bennett, 1993). Another point which this definition entails is the relation between language, culture, and communication, as discussed in the previous part. To use Tomalin and Stempleski's words (1993), cultural awareness comprises an awareness of one's own culturally induced behaviour and that of the target language community, in addition to the ability to explain one's own cultural standpoint.

Seen from the same perspective, cultural awareness was "used to refer to a range of phenomena *ranging* from knowledge about other countries to positive attitudes towards speakers of other languages, to a heightened 'sensitivity' to otherness of any kind" (Michael Byram and Karen Risager, 1999:4) (italics added). Though this description of cultural awareness was set in relation to intercultural competence rather than intercultural communicative competence, it meets modern foreign language teaching aims, too, by delimiting the speakers of other languages to that of the language studied. Cultural awareness, according to this definition and culture- knowledge- learning are two faces of the same coin, i.e., cultural awareness is an inevitable outcome of culture learning. In fact, many researchers use cultural awareness as a measurement to see whether the cultural learning goals have been achieved or not.

To round off, cultural awareness is a term brought from cognitive psychology and become an important concept in the field of foreign language teaching as an outcome to be achieved by the learners to enable them to use the target language appropriately in different communicative contexts with no conflicts and misunderstanding between the interlocutors. This behavioural outcome is thought by some researcher to be more important than the cognitive ones which precede it, a debatable notion to be dealt in the next part.

1.2.1.2 Different Views on Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness achievement is said to be the result of some cognitive and affective changes in the learner's cognitive knowledge and behaviour that would be most apparent in actual communication with the target language natives. Yet, there is disagreement among two groups of researchers as to which of these changes signals its achievement best. The first group advocates the priority of cognitive changes over the behavioural ones and the second favours behavioural changes at the expense of those which are of a cognitive nature. In fact, there are arguments on both sides.

To start with, proponents of the priority of cognitive development over behavioural development argued that cultural awareness is abstract by its nature. Consequently, its outcomes are expected to be abstract too and take place in the learner's mind. Rebecca Oxford (1994), an advocate of the cognitive standpoint and its effects on the learners, for example, made this clear in her investigation of the relationship between attitudes and development schemata and outlined a set of five steps for cultural awareness achievement. These are summarised as follows (Oxford, 1994:33):

- No understanding when the learners do not have any knowledge about the foreign culture and its people, and if so a few about its common facts
- Superficial understanding when they have some superficial facts and stereotypes
- Growing awareness and possible conflict when the learners are aware of some subtle traits but may experience cultural conflict (and perhaps real cultural shock)
- Greater intellectual awareness when the learners understand the culture intellectually but not emotionally

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- True empathy and respect when the learners understand the culture both intellectually and emotionally, can feel what the people in the culture feel.

Hence, cultural awareness, according to Oxford (1994), is a matter of cognitive and emotional maturation or change but not a behavioural one. Moreover, she thought that reaching the last level of cultural awareness is conditioned by living abroad, i.e., in the target language culture country. However, she, succinctly, elaborated the second and the third steps which she considered relevant to most foreign language teaching environments. In fact, learners of foreign languages can be either associated with the second or the third level for it is implausible to expect learners with no background knowledge about the target culture; especially with the recent teaching methods that have given some importance to the cultural dimension of the language in order to follow the actual demands of intercultural communication. Superficial understanding, that represents the second level, is seen to be the result of common stereotypes acquired from the social environment. Indeed, learners of foreign languages do generally hold some negative views about the target language culture due to some social misleading stereotypes in their surrounding environments, namely, family, peers, and different social groups which, in turn, hinder their learning progress by affecting their attitudes and motivation to learn. The third level is considered to be more important than the second because of the expected conflict that may result during the process of cultural awareness acquisition. The negative stereotypes about the foreign culture may be a double edge sword; they may aggravate or improve the situation when experiencing a culture shock as a result of feelings of greater discomfort. This culture shock, defined by Oxford as "anxiety resulting from the loss of commonly understood cultural signs and symbols" (ibid:5), can either help the learner to develop a sense of appreciation of his own and other's culture and to experience the feeling of ethno-relativity growth or cause the development of ethnocentricity

and a feeling of glory to his native culture at the expense of others' cultures, thence, a fear of coming in contact with people from other cultures. (For more details see the next part 2.2). Accordingly, it can be said that Oxford is more interested with the cognitive, intellectual, and emotional alterations occurring alongside with the cultural awareness acquisition.

Another figure concerned with the cognitive aspect of cultural awareness is Bennett (1993) in his theory of intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural sensitivity refers to "the construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural differences" (Bennett, 1993:24). It is considered as the first outcome in the process of cultural learning. Though using the term of accommodation which has a tacit meaning of behaviour, Bennett is more concerned with the cognitive aspects of the cultural awareness achievement as the expression of the construction of reality reveals a purely cognitive-oriented dimension .It is situated between ethnocentrism and integration through gaining a level of sophistication in managing cultural difference. Thus, his basic premise is differentiation. He classified the different steps and described them according to the change of differentiation perception for the individual. It should be mentioned here that Bennett's model was devoted to sojourners, but can be generalised to learners of foreign languages. Bennett (1993: 34-41) set six stages that learners move through before they reach the last stage: The ability to construe or deeply understand cultural differences. These can be classified into two categories: Ethnocentrism and ethno-relativism. The former comprises denial, defense, and minimization; whereas, the latter includes acceptance, adaptation and integration each of which is explained below.

- Denial: To assume that the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality. Difference at this stage is not yet recognized.
- Defense: The posture intended to counter the impact of specific cultural differences perceived as threatening through denigration, superiority, and reversal.Difference now is ignored.

- Minimization: An effort to bury differences under the weight of cultural similarities.
- Acceptance: To cross the barrier from ethnocentrism. Difference is neither good nor bad, it is just different.
- Adaptation: To develop empathy and a shift between the different cultures.
- Integration: The learner goes beyond culture differences, his cultural identity is built.

Accordingly, the last step witnesses the learners' cultural personality formation. The learner at this level is supposed to be able to adapt himself to a new identity that shifts regularly between the native and foreign culture identities or as labelled by Bennett 'constructive marginality' where "*the learner* is outside all cultural frames of reference" (ibid: 63). This does not mean that he loses his personality but becomes independent and relies on the surrounding context in his evaluations rather than his own intuitive judgments based on his native culture stereotypes. In order to link these stages with classroom settings, Bennett has proposed some training activities that help the learners to pass through these steps.

All in all, Oxford, Bennett, and Gaston (1984) in his proposal of the four stages from recognition to transcendence are proponents of the cognitive and emotional sides of cultural awareness achievement. Unlike them, Hanvey (1979) was more interested in the behavioural symptoms of cultural awareness development since he based his view on experience. His model starts with visible traits to an awareness of how foreigners feel from an insiders' stance and involves four levels, (cited in Shaules, 2007:98):

- Awareness of superficial or very visible cultural traits: stereotypes.
- Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one's own; in culture conflict situation.
- Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one's own; in intellectual analysis.

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- Awareness of how another culture feels from the standpoint of the insider; Cultural immersion.

Following these levels, cultural awareness is deemed as one of the basic culture learning goals and is conditioned by one's readiness to accept and respect the foreign perceptions and views, a similar point to that of Oxford.

Hanvey's interest in the behavioural dimension of cultural awareness can be clearly seen in his claim that, in addition to the potential readiness in the learner, there must be an existing willingness to participate. The external world is also expected to play a role in the learners' development of cultural awareness by rewarding them and expressing approval for their positive attitudes about the learnt language culture demonstrated by their appropriate use of the foreign language in different communicative contexts. Cultural awareness, according to Hanvey, proves its significance and development in the learners' behavioural reactions and performances when communicating in the target language.

At this stage of the discussion, cultural awareness is perceived at three levels: cognitive, behavioural as presented above and more importantly at the emotional one. The cognitive level refers to the deep understanding of the cultural traits and values or what is known as deep culture of a given society, whereas, the behavioural one has to do with the learners' reactions and performances in the foreign language after developing an intellectual analysis of the cultural differences between the native and the foreign culture. The emotional level will be dealt in details in the next section.

1.2.2 Cultural Awareness and Attitudes

Cultural awareness reveals its development at three levels; two of which were mentioned in the previous part, and the third one in this part. The third element refers to the emotional change in the individual or to his attitudes towards the target culture and its people. Indeed, the role of attitudes has been investigated to be of great significance in second and foreign language learning development, especially in learning the foreign culture.

The relationship between cultural awareness and attitudes was first introduced by Byram in his notion of intercultural communicative competence with the five savoirs. This idea was inspired from the role of attitudes in second language learning. In fact, attitudes have been proved to be either a cause or a result of successful second and foreign language learning. According to Byram's model, attitudes are of a dual role. The first is that attitudes can be a cause for achieving intercultural communicative competence or one of its components (in addition to knowledge and skills), in the sense that they refer to the willingness and readiness to learn about others' perceptions and to communicate with them. Yet, he stressed the significance of the learners' attitude changes as an important outcome of intercultural communicative competence that enhances their language proficiency and influences their intercultural communication. In other words, Byram considered cultural awareness in its affective dimension to be crucial and important for successful intercultural communication and an interesting element in intercultural communicative competence (see the following part). Despite the difference in his perception of attitudes from that of Byram, McDonough (1981) believed that success in target language learning and positive attitudes are interdependent. Expressed differently, success in foreign language learning leads to gaining positive attitudes towards the target language people.

Additionally, Gaston (1984), Hanvey (1979), Oxford (1994), though differ in their focus of the most representative aspect of cultural awareness achievement, they all agree upon the significant psychological changes in the learners' personality and perceptions towards the target culture as an initial step for cultural awareness development. Karen Risager (2007) was ,also, one of the proponents of the notion that the change of attitudes is a result of foreign culture learning and culture awareness teaching when she said (2007 :24) that : "the feeling of being disconcerted which is an indication of a change of attitudes and concepts, of a modification of culture-specific schemata, which cultural awareness teaching should bring about" .

Seen from another perspective, attitudes are considered to have a great impact on the learners' second or foreign language learning process on the basis that language occurs in social settings and communication that involves, tacitly, the integration of personal feelings, attitudes, and motivation. In relation to the field of foreign language teaching, things are very much the same , i.e., the learner's personal attitudes about oneself and the foreign language people will interfere in his learning of and communication with the target language (Seliger:1988)

According to William Little wood (1984), attitudes permit the learners to look at the communicative need from a different angle. That is, holding positive attitudes about the target culture and recognizing the nature of communication help the learners to adopt new patterns of communication, different from their own, and accept that of the foreigners. Positive attitudes, then, allow the learners to move from ethnocentricity and overwhelming feelings towards the native cultural patterns and behaviours to ethnorelativity, acceptance, and appreciation of differences between cultures. Little wood was more interested in the role of attitudes in the role of attitudes in the learners' language proficiency achievement, in a direct

way, rather than through cultural awareness. In the same vein, Brown (1987) argued that the enhancement of linguistic proficiency involves some affective feelings such as the excitement at the newness and the shock at the difference.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) were also interested in the role of attitudes in second language learning and its correlation with motivation. They reached a conclusion that the learners' motivation is a set of collected attitudes that urge them, either positively or negatively, to learn the foreign language and culture. Thus, holding positive attitudes towards the target culture gives the learner an integrative motivation or a desire to learn more about the target language in order to be able to communicate with its speakers successfully and appropriately as expressed by Lambert (1972:180), "motivation to learn is thought to be determined by the learner's attitudes and by his orientation towards learning a second language".

Another area where attitudes, particular socio-cultural awareness, play a vital role in culture learning is when the learners experience culture shocks in their communication with natives. Culture shock is a term introduced by Kalvero Oberg (1960 :1) to refer to "the anxiety resulting from not knowing what to do in a new culture" where he set six negative aspects of culture shock (ibid:2):

- Strain resulting from the effort of psychological adaptation;
- A sense of loss and deprivation referring to the removal of former friends, status, and role ;
- rejection by or rejection of the new culture;
- Confusion in the role definition, expectations, feelings and self-identity;
- Unexpected anxiety, disgust, or indignation regarding cultural differences between the old and new ways;
- Feelings of helplessness as a result of not coping well in the new environment.

Peter Adler (1975) was also interested in culture shock. For him, cultural shock is a process rather than a single psychological event. It involves five stages ranging from the 'honeymoon stage' to the 'reciprocal interdependence stage'. Yet, he believed in its positive dimension in the learning process. Moreover, culture shock, according to Adler, is related mainly to intercultural learning which leads to develop self awareness and self perception growth.

Another important figure in this area of study is Brown (2007:280) where culture shock is seen as "the process of acculturation, phenomena involving mild irritability, depression, anger, or possibly deep psychological crisis due to the foreignness of the new cultural milieu". Thus, people, who learn and understand the cross-cultural differences, develop positive attitudes that enable them to be successful in cross-cultural communication; whereas, those who reject learning new cultures, because they are stereotyped by their own culture, may develop negative attitudes and may run the risk of experiencing culture shocks. Stereotypes are more of a hindrance than a help to successful intercultural communication. Stereotype hinder understanding of the reality of foreign cultures and the development of an objective view towards one's own and foreign cultures, whence, misunderstanding, indifference, rejection and disapproval of cultural diversity. Additionally, stereotypes are generally based on pure groundless observations of daily facts and can engender some wrong prejudices about the culture group members. Thus, stereotypes, prejudices with the individuals' intuitive ethnocentrism form an affective and psychological barrier to learning the foreign culture and communicating using its language appropriately.

A similar view to that of Byram is that of Geert Hofstede (2002) who saw culture as "a set of emotional and psychological organizations or programs internalized by the members of a given society which urge them to have some specific psychological and

particular reactions" (cited in Shaules, 2007 :50). Thus, learning a new culture involves learning another psychological program in order to react appropriately in that culture context. Hofstede (1997) set five different cultural values that he believed are universal categories of cross–cultural comparisons. These are power, distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and Confucian dynamism. This value system was the result of investigations he made about how these values are perceived in different cultures and the effects they may have on peoples' daily behavior and reactions in different situations on the basis of their internalized psychological programs. Another important point which Hofstede raised is that "the core of intercultural awareness is learning to separate observation from interpretation." (Hofstede, 2002:17), i.e., the communicator should focus on actual behaviour in his interaction rather than personal interpretations that he makes about that behavior (which may result in prejudice, common stereotypes and generalizations). According to Hofstede, interpretation of the foreigner's behavior should not be from one's native standpoint, but rather from the foreigner's perception of values. This of course, is not an easy matter; it needs a deep understanding of the target culture and ability to decentre oneself. Culture shock, for him, occurs after living a long time in the foreign culture and may cause a feeling of frustration for the individual in his attempts to adjust and accommodate to the new cultural environment. It should be mentioned , here, that Hofstedes's views are similar to that of Brooks (2004).

Attitudes have been proved to be of a significant value in second language learning, in general, and in cultural awareness, in particular. Change of intuitive attitudes, common stereotypes, and development from ethnocentricity to empathy and appreciation of foreign cultures are the signs of cultural awareness development, which in turn, help for succeeding in intercultural communication.

1.2.3 Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence

Cultural awareness development has been used to refer to some changing attitudes in the learner's mind toward the target culture and its people. Indeed, attitudes are seen as the key element in managing successful communication. Thus, cultural awareness recently gained its grounds in the field of foreign language teaching because of its basic concern with attitudes; a basic element in intercultural communicative competence.

For a long time now, albeit in vain, educationists in the field of foreign language teaching have strived to train students to communicate successfully using the target language in different context. Yet the emergence of the communication theory, which emphasizes the role of attitudes in communication, has inspired researchers to make of the intercultural dimension of language a goal of communicative competence that gives more validity and importance to the attitudinal aspect of the learners. Intercultural communicative competence was, then, set as a surrogate to communicative competence. In addition to the knowledge and skills that the latter comprises, the term intercultural communicative competence coined by Byram includes a third element known as attitudes. These three dimensions are categorised in the five proposed components or savoirs that make up intercultural communicative competence which are Knowledge (savoir), skills (savoir comprendre, apprendre and faire), and attitudes (savoir etre) where the focus is on the willingness to discover and know about others' perceptions in life, and dispositions and orientations to act (savoir s'engager) where the research focus is (cultural awareness). Despite the classification of these components, as mentioned above, they are interlinked and correlate with each other in practice. Each component supports the other as for example with 'savoir etre' and 'savoir s'engager' as investigated in the present research and which constitutes its main concern.

In addition, developing cultural awareness cannot occur without a personal willingness on the part of the learner to engage in making different relationship with people of the foreign language or in the case of having inherited negative stereotypes about the foreign culture. Cultural awareness, according to Byram et.al (2001:53) is "the ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices, and products, in one's own and others' cultures and countries". Seen from this perspective, cultural awareness is primarily linked to cognitive processes of comparison, analysis and evaluation of one's own and foreign views on the basis of explicit behavior. It contributes to the making of an intercultural speaker who appreciates the two cultures, his own and that of the foreign language. It permits the learner to step from his judgments as an outsider of the foreign culture to see and feel as an insider after putting his own deep culture in awareness rather than out of awareness. This collaboration between the two cultures allows the learner to be in-between or go-between situations as claimed by Byram and Zarate (1994) to which Kramsch referred as a sphere of interculturality and mediation between the two cultures. Byram's idea of cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence seems to be more realistic and appropriate to the foreign language classroom setting, unlike the other works which are more ideal and cannot serve the context of language education.

More important, cultural awareness is a central element in the development of intercultural communicative competence and during the foreign language learning process as a whole. It is the first step towards developing positive attitudes about the foreign culture and its people which, in turn, affects the learners' communicative acts in the foreign language and thereby achieving the development of their language proficiency, a basic and crucial aim of learning and teaching foreign languages. This growing importance has prompted many

researchers to provide some teaching models which emphasize cultural awareness as an inevitable element as will be demonstrated in the following sections.

1.2.4 Cultural awareness: A Key Element in Teaching Culture

Cultural awareness has proved its primary role in the learners' language proficiency achievement and communicative performance effectiveness in the foreign language. Many researchers have, consequently, tried to present some culture teaching models which make of cultural competence a central element or objective to achieve. Hence, two recently proposed models are to be presented in this part.

The first model to be dealt with is that of Michael Byram outlined in his book *Mediating Languages and Cultures* (1991). This model has four parts or components; two of a cultural nature and the two others relate to language. This comprehensive model is a result of the belief in the intertwined relationship between language and culture and the non-possibility of teaching language and culture separately but language-and -culture in tandem (Byram and Morgan, 1994). Byram's viewpoint on the relationship between language and culture is that "language is not simply a reflector of an objective cultural reality but an integral part of that reality through which other parts are shaped and interpreted"(Byram,1991: 18).Consequently, teaching a foreign language implies, indirectly, teaching its culture at the same time. His model makes use of two major techniques: The use of the learners' mother tongue in comparison between the native and the foreign cultural aspects and teaching language as a subject and medium of experience. Expressed differently, Byram used these two techniques in the process of applying his model which involves language learning, language awareness, culture awareness, and cultural experience (ibid:19):

- Language learning: skills- oriented; foreign language focus; mainly foreign language medium.

- Language awareness: sociolinguistic knowledge oriented; L1 medium; comparative focus.
- Cultural awareness: knowledge oriented; L1 medium; comparative focus.
- Cultural experience: knowledge oriented; FL medium; foreign culture focus.

According to Byram, these four elements have a mutual effect on each other and do work interchangeably. To phrase differently, cultural awareness goes in parallel with awareness of the language; the study of the nature of the language as a social and cultural phenomenon following a comparative analysis of the two linguistic systems and their cultural meanings. Cultural experience would, also, intervene in cultural awareness by selecting activities about some cultural phenomena presented to the learners and to be performed using the foreign language. The learners' socio-cultural awareness can also be raised through comparative analyses of the linguistic and cultural meanings of the native language and the target language. Language awareness, in this sense, can support the acquisition of linguistic skills by making the learners reflect on the different social function which the learnt linguistic structures can be used to fulfill. More importantly, the learnt linguistic forms themselves can be used to reinforce the cultural and language experience learners are presented with. Language learning is, thus, seen as a rehearsal process of the already learnt knowledge as well as being used as a medium of experiencing cultural situations. Subsequently, all these elements are of equal importance and opportunity to be applied. Yet, Byram mentioned that the time of applying them depends on the learners' level and the degree of achievement of each of these components. However, he insisted that cultural awareness is deemed a crucial objective to be reached by all these components which may enable the learners to change their attitudes towards the common stereotypes and puts them in the feet of ethnographers and

informants, hence building new schemata and developing intercultural communicative competence.

The second model is that of Claire Kramsch, who, in her book *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (1993), stressed cultural awareness as a crucial aim in foreign language teaching. Like Byram, Kramsch advocated the interrelationship between language and culture but from a different angle. According to her, the relationship is that of text and context, as presented by Halliday and Hassan (1989). Culture is seen not as a fifth skill in foreign language teaching. Instead, it is integrated in language teaching because language learning is a social practice that takes place in a surrounding context which, in turn, helps in interpreting it. Therefore language expresses personal thought and reflects social order .Culture, on the other hand, refers to "facts and meanings *as well as* a place of struggle between the learners' meanings and those of native speakers" (Kramsch, 1993: 24). This struggle would be revealed in dialogues. Thus, the teachers' role is not to dictate to the learners how to react in such situations but to give them space to reflect by themselves and find appropriate interpretations useful for understanding the opposed viewpoints of the natives. This can be done through recognizing the space of differences with the natives in favour of similarities. Kramsch model focuses on differences from a dialogic perspective. The learner should look at the foreign perspectives in relation to his own, hence to focus on what is culture – specific rather than what is culture universal. Thus, the learner would be expected to decentre from his own culture and become a mediator between his and the target cultures.

Another point which supports the hypothesis investigated in the present research is the idea that "culture awareness must be viewed both as enabling language proficiency and as being the outcome of reflection on language proficiency" Kramsch developed (ibid:8). Lastly,she (ibid: 205-206) has set the following principles to teach culture:

- Setting up a sphere of inter-culturality: to relate first culture to foreign culture and to reflect on conceptions of first culture and foreign culture.
- Teaching culture as an interpersonal process: to present not only cultural facts in a structural way, but to present understanding processes, values, beliefs or attitudes;
- Teaching culture as difference: culture is not only national traits, but race, gender, social class, etc.
- Crossing disciplinary boundaries: in order to carry out this approach , teachers need to have wider knowledge on subjects related to culture such ethnography, psychology, sociology , or sociolinguistics.

Cultural awareness is fundamental in foreign language teaching particularly in the development of intercultural communicative competence and language proficiency; the basic teaching goals of foreign languages. Developing positive attitudes towards the target culture via comparison of differences between the native and the target culture prompts the learners' ability to use the language efficiently in communicative acts with foreigners.

Conclusion

Cultural awareness has been used to refer to the development of sensitivity to the foreign culture, resulted from some modifications in the learners' cognitive schemata, and which can be reflected in some behavioural changes. In doing so, potential readiness and willingness in the individual learner is crucial. Yet, gaining new insights about oneself and others can be hindered by some common social stereotypes, hence, prejudices about the target culture or because of the natural outcome of socialization known as ethnocentrism. This feeling of ethnocentricity may, itself, cause the learners' culture shock due to some cultural differences between the native and the target culture. Hence, the teachers' basic role is to develop the students' cultural awareness to fully achieve the desired learners with

intercultural communicative competence and tolerant attitudes towards the target culture, which in turn, enhances their proficiency of the foreign language.

Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Results

Section One: Methodology

Introduction

The first section of this chapter presents a full description of research methodology designed to investigate the Algerian learners' cultural awareness acquisition. It provides a description of the research tool, the population (participants), the administration of the test and the procedure of analysis to be followed. This section is considered as an introduction to what will be presented in the second section.

2.1.1. Research Hypothesis

At the risk of being repetitive, it may be worth recalling the hypothesis on which the present thesis is based. With regard to the interconnectedness between language, culture, and communication, and present day aims of foreign language mainly to help the learners develop their 'intercultural communicative competence, the hypothesis of this research states that: Imparting the Algerian university learners of English with both linguistic and cultural knowledge about the English language could enable them to develop both cultural awareness and a deep understanding of cross-cultural differences, two crucial elements in enhancing language proficiency.

2.1.2. Description of the Test

The research instrument used in the present study is a 'Written Discourse Completion Task' (WDCT henceforth). A 'WDCT' is a widely used tool in pragmatics and second language acquisition because of its simplicity and practicability in dealing with the participants' performance in naturally occurring interaction.

The test is made up of three parts. The first part is meant to collect some background information about the students' age, years of studying English at the university, their motivation to learn English, their self concept about running conversations with natives and the type of hindrances they may face in intercultural communication. The questions are in the form of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ henceforth).

The second part aims to get some insights into the participants' linguistic and pragmatic knowledge. To achieve this aim, the participants are required to fill in the gaps within some sentences with the appropriate verb term from a set of given near synonymous items and (Question item 2.1), to determine the three different meanings that the term 'right' has in a conversation excerpt used with slight modifications(Porpora, 2001)(Question item 2.2) . In Question item (2.3) they are required to choose the appropriate expression from a set of three choices that fits the context described in two different situations.

The last part evaluates the informants' cultural knowledge and awareness of the English culture. It encompasses four elements. The first two try to uncover the participants' cultural knowledge about Big C and small c cultures by means of a 'filling in the gaps' exercise (no element is given) and a true / false exercise which requires them to decide on the truthfulness of some social behaviors with regard to English etiquette (Question items 3.1 & 3.2). The two other question items (Question items 3.3 & 3.4) are designed to evaluate the participants' cultural awareness. The questions given have an MCQ form where the participants are required to react (Question item 3.3) and to hypothesize about how a native speaker might react (Question item 3.4) in some situations that may cause misunderstanding between the interlocutors because of cross-cultural differences in beliefs and patterns of behaviors.

2.1.3. Administration of the Test

The test was administered to two different groups, a group of 15 first year LMD students and a group of 15 third year LMD students reading for a BA degree in English at Mentouri University, Constantine. During the test administration, the necessary instructions as to how to answer the question items therein were given. In order not to influence the participants' answers, the researcher chose not to inform the participants about the aim of the present test. The explanations given were limited to some clarifications with regard to question items. The test lasted 45 minutes for each group.

2.1.4. Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation procedure followed in this research is quantitative in nature based either on the correctness or the appropriateness of the participants' responses to get the frequency of occurrence of each response, depending on the question. For the questions that require giving one answer, the criterion to be used is 'correctness' . In the MCQ given in the second and the third part; the informants' responses will be evaluated on the basis of their appropriateness. It is worth mentioning that their appropriateness is evaluated against the responses proposed by a near native speaker (Professor) who lived for a long time in UK. This evaluation procedure was followed with both first year and third year populations but on a separate basis. At the end, a comparison between the results obtained from both samples is made to see whether one of the hidden assumptions in this research that the more students get acquainted with the English language, the more they develop their cultural awareness, is sound.

2.1.5. Research Population (Participants)

As stated previously, the sample of this research comprises 30 participants, 15 of them were first year LMD and 15 were third year LMD students reading for a BA degree at the

University of Mentouri ,Constantine. The first group studied English for one year and the second group has studied English for three years at the university. It should be mentioned, here, that the selection of first and third year LMD students was intentional to see whether there is an improvement or not.

Conclusion

On the basis of the nature of the research topic and its main aim that attempts to evaluate Algerian learners' cultural awareness of English as a foreign language, a quantitative method using a Discourse Completion Task was thought to be the most appropriate research tool. It was then designed and administered to first and third year LMD students purposefully. Following is the presentation and analysis of data obtained.

Section Two: Data Analysis and Interpretation

Introduction

Now that a full description of the research tool, its administration is made and the evaluation procedure is outlined, the following part attempts to analyze and interpret the generated data. On the one hand, the data gathered will be presented in statistical forms in tabular formats. On the other hand, the analysis focuses on the different points that this research aims to investigate. The presentation of both first and third year analysis of data and the results obtained will be simultaneous therein to draw some conclusions on the basis of which some suggestions, too, with regard to the cultural dimension of teaching a foreign language, will be formulated.

2.2. 1. Data Analysis

2.2. 1.1. Part One: Background Information

The total number of informants who participated in this study amounts to 30 distributed equally between first and third years LMD students reading for a BA degree at the University Mentouri, Constantine.

As far as first year students are concerned, the majority of them are females (13) (87%) and two (2) are males (13%). Whereas, the group of third year students includes fifteen (15) informants, twelve (12) of them are females (80%) and there (3) are males   (20%). All the participants have been studying English either for one or three years at the Department of Foreign Languages.

2.2.1.1.1 Question Items 1.4, 1.5 & 1.6

To diagnose the participants' motivation in studying English at the university is the aim of question items 1.4, 1.5 & 1.6. In question item 1.4, participants were asked:

Was studying English at the university your first choice:

     Yes   No

Question item 1.5 is a follow up to the previous question and requires the participants who answered the previous question negatively; *English was not their first ch*oice, to say '*how do they feel now that they are studying English'* and were given the following options.

    a- Bored

    b- Motivated

    c- Indifferent

In fact, studying English at the university was a personal choice of 80% of the participants (either for first or third year LMD students), whereas, some of the participants (20%) were interested in other areas of study. Yet, despite the fact that English was not their first choice at the beginning, they then claimed to be motivated in studying it since their answer to the question item 1.5 was (b) with a percentage of 20%. By correlating the responses of question items 1.4 and 1.5, it can be said that the whole sample 100% was motivated in learning English, as displayed in the figure below:

	Question item 1.4		Question item 1.5		
	Yes	No	a	b	c
First year participants	80%	20%	0%	20%	0%
Third year participants	80%	20%	0%	20%	0%

Figure 1 : Correlation of Participants' Answers to Question Items 1.4 & 1.5

Question item 1.6, too, requires the participants, who chose response (a) in question item 1.5, i.e., those who claim that they feel bored in studying English, to say whether their boredom was due to:

a- Other interests and expectations

b- Your negative attitudes towards the English people

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c- Differences in beliefs and concepts between your culture and the English culture

Responses to the (1.6) were not supplied then. Participants neither had negative attitudes towards English people nor apathetic to learn English because of cultural differences in beliefs and concepts. Accordingly, the forthcoming analysis of the data will take into account the students' motivation in learning English, an important variable in the learning process, in general, and cultural awareness acquisition, in particular.

2.2.1.1.2 Question Items 1.7 & 1.8

Question items 1.7 and 1.8 aim at probing the students' self concept and awareness of their ability to communicate successfully with foreigners. The questions also aim at diagnosing the students' realization of the nature of communication that involves culture alongside the language used as well as the different aspects that are necessary for successful communication.

Question item 1.7 enquires the participants about their views with regard to their ability/inability to run a conversation with a native speaker. The participants had to answer with 'Yes' or 'No'.

Question item 1.8 is designed specifically to those who considered themselves unable to do so. It deals with the possible hindrances that would face them when conversing with natives using the target language. This item dictates:

If no, is it because of :

    a- Linguistic problems

    b- Lack of cultural knowledge

    c- Inability to use linguistic expressions appropriately

    d- Other factors (psychological : self confidence)

In fact, first year participants' responses to question item 1.7; can be divided into two groups, 40% of them answered 'yes', i.e., they were able to run a conversation with native speakers, whereas, 60% claimed they were unable to do so. This was mainly due, according to their answers to question item (1.8), to linguistic problems (a) with 26.67%, inability to use linguistic expressions appropriately (c) with 26.67%, or the lack of cultural knowledge (b) with 6.66% of the participants' answers. The last choice (d), *psychological factors may hinder their ability to converse with native speakers*, was not taken into consideration by the participants 0%. This can have many interpretations that will be presented later in the discussion.

Additionally, in answering question item 1.7, eleven (73.34%) of third year participants considered themselves able to run a conversation with the natives, whereas, 26.66% said they were unable. Their responses are distributed as follows: Answer (a) = 0%, answer (b) = 25%, answer (c) = 0%, and answer (d) = 75%. Participants, at this level thought they had sufficient linguistic knowledge (a) about English, i.e., they master its grammar and vocabulary as well as the pragmatic knowledge (answer c). They did not have any problems with these two language aspects involved in communication. The two basic obstacles were the lack of cultural knowledge and self-confidence. More details are presented in the following figure:

	Question item 1.7		Question item 1.8			
	Yes	No	a	b	c	d
First year participants	40%	60%	26.67%	6.66%	26.67%	0%
Third year participants	73.34%	26.66%	0%	25%	0%	75%

Figure 2: Correlation of Participants' Answers to Question Items 1.7 & 1.8

In comparing the results yielded by the analysis of the responses of first year with that of the third year, one finds some differences. First of all, the percentage of participants who thought they were able to run conversations rose from 40% (first year) to 73.34% (third year).

This means that there is some kind of improvement in the course of learning English (for more details see below). Yet, this would help to confirm slightly one of the research hidden assumptions that the more the learners get acquainted with the English language, the more they enlarge their bulk of knowledge necessary for achieving successful communication with the target language. Second, the reasons given for their inability to make successful communication were almost different between first and third year participants. First year participants were interested in linguistics and pragmatics, two basic and primary elements to be included, hence learnt, by students in communication, whereas, third year participants have developed other views on the nature of communication that involves culture and psychology. Hence, third year subjects show their awareness development alongside their learning progress.

First year participants' ignorance of the psychological factors can be interpreted either that they were confident of themselves or that they were not aware of the crucial role that their psychological state plays in their learning process, particularly, self-confidence. What can be, also, noticed from the obtained results is that pragmatic and linguistic problems are of equal value and interest to the participants.

In sum, the obtained results from the two samples show that all the participants were motivated in learning English at the university even if it was not their preferable choice. Hence, participants do think to have neither bad attitudes towards the English people nor problems of differences in beliefs and concepts between the Arab Algerian culture and the English culture.

2.2.1.2. Part Two: Linguistic and Pragmatic Competence

The following part investigates the participants' linguistic and pragmatic knowledge. These two elements were included in this test on the basis of the Intercultural Communicative

Competence (ICC henceforth) components that were set by Byram (1997) .Thus, including linguistic and pragmatic competence would help in the investigation of the students' cultural awareness acquisition as one of ICC components.

2.2.1.2.1 Question Items 2.1 & 2.2

The first two parts (Question items 2.1 & 2.2) are of linguistic nature. The aim is to diagnose the participants' linguistic knowledge, hence competence. In 2.1, the subjects are required to *'Fill in the blanks in some sentences using the appropriate verb from a list given...'* The verbs provided are near synonyms that have some slight differences in their conceptual meanings as advocated in Sapir and Whorf's hypothesis. The expected answers to this question are the following:

1. *I **think** it is raining*

2. *Well , I **suppose** you know you could just show your face , couldn't you*

3. *I **gather** there is to be a further inquiry*

4. *You mentioned two friends in particular who I **assume** are about the same age as you.*

In question item (2.2), the participants were required to *'Indicate the different meanings that the term '**right**' has in a given conversation excerpt'*. The meanings referred are linguistically and culturally-loaded connotations. The expected answers are the following:

Right (1): **Conversational** implications

Right (2): **Intellectual** implications.

Right (3): **Moral** implications.

The participants did not give these exact words but used some terms that give the approximate meaning.

Statistically speaking, with regard to first year participants, the overall percentage of the

correct answers was 27.62%. These results show that the subjects' linguistic competence is below average. In the analysis of the participants' responses to the two question items related to the linguistic aspects of the language, it becomes clear that the participants did better with the first question (2.1) with 18.10% and only 9.52% of their answers to question item (2.2). Hence, the correct answers to question item (2.1) could possibly be a matter of coincidence. Thus, in relation to the participants' responses to the question item (1.8 page 45) which indicates that 26.67% of their weakness is because of linguistic problems, it can be said that the participants were aware of their actual abilities.

As far as third year participants are concerned, their responses show that 61.92% of their answers are correct. Their linguistic competence was better in comparison to that of first year participants' linguistic knowledge as shown in the table 3 below.

In (2.1), among the answers obtained, 50% were correct responses. This means that the participants have developed enough linguistic knowledge about English. It is believed then that there was no coincidence. This was, also, proved by answers to question item (2.2) where 11.92% of the answers were correct. Participants understood and differentiated the different meanings that the term 'right' has in the given conversation excerpt. In this part, there were no blank answers given by the subjects as it was the case with first year participants. This shows the participants 'achievement of linguistic competence.

	Question item 2.1	Question item 2.2
First year participants	18.10%	9.52%
Third year participants	50%	11.92%

Figure 3: Distribution of Participants' Responses to Question items 2.1 & 2.2

2.2.1.2.2 Question Item 2.3

This sub-part (2.3) is designed to evaluate pragmatic knowledge and competence. In fact, the content of this part comprises two situations where the participants are required to choose the appropriate expression in relation to the surrounding context.

In (2.3.1), the situation requires the respondents to apologize to someone after pushing him accidently. The statement is the following:

You accidently push someone behind you when getting on a bus s/he almost falls down. You say: a- Excuse me, I did not see you.

b-I beg your pardon.

c-I am sorry, I did not see you.

In fact, each of these expressions has its appropriate context of use. The appropriate expression to apologize, in this situation, is *'I am sorry, I did not see you'*.

Statistically speaking, 66.66% of the first year respondents apologized correctly in this situation, while 33.34% failed to do. Some of them (26.67%) answered (a) and 6.67% answered (b).

The statistics of third year LMD participants was higher than that of first year participants. Indeed, 73.32% of the respondents succeeded in selecting the appropriate answer (c) whereas the rest (13.34%) was distributed between options (a) and (b).

In (2.3.2), the subjects are exposed to a situation where sociolinguistic rules should be taken into account rather than the pragmatic ones. The situation is about:

When you speak about a boss who takes right decisions concerning his employees, you say: a- He is good.

b- He is correct.

c- He is fair.

In this situation, too, the appropriate expression to be selected is (c), '*He is fair'* because option (a) *good* or (b) *correct* do not fit such a situation.

The answers of first year participants in this situation are distributed as follows: Option (c) = 40%, Option (a) = 33.34% and Option (b) = 26.66%. Concerning third year responses' distribution, it is as follows: Option (a) = 6.67%, Option (b) = 6.67%, Option (c) =86.66%. These results are given below in tabular format:

	Situation 2.3.1			Situation 2.3.2		
	a	b	c	a	b	c
First year participants	26.67%	6.67%	66.66%	33.34%	26.66%	40%
Third year participants	13.34%	13.34%	73.32%	6.67%	6.67%	86.66%

Figure 4: Participants' Responses Distribution in Situations 2.3.1 & 2.3.2.

A comparison of the two sample performances in pragmatics reveals that, as in linguistics, third year participants proved to be better than first year participants. This means that their pragmatic knowledge of the social rules of using English in different situations has developed alongside the linguistic one.

First year participants' performance in the two situations is different. In the first situation, 66.66 % of the participants gave the appropriate answer, while in the second situation, only 40% did so. In correlating their total performance in pragmatics (2.3: 50%) with their responses in question item 1.8, where 26.67% of them claimed that their failure to communicate successfully with natives is because of the lack of pragmatic knowledge(c), the possible explanation that can be given is that their answers to the first situation were a matter of pragmatic transfer. First year participants have resorted to transfer their native language (Algerian Arabic dialect) linguistic and social rules and apply that on English as a solution to their deficiency and lack of pragmatic rules that correspond to such situation.

Unlike first year participants, third year responses were not a matter of pragmatic transfer. This is revealed by the comparison between the two situations given (73.32% in the first situation and 86.66% in the second one) and the high total percentage in pragmatics with 80%. Moreover, third year participants showed their awareness of their own actual abilities as they claim to have no problem in pragmatics (0 % for inability to use linguistic expressions appropriately in 1.8)

All in all, third year participants have actually developed a certain degree of linguistic and pragmatic competence, as they claim in 1.8,in comparison to first year participants.

2.2.1.3. Part Three: Cultural Knowledge and Awareness

In the last part, the focus is on the cultural aspect of learning a foreign language. That is to say, the purpose of this part is to probe the subjects' cultural knowledge of the English culture. It is divided into two main parts, the first is devoted to socio-cultural knowledge about the English etiquette and behavior and the second is devoted to cultural awareness where the participants were required to react and to hypothesize about possible reactions of native speakers in given situations.

2.2.1.3.1 Question Items 3.1 & 3.2

To start with, question items 3.1 and 3.2 are designed to test the participants' cultural knowledge. In the first situation (3.1), unlike all the previous questions, the informants were required to *fill in the gaps with correct answers*. In this question item, no response choices were given. The participants were expected to have some basic cultural knowledge about the English history and some factual knowledge. Expressed differently, this sub-part tries to highlight the participants' level of big C culture. The subjects were expected to give the following answers (written in bold):

a- *The union jack is **the flag of UK.***

b- *Elizabeth 2, queen of UK from 1952, is the daughter of* **George 3** *and Queen* **Elizabeth***, the mother queen, and the mother of Prince* **Charles** *and Princess* **Ann.**

c- *Margaret Thatcher* **was the prime minister of UK** *and known as* **the iron lady***.*

d- *Christmas day is on* **25ᵗʰ December***.*

Concerning this sub-part, the analysis of data of first year participants showed that just 11.42% of the participants gave correct answers, 15.24% gave wrong answers and 73.34% of them did not give any answer. The sentences were left blank which means that these participants do not have enough factual knowledge about the English culture and history.

Third year participants, at this level showed more interest in the cultural side of the English language in the sense that 17.14% of them gave appropriate answers and 82.86% of them gave inappropriate ones.

Question item (3.2) aims at investigating the subjects' knowledge about some English behavioral patterns. The participants were required to *say whether the given statements are true or false* in relation to English behavioral conventions while eating and at work. Some of these statements are:

a- *The host himself starts eating before the guest.*

b- *At the end of the meal, the knife and fork should be put on the side of the plate.*

c- *At work, it is not important what you wear but how you do work.*

d- *At work, the employees are treated differently, each according to her his educational qualification.*

All the statements given are *false*. The obtained data from first year participants, on the one hand, show that 41.66% of them gave correct answers. Approximately, half of the answers given were obtained.

On the other hand, 50% of the third year subjects gave correct answers. Thus, it can be said that both participants were imparted with enough behavioral patterns of English culture but with an improvement within third year sample.

	Question item 3.1	Question item 3.2
First year participants	11.42%	41.66%
Third year participants	17.14%	50%

Figure 5: Participants' Performance in Question Items 3.1 & 3.2

While observing the figures above, it can be noticed that the participants performance in both groups in the two question items (3.1) and (3.2) is largely different. The difference was about 30% (first year participants shifted from 11.42% to 41.66% while third year participants from 17.14% to 50%). Additionally, the majority of the correct responses in (3.1) were that of (c) and (d).

This is, in fact, one of the contradictions of the research presumptions. Participants were expected to have more factual knowledge of the English culture rather than knowledge about English social behavioral patterns through the courses of civilization. This can have two explanations : Either participants are more interested in acquiring knowledge about English people behavioural patterns and their social rules that would serve their daily use of the language instead of internalizing bulk of useless factual knowledge or that their acceptable performance in (3.2) was a matter of coincidence .

Third year participants total performance in this part (3.1 - 3.2) is measured with 29.09% in comparison to 21.82% of the first year participants .This indicates that culture acquisition is consistent with language acquisition; one of the interesting points of this research hypothesis.

2.2.1.3.2 Question Item 3.3

Question items 3.3 and 3.4 deal with cultural awareness. The questions in this sub-part are of MCQ nature. The informants were provided with three options or alternatives to choose from.

Question item 3.3 tries to achieve one of the present research aims. It attempts to highlight the influence of cultural awareness on the participants' language proficiency and communicative performance. In this part, the informants were presented with two different situations that may cause some misunderstanding between people, especially a native and a non-native speaker.

In 3.3.1, the situation is a business call dialogue. Thus, formality and politeness between the interlocutors were to be taken into consideration because of the common conversational and social rules followed in such contexts (social status: the maxim of politeness of Schneider, 1988 and the conversational sequences to be followed in order to establish social relationships). In this conversation excerpt, there was no consensus in interaction between the interlocutors (Cooperative principle of Grice). This would engender an intercultural misunderstanding and a disorientation of the participants behavioural reaction because of unexpected answer interpreted in a wrong way. This misinterpretation of the businessman's intention would reveal the participants' lack of cultural awareness. The problematic expression is *'I am hot'* as a response to *'how are you'*. There were three different answers that may indicate the participants' position; whether they had some degree of cultural awareness or not, and how that would influence their language proficiency or language fluency in communication. The question given was: *How would you react to BM's answer:*

a- *You say you're what!*

b- *You continue the conversation about the heat.*

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c- You pretend not to hear well and you move to the main topic.

The appropriate reaction which indicates the participants' cultural awareness is (b). Choosing the third option would indicate the opposite, i.e., the participants' unawareness.

Statistically speaking, first year participants' answers distribution was as follows: 6.66% of the participants chose (b) (right answer); 33.34% (a) and 60% (c). These results show the informants' unawareness of this culturally loaded linguistic expression and reveal clearly its influence on the conversation flow. The participants, here, did not take the behaviour as it is but did interpret it before reacting, a basic hindrance in achieving intercultural awareness (Hofstede, 2002).

For third year participants, 20 % of the respondents chose (b) (right answer) 13.34% (a) and 66.66% (c). These statistics show that despite the low performance of third year in this situation, more improvement or awareness is acquired in comparison with first year.

The second situation 3.3.2 is approximately similar. The puzzling answer is '*yes, in a manner of speaking*' as a response of a stranger to a student's enquiry about his job '*Oh, yes, are you a student.* The three reactions given are as follows:

a- You continue asking questions till you understand his job.

b- You stop talking to him.

c- You change the topic.

The expected answer is: *(a). the first.* The two other options (c and d) indicate unawareness or misinterpretation of the stranger's response.

Concerning this situation, the generated data from first year sample show that 46.67% of the participants answered (a), 26.67% answered (b) and 26.67% answered (c). In this situation, approximately, half of the participants responded appropriately.

For third year informants, the generated data show that 60% answered (a), 20% answered (b) and 20% answered (c). In this situation, too, a development of the third year participants' performance is clear.

	3.3.1			3.3.2		
	a	b	c	a	b	c
First year participants	33.34%	6.66%	60%	46.67%	26.67%	26.67%
Third year participants	13.34%	20%	66.66%	60 %	20%	20%

Figure 6: Distribution of Participants' Responses in Situations 3.3.1 & 3.3.2

As mentioned in the above figure, a contradiction between the two situations in first year collected data is noticeable. The second situation was correctly answered in comparison with the first one. This can have many interpretations: first, the expression used in the second situation does not cause as much misunderstanding on the part of the participants as that in the first situation. Second, the participants did not recognize the real meaning of the expression *'I am hot'*, or that the obtained data of responses on this situation was a matter of shared cultural values between the participants and not a matter of awareness.

Another important point in this part is that the obtained data of first year from the two situations reveal some of Hofstede values theory. This is clearly shown by the two highly scored answers 60% (c) and 46.67% (a) in both situations (3.3.1 - 3.3.2) where participants do share approximately the same cultural values and visions towards the external world which in turn influences their behavioral patterns or reactions with people from different cultural backgrounds.

This explanation can be given, also, to third year participants. In fact, they share the same cultural values towards the English people as that of first year participants. Third year

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participants chose (c) and (a) with 66.66% and 60% respectively in both situations (3.3.1-3.3.2).

2.2.1.3.3 Question Item 3.4

The last part in this WDCT is in the form of MCQ with three options in four situations that involve culturally bound reactions. It aims at uncovering the students' cultural awareness in terms of cross-cultural differences in beliefs and concepts between the English and Arab Algerian native cultures. The informants were required to hypothesize about a native's reaction in some given situations and to give their own reactions in the same situation.

The generated data about the participants' reactions will be evaluated in relation to the frequency of occurrences for each given item, for both their own reaction as Algerians or their hypotheses about the English people reactions.

In this part, the obtained data for first year informants show that 32% only were able to hypothesize appropriately concerning the native speaker's reaction. This clearly shows the participants' unawareness of the cross-cultural differences between the native and the target culture. While for third year participants, 51.42 % of them were able to hypothesize appropriately concerning the native speaker's reaction.

2.2.1.3.3.1 Situation 3.4.1

In the first situation (3.4.1), there was *a man who scattered another man's bag on the ground while he was hurrying in order to be on time for his job interview*. The participants were required to give their own reactions as well as that of the native speaker from this set of options if they were in the place of the first man (who was in a hurry):

a- *To apologize and keep running.*

b- *Not to apologize and to keep running.*

c- *To stop, apologize, and give the man a hand to gather what is scattere*d.

Concerning the English people reaction, the appropriate answer was (c) obtained by 20% of first year participants, while 60% was given to (a) and 20% to (b). With regard to their own reactions (as Algerians) in this situation, 80% answered (c) and 20% answered (a) and 0% answered (b).

For third year participants' responses on the native speaker reaction, the obtained data was as follows: 46.66% (a); 13.34% (b); 40% (c), With regard to their own reaction, 66.66% answered (c), 6.66% answered (b); and 26.66% answered (a).This data are displayed in the figure below :

	Native's reaction			Non-native reaction		
	a	b	c	a	b	c
First year participants	60%	20%	20%	20%	0%	80%
Third year participants	46.66%	13.34%	40%	26.66%	6.66%	66.66%

Figure 7: Participants' Responses Distribution in Situation 3.4.1

In the analysis of this situation, some points can be drawn: The participants' awareness of the English cultural values seems to improve between first and third year data (20%-40%), whereas, their own reactions are nearly similar with regard to their answers distribution. This means that they share the same cultural values which are similar to those of the English people.

2.2.1.3.3.2 Situation 3.4.2

In (3.4.2), the situation involves *two neighbors where one refused the other's complaint*. The proposed reactions were:

a- *To respect the neighbor's view and return back.*

b- *To get into a hot argument with the neighbor.*

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c- Not to care.

The appropriate answer for the native reaction was (a) obtained by 46.38% of first year participants. The others (26.66%) answered (b) and 26.66% answered (c) .When expressing their own reactions, first year participants mostly agree on (a) with 46.66% of the total number of answers; 40% chose (b) ; and 13.34% chose (c).

Third year participants showed more awareness in this situation; 46.66% of them answered (a), whereas the rest chose (b) 26.67% and (c) 26.67%. With regard to their reactions in this situation, , the most often chosen option is (a) with 53.34% of the answers (a), 20% (b) and 26.66% was given to (c).The same points as in the first situation are to be drawn .

	Native reaction			Non-native reaction		
	a	b	c	a	b	c
First year participants	46.38%	26.66%	26.66%	46,66%	40%	13.34%
Third year participants	46.66%	26.67%	13.34%	53.34%	20%	26.66%

Figure 8: Participants ' Responses Distribution in Situation 3.4.2

2.2.1.3.3.3 Situation 3.4.3

In (3.4.3), the situation is about the participant's reaction about *someone jumping the queue while buying a ticket for a theatre show.* The choices given are the following:

a- To lecture the man on good manners.

b- Not to comment on such silly situations.

c- To jump the queue.

The answer provided by the near native speaker was (b) which was answered by 20% of first year participants while 33.34% have responded (a) and 46.66% (c). Their own reaction

was basically (a) as responded by 73.34% of the participants, while 20% reacted as in (b), and 6.66% as in (c).

Third year sample case was different from that of the first year, either in relation to their hypotheses about the native's reaction or about their own reaction. Concerning their hypotheses about the native's reaction 66.66% of them responded (b) while 26.67% responded (a) and 6.67% did (c). The data obtained about their own reactions is as follows: (b) 66.66%; (a) 20%; and 13.34% for (c).this data is displayed shown in the following figure:

	Native reaction			Non-native reaction		
	a	b	c	a	b	c
First year participants	33.34%	20%	46.66%	73.34%	20%	6.66%
Third year participants	26.67%	66.66%	6.67%	20%	66.66%	13.34%

Figure 9 : Participants' Responses Distribution in Situation 3.4.3

2.2.1.3.3.4 Situation 3.4.4

In (3.4.4), the situation is about the participant's reaction about *his friend who does show up at the time of the arrangement, whether they*:

a- *Will become angry and leave.*

b- *Will wait till he comes.*

c- *Will call him to know if everything is alright*.

The appropriate answer to this situation as provided by the near native speaker is either (b) or (c). Concerning first year participants data , the answers' distribution about the native reaction was as follows: 40% (a) ; 40% (b) ; and 20% (c), while they chose to react as in (c) with 100% .

For third year participants' data, the two appropriate answers about the English native reaction were scored with 40% to (b) and 40% to (c) while (a) was chosen by 20% of the participants. Meanwhile, their own reactions were distributed as follows: 60% (c); 13.34% (b); 26.66% (a). This data will be displayed in the figure below:

	Native reaction			Non-native reaction		
	a	b	c	a	b	c
First year participants	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%	100%
Third year participants	20%	40%	40%	26.66%	13.34%	60%

Figure 10: Participants' Responses Distribution in Situation 3.4.4

In order to clarify the picture of the participants overall performance in the Discourse Completion Task, figure 11 below presents the overall results obtained in the different parts:

	Motivation	Linguistic and pragmatic knowledge	Cultural knowledge and awareness
First year participants	100%	32.60%	26.29%
Third year participants	100%	65.92%	35.18%

Figure 11: Participants' Overall Performance in the Test

This summary table shows clearly the differences between the performances of first and third year either in linguistic or cultural knowledge. This reveals that the more learners progress in their learning of English, the more they develop their knowledge about the linguistic, pragmatic and cultural aspects of language. Additionally, despite the fact that all the participants are motivated, a difference between their linguistic and cultural input is

revealed. Linguistic knowledge is higher than the cultural one which means that culture is not equally acquired / taught as the grammatical rules of English.

2.2.2 Discussion

As noticed in the figures above, many conclusions and interpretations can be drawn either at level of difference between the two sample participants performances or at the level of the whole performance between the different parts that comprise the test. These conclusions will be presented below on the basis of a correlation of the whole test obtained results in different parts.

Starting from the main conclusion of this research, Algerian learners cultural awareness is not perfectly acquired. Learners do show a lack of cultural awareness of the cultural dimension of English being a foreign language in Algeria. This is the case of both first and third year participants, despite the subtle improvement in their performances, as mentioned in last part of the test (3.4) in the four different situations.

Subjects, then, have not suspended their common stereotypes about the English people and do use their own cultural values as a standard to judge natives behaviours. They have not developed from their feeling of ethnocentricity to ethnorelativity because of their unawareness of the cross-cultural differences between their culture and the English one. Moreover, participants do not react as they observe the behavior but as they interpret it. Meanwhile, a culturally aware person is the one who can deal with the actual behavior as it is with no interpretation that is based on his own stereotypes so that to avoid misinterpretations of culturally different behaviors (Hofstede , 2002).

Another point which corresponds to Hofstede theory is that of the shared cultural values. This was investigated in the participants' responses about their own reactions in 3.4 to

the given situations. Participants in this research share the same cultural values or visions that influence their behaviors in communication.

Moreover, the lack of cultural awareness has influenced their linguistic and communicative performance in English, that is to say the lack of cultural awareness accounts for their language proficiency enhancement failure as mentioned in (3.3) where 6, 66% in 3.3.1 and 46.67% in 3.3.2 of first year participants have correctly responded the two situations while 20 % in 3.3.1 and 60% in 3.3.2 by third year participants.

Linguistic knowledge proved to be insufficient for developing language proficiency and enhancing cultural awareness. As the case with third year participants, despite their good performance in linguistics and pragmatics (65.92%), and the low performance in cultural knowledge evaluation (29.09%) , their cultural awareness is not yet perfectly acquired.

Additionally, the lack of cultural knowledge has been proved in 2.2 where some cultural knowledge was necessary to answer in a correct way where only 9.52% of answers were obtained by first year participants and 11.92%. Similarly, this lack of cultural knowledge was proved in 2.3. First year participants showed their pragmatic transfer from their Arabic native language into English as mentioned in the obtained results between the two situations 66.66% in 2.3.1 and 40% in 2.3.2.

Thus, teaching foreign languages curriculum in Algeria has proved to miss the focus on the cultural side of the foreign language and country which accounts for the learners' failure to run conversations in the target language or to achieve successful intercultural communication, hence holding negative attitudes about strangers. This point can be deduced from the learners' motivation to learn English and their unawareness of the cross-cultural differences between cultures and the cultural dimension of the foreign language and its effects

on their language proficiency. The focus, as revealed from the data obtained, is laid on teaching linguistics, grammar rules, and vocabulary items, the necessary but not the only elements included in communication.

All these conclusions mean that students do not recognize the cultural aspect of the language despite their close relationship which was proved in the dual and simultaneous improvement of third year performance in linguistics and cultural knowledge, which, in turn, engenders their lack of cultural awareness being a key element in language proficiency and intercultural communicative competence.

Conclusion

In sum, it can be said that the Algerian learners' cultural awareness level is not sufficient to enable them to achieve successful communication in the target language . Despite the fact that they have enough linguistic knowledge about English, the lack of cultural knowledge is the source of their failure in acquiring cultural awareness. Thus , some recommendations and suggestions about enhancing the learners' cultural awareness that would help them to gain positive attitudes about the English culture will be formulated in the following part.

2.3. Recommendation

As far as the conclusions mentioned above, some necessary recommendations can be formulated in order to provide the foreign language teaching profession with some simple insights and ideas that are useful to improve learners' achievement of intercultural communicative competence.

The teaching of culture in Algeria, as revealed in the data obtained, was ignored by teachers of foreign languages. First, it should be taken as integrative in language rather than a surplus in the process of teaching a foreign language. Culture should not be taught as a separate course about factual knowledge of the foreign language country. It should be taken into consideration and gain teachers' interest*s. This can be reached through providing learners with different opportunities to get used to the target culture mainly through the use of authentic materials as videos about the different famous places, universities …etc of the foreign country, documentaries, role plays, or even involving learners in real discussions about world problems and recent issues. Phrased differently, teachers should involve learners in cooperative learning to enrich their bulk of knowledge about the target culture while interacting with each other.

Second, teaching culture should give more attention to small c rather than big C culture. This latter has already been focused on by foreign language teachers but proved to be useless in daily interaction or intercultural communication with foreigners. Learners, then, should be imparted with knowledge about the behavioural patterns followed in the foreign country so that to communicate appropriately and successfully in the target language. Small c culture can help teachers draw their learners' attention to the cross-cultural differences in beliefs and perceptions towards the external world which influences daily interaction behavior. It accounts for some discussion and debate wherein the teacher can inform the

learners about the English people culture and their viewpoints and values about different issues that are either similar or different from theirs.

As far as the language is concerned, culture should be dealt with as well. Teachers should draw their learners' attention to the cross-cultural differences and similarities between the native and target language*s* that are based on some cultural criteria as in teaching pragmatics or the different contexts in which these linguistic expressions can be used and the cultural norms of communication and interaction as how to apologize, complain and how to respond to such speech acts, i.e.*,* appropriate language behaviour. Teachers should include the cultural dimension while teaching either vocabulary items or grammar rules. Each of them has some cultural connotations (as shown in 2.1 – 2.2).

Moreover, learners should be aware of the nature of communication which requires language and culture as means of expression. Intercultural communication entails knowledge about the interlocutor's cultural background so that to understand him*,* to use his language appropriately and to be understood by others. Thus, teachers should aim to soften their learners' attitudes and feelings towards the English culture and its people and raise their cultural awareness that permits them to succeed in their intercultural communication through:

- Dealing with English socially acceptable behaviours or what is known as etiquettes. This has been dealt in 3.2 of the WDCT. Foreign language learners should know about the acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours and to understand and respect the natives' behaviours and their perception of the world. This can be done, for example, while teaching some vocabulary items that belong to the same field and then draw their attention to such aspects in an indirect way.

- Dealing with the different social and cultural rules that interfere in their use of different linguistic expressions or speech acts depending on the situation so that they would not sound odd pragmatically while communicating.

- Dealing with English people perceptions and views about different issues of life so that to understand and respect them as their own and overcome their feelings of ethnocentricity and rejection of all that is different from their own culture. In other words, to develop a sphere of interculturality (kramsch, 1998) through a comparison with the native perceptions towards the same point. This cultural aspect, too, can be taught through giving learners some situations where cultural values would interfere in the reaction and ask them to give their own reactions and hypothesize about that of the English people (as has been dealt in 3.4). These types of exercises that involve cultural values have been proposed by Brooks (2004) and Hofstede (2002) when they dealt with cultural intelligence and cultural values such as writing cross-cultural exchanges and interpreting them from different viewpoints, group exercises, role play , and simulation gaming.

Foreign language learners should develop their visions about the foreign culture as an insider and outsider. They should understand the cross-cultural differences and similarities between the native and target culture and respect what is different and observe the external behaviours of foreigners without reference to their stereotypes. Awareness, *as* expressed by Brooks, Hofstede, and Byram, is necessary to achieve appropriate behaviours and successful communication if combined with the necessary cultural knowledge.

General Conclusion

As far as the research hypothesis is concerned , it can be claimed that it is supported by the obtained results. The Algerian learner's cultural awareness is below the required level despite their acceptable level of linguistic competence. The lack of cultural knowledge and awareness of the cross-cultural differences and similarities between the native and the target languages is the main cause behind their negative attitudes towards English people and failure to achieve language proficiency which is crucial for the development of their intercultural communicative competence . Concerning the teaching of English as a foreign language in Algeria , the obtained data showed that the cultural aspect of English is discarded within the course syllabus despite the fact that its main objective is to help the learners achieve intercultural communicative competence.

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Appendix

Discourse Completion Task

I will be very grateful if you take a few minutes to complete this discourse completion task about the role of socio-cultural awareness in learning a foreign language. The significance of your feedback will be of great help to bring the research I am undertaking to an end. Thank you for your cooperation.

For each item, tick the right box or write in the space provided.

Part One: Background Information

1.1.   Age:...................

1.2.   Sex: Male   Female

1.3.   Years of studying English at the university: ....

1.4.   Was studying English at the university your first choice?

              Yes   No

1.5.   If not, how do you feel now that you are studying it?

              a- Bored

              b- Motivated

              c- Indifferent

1.6.   If your answer to the previous question is (a), is your feeling of boredom due to:

       a- Other interests and expectations

       b- Your negative attitudes towards the English people

       c- Differences in beliefs and concepts between your culture and the English

                culture

1.7.   Do you think that you can run a conversation with a native speaker?

              Yes   No

1.8.   If no, is it because of:

Part Two: Linguistic and Pragmatic Competence

2.1. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences using the appropriate verb from the following: think, suppose, gather, assume

a- I ….….....it is raining.

b- Well, I...................... you know you could just show your face, couldn't you.

c- I………… there is to be a further inquiry.

d-You mentioned two friends in particular who I…… are about the same age as you.

2.2. Indicate the different meanings of the term 'right' (written in bold) in the following conversation excerpt:

   A: … I mean different people are taught different values, **right (1)**?

  B: Yeah, you're **right (2)**

  A: Somebody else might be taught a different set of values…

  B: Mm-hm

 A: Then, what you were taught … So, do you think your values are **right (3)** rather than... Do you think those are the right values to have?

 Right (1):…………………………...

 Right (2):………………………….

 Right (3):……………

2.3. Following are hypothetical situations, respond to each expressing what you are likely to say in each:

2.3.1. *You accidentally push someone behind you when getting on a bus (s/he almost falls down .You say:*

 a- Excuse me; I did not see you.

 b- I beg your pardon.

 c- I am sorry, I did not see you.

2.3.2. *When you speak about a boss who takes right decisions concerning his employees. You say:*

 a -He is good.

 b -He is correct.

 c -He is fair.

Part Three: Socio-cultural knowledge and awareness

 3.1. Fill in the gaps in the following:

a - The union Jack is ……………….. .

b - Elizabeth 2, queen of UK from 1952, is the daughter of ……….. and queen …………. the mother queen, and the mother of Prince ………. and Princess

……………

 c - Margaret Thatcher was the ………….. of UK and known as ……………. .

 d - Christmas day is on …………. .

3.2. Say whether the following statements are true or false:

 In England:

 a - The host himself starts eating before the guest.

 b - At the end of the meal, the knife and fork should be put on the side of the plate.

 c- At work, it is not important what you wear but how you do work.

d - At work, the employees are treated differently; each according to her/his educational qualifications.

3.3. The following are some situations that may cause some misunderstandings between people. Give your own reaction in such situations:

3.3.1. *Imagine yourself making a business call with a business man (BM). Here is the conversation*.

BM: Yes?

You: Yes, hello Mr Brown. It's Michael Sikes again speaking

BM: Ah, hello Michael

You: Hi, how are you?

BM: I'm very hot!!!

How would you react to BM's answer (in bold)?

a- You say: you're what!!

b- You continue the conversation about the heat.

c- You pretend not to hear well and you move to the main topic (business).

3.3.2. *You meet someone waiting in front of the English Department; you want to speak to her/him. After introducing yourself, you say:*

You: What brings you here?

Man: I'm visiting the Department of English

You: Oh, yes. Are you a student?

Man: Yes, in a manner of speaking (laughing)

What is your reaction to his answer (in bold)?

a-You continue asking questions till you understand his job.

b-You stop talking to him.

c-You change the topic.

3.4. React and hypothesize about a native speaker's reaction in the following situations:

3.4.1. *In the street, a gentleman hurries in order to be on time for his job interview appointment. Suddenly, he runs into another man carrying a bag in his hand (the bag scatters on the grounds) if you were that man:*

You

    a- will apologise and keep running.

    b- will not apologise and keep running.

    c-will stop, apologise, and give the man a hand to gather what is scattered.

A native speaker

    a- will apologise and keep running.

    b- will not apologise and keep running .

    c- will stop, apologise, and give the man a hand to gather what is scattered.

3.4.2. *A & B are neighbours. B is listening to music. A is disturbed by the music and cannot concentrate on the show he was watching. He goes and asks B to turn the volume down. B refuses believing that he is free. If you were A:*

You

    a- would respect your neighbour's view and return back.

    b- would get into a hot argument with the neighbour.

    c- would not care.

A native speaker

    *a-*would respect his neighbour's view and return back. .

    b- would get into a hot argument with the neighbour.

c-would not care.

3.4.3. *You didn't mind waiting your turn for half an hour just to bring a ticket for tonight's theatre show. While you were waiting, someone comes in and jumps the queue:*

You

    a-will lecture the man on good manners .

    b-will not comment on such silly situations.

    c- will also jump the queue.

A native speaker

    a- will lecture the man on good manners.

    b- will not comment on such silly situations.

    c- will also jump the queue.

3.4.4. *You arranged to meet a friend, but he does not show up:*

You

    a- will be angry and leave.

    b- will wait till he comes.

    c- will call him to know if everything is alright.

A native speaker

    a- will become angry and leave.

    b- will wait till he comes.

    c-will call him to know if everything is alright.

Thank you

Résumé

Cette thèse traite de la synergie des aspects culturels et linguistiques en classe de langue . elle vise à mettre en évidence que l'enseignement des langues étrangères doit ètre associes à leurs cultures d'origine. Le but est de rendre les apprenants capables de communiquer en langue étrangère dans des situations culturellement marquées en relativisant ses propres pratiques sociales , ses convictions et ses croyances , et d'inciter les enseignants à prendre davantage en compte dans leurs pratiques la dimension culturelle.

في ظل العلاقة الوثيقة بين اللغة و الثقافة على مختلف المستويات و الهدف الرئيسي من تدريس اللغات الأجنبية المتمثل في تكوين الطلبة من تطوير كفاءاتهم اللغوية و تحقيق التواصل الناجح مع مختلف الثقافات باستعمال اللغة الأجنبية , تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تقييم درجة اكتساب الوعي الثقافي لدى الطلبة الجزائريين الذي يمكنهم من تطوير الحس اتجاه الاختلافات الثقافية فضلا عن ثقافتهم و بالتالي التواصل بالغة الأجنبية بشكل فعال و ناجح لاسيما مع الناطقين الأصليين.