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**English Language Proficiency as a Prerequisite to Study  
British Civilisation by Second Year Students of English  
at Batna University**

*Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
magister degree in language and communicative competence*

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**2005-2006**

**I**

**DEDICATION**

**To my family**

**For you Mum**

**I dedicate it also to**

**You Dad**

**Hasna,Ibtissem,and Amani**

## II

### Acknowledgements

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### **III**

#### **Abstract**

The present study aims at identifying the effect of students' English language proficiency on communicative modes, both receptive and productive ones, in as far as the module of second year British civilisation is taught in the department of English at Batna University. Along a descriptive study, the attempt was to highlight the nature of the relation existing between students' English language proficiency and their achievement in this module. Questionnaires' use on the population of both students enrolled for the academic year 2004-2005, and teachers of the module, revealed not only the tie aspect of this relation, a fact latterly confirmed through the analyses of second term students' exam copies; but furthermore evoked its significant impact on students' affective side like apprehension, involvement and motivation to study the module. On the basis of literature reading and field work results, some recommendations have been drawn, in order to attract both teachers' and students' attention on the role the language proficiency performs at the level of their understanding and language development, which is later on reflected on their achievement.

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## List of Abbreviation

**C1:** First culture

**C2 :** Second culture

**CF:** Foreign culture

**DM:** Direct Method

**FL:** Foreign language

**GT:** Grammar Translation

**L2:** Second language

**RAM:** Reading Approach Method

**SL:** Second language

**T C:** Target culture

**TEFL :** Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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## Glossary

**Appropriateness:** The particular item to put in the appropriate context .A word may be common, rare or taboo.

**Audio lingual method** ( Listen and speak): this method considers listening and speaking the first tasks in language learning, followed by reading and writing. There is considerable emphasis on learning sentence patterns, memorization of dialogues and extensive use of drills

**Communicative competence** :The ability to use the language effectively for communication.

**Competence:** Defined by Chomsky as ‘the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language’.

**Connotation:** The associations, positive or negative feeling that an item may evoke ex: Flower.

**Denotation:** The meaning of a word in the real world.

**Direct Method:** The most common approach in TEFL, where language is taught through listening and speaking. There may be little or no explicit explanation dealing with syntax or grammatical rules, nor translation into the mother tongue of the student - inductive learning rather than deductive.

**Grammatical competence:** Attributed to Chomsky, is the speaker’s knowledge of the grammar rules which govern the language.

**Grammar Translation:** A method based upon memorizing the rules and logic of a language and the practice of translation. Traditionally the means by which Latin and Greek have been taught.

**Interference:** According to behaviourist learning theory, the patterns of the learner's mother tongue (L1) get in the way of learning the patterns of the L2. This is referred to as 'interference

**Linguistic competence:** A broad term used to describe the totality of a given individual's language ability.

**Over-generalization:** Language learners often produce errors which are extensions of general rules to items not covered by the rules. For example, 'I comed home'. This is called ‘over-generalization’.

**Performance:** The actual use of language in a concrete situation.

**Productive Knowledge:** Means being able to use it in speaking and writing.



**Reading Approach Method:** The approach is for people who do not travel abroad for whom reading is the one usable skill in a foreign language. The priority in studying the target language is first, reading ability and current or historical knowledge of the country where the target language is spoken.

**Receptive Knowledge:** means being able to recognize one of the aspects of knowledge through reading and listening.

**Transfer :** Knowledge of the L1 is used to help in learning the L2. Transfer can be positive, when the two language have similar structures, or it can be negative, when the two languages are different, and L1-induced errors occur

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## Introduction

English language teaching / learning has increasingly gained a relevant portion in the educational systems all over the world during the last decades. The met challenge, however, arises from the question how to teach the foreign language with its relative culture. An unavoidable step, mainly considering the claims stressing the tie relation connecting both : the foreign language and its culture. Stemming not only as the natural environment of the language, culture performs an important role as an enhancer of the former. Hence, to speak correctly the foreign language, the foreign language learner, has firstly to know about this culture. Once dealing with real classroom situation, the concern is no more to tackle the issue of culture teaching/ learning importance, which becomes an evidence, and /or to evaluate the variant aspects may be generated from its inclusion, but rather to concentrate much efforts to set the question of how to introduce it. Mainly in regard of the required tool to transfer the cultural information, which is the foreign language. Not adequately mastered yet, the language, would represent a new impediment to the foreign language learner, who would face not only a set of information he is not familiar with, but has to process them using a language he handles to a very limited extent. The case of second year students in the department of English at **Batna** University, who not accustomed to deal with “content courses” like British civilisation, seem meeting difficulties to use their English language proficiency, the unique mediator between them and the cultural information this course presents to them. In the two first chapters constituting the literature review, the interest was firstly to shed the light on the historical background of culture inclusion in the foreign language classroom, and then to denote its aim and importance in the improvement and development of learners’ language proficiency. Secondly, to highlight culture teaching basic requirements as far as problems mainly related to foreign learners’ English language proficiency in general, and with reference to the Algerian context in particular.

## 1. Background and Significance of the Study

Foreign language teaching is foreign culture teaching as maintained by many educators “by teaching language...one is inevitably already teaching culture ...” (McLeod, 1976:212, cited in Thanassoulas, 2001:6) .Thus, whatever the aspect under which it is introduced in the language classroom, either implicit or explicit, culture teaching remains an important ingredient of foreign language learning.

To study the foreign culture, implies dealing with messages specific to the foreign language community, through, the use of the foreign language, which is the vehicle to transmit the cultural information. Any deficiency in the language ability of the learner, immediately interferes in the quality of the message which they are expected to receive and later on to convey, so they will deal with either “meaningless symbols or symbols to which they attach wrong meanings ” Politzer (1959:100-101, Ibid:3).

This is what we personally experienced as a second year student, during our learning stage, and what we noticed again, but as a teacher of the module of British civilisation in the department of English at Batna University. In both experiences, second year students expressed an incomparable difficulty in the module of second year British civilisation, either if compared to other modules in the same year or with the same module in the other stages -third and/or fourth years- . Many elements may be at the origin of learners' difficulty: the content, the teacher, the method, the newness of the module and so on. Yet, only one factor corresponds to the kind of obstacles students frequently refer to, and which are reflected in the kind of questions our classmates, during our studying stage, as well as our students in the module of British civilisation, ask and which are related to the communication of meanings of words rather than the content itself. Consequently, students are misled by wrongly interpreting events. A fact clearly depicted in their performances mainly in the provided answers during official tests and examinations.

Therefore, we have decided to conduct this research to examine to what extent students' English language proficiency permits a successful teaching / learning of second year British civilisation.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

British civilisation module is one of the content courses or as pointed at by Littelwood (1981:46) courses having a "dual role", since it offers the possibility to learn the foreign language by the same time to learn through it. Its main concern is to introduce the foreign language learners, in our case English language learners, to the target community by tackling different cultural aspects. Introduced in the curriculum starting from second year at English department, students at this stage seem encountering many difficulties in this module. Difficulties related not only to their unfamiliarity with the module but mainly with their English language proficiency which is at this particular stage not sufficiently developed yet to meet their needs, either in terms of receptive requirements or for the productive ones. Consequently, it impedes not only their understanding and absorption of the cultural information, but exceeds to work out their predisposition and involvement to study the module. The fact that pushed us to look for the issue so to attract teachers' attention on the seriousness of this problem generally not attributed due importance if compared to other elements like the content for instance.

## **3. The Hypothesis**

We hypothesise that second year students' poor English language proficiency negatively affects their achievement in British civilisation module. Being the tool mediating the learner and the cultural information, its quality stands as an obstacle to the module set objective.



#### **4. Basic Assumption**

We assume that second year students of English are not adequately prepared in terms of English language proficiency to deal with British civilisation course.

#### **5. Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the present study are:

- 1- To investigate the relationship between second year students' English language proficiency and their achievement in the module of British civilisation.
- 2- To analyze language proficiency's importance on both: students' receptive and productive competences in the module of British civilisation.
- 3- To know if second year students possess the sufficient language proficiency required to deal with British civilisation module or not.

#### **6. Definition of Terms**

##### **Language proficiency:**

-The possession of the fundamental linguistic information derived from enough practice and experience to be able to understand and use language.

- The linguistic competence necessary to performance.

(Cambridge Dictionary of American English, 2004)

##### **Prerequisite**

A previously required, necessary as preliminary to any proposed effect or end ; as, prerequisite conditions of success.

(Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1996, 1998) .

## **7. Limitation of the Study**

Along this study, we will be limited to the analyses of second year students' English language proficiency role on their achievement in the module of British civilisation. Focus will be made on isolating the linguistic element without attributing much concern to other involved factors in the learning process like motivation or the teaching method for instance. This limitation is explained in terms of students' complaints and questions, mainly connected to the expression of meaning of the language .A phenomenon less apparent in other modules of the same year(2<sup>nd</sup>) or in the same module in other years(3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> ).The fact that explains in its turn the choice of the second year level.

The choice of the course of second year British civilisation, is based on a host of facts, first of all: The nature of the course language requirements in terms of accuracy/fluency. Secondly, it is newly introduced to students in this year (second year) who, and most importantly, come from different streams which implies many differences, that first year is supposed to erase linguistically speaking. Furthermore, in relation to the kind of vocabulary this course presents students with, which differs of vocabulary used in the courses of phonetics for instance, which is rather terminological, or the one of literature courses, which is artistic. Thus, by doing so we reduce the probability of vocabulary difficulty.

## **8. Methodology Design**

### **a- Choice of the Method**

In order to draw the link between second year students' language proficiency and their achievement in the module of British civilisation, we opted for the use of the descriptive method ,which will permit us to identify this relation and moreover to collect the needed data about the subject under investigation. An experimental study would be of no usefulness if we consider that nothing new would be tested and that we will only report and analyse conditions of the current situation and thereby to clarify its status. The

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research findings may provide with a theoretical framework for future research that may opt for other methods use like the experimental one.

## **b- Population**

Both students' and teachers', of the department of English at Batna University, attitudes toward the subject under investigation are of relevance in this study, that is why we will deal with both populations:

Students concerned by our research are second year students of English at Batna University enrolled for the academic year 2004-2005. Their exact number is 349 students divided out to 7 groups (information obtained from the administration).

The choice of these subjects is related to a number of facts, namely in relation to the module of British civilisation which is newly introduced to them in the second year . Secondly, in relation to their linguistic background, if we consider that they come from distinct streams, with different linguistic abilities that first year is expected to erase. More importantly, this choice is based upon learners' complaints noticed along our studying and teaching experiences.

The teachers concerned in our study are : those who had already taught second year British civilisation and those who actually still teach it at Batna University. In regard of their small number (seven), sampling will be of no need. Since what we point at, is the teachers' perception of the problem under investigation .The most important stressed criteria of this population's selection is the teaching of second year British civilisation.

## **Students' Sample**

Since the objective of the study is to get all students' perceptions of the problem, so the questionnaire will be administered to the whole population of second year.

A stratified sample will be needed later on to select students' exam copies. The choice of this particular kind of sampling is explained in terms of the possibility it offers

to minimize the chance that our sample group will include a disproportionate number of students representing a particular subgroup like in our case, where the attributed grades in the module of British civilisation is the criteria according to which we represent the whole population . Therefore, second year students' second term exam copies will be divided into three groups. Each group contains the similar grades, low- average -good. From each group the same number of copies will be randomly selected by keeping the same gender representation of the whole population.

## **9.Data Collecting Tools**

In order to bring more consistency to the study, we opted for a combination of two tools, so that each instrument is designed to test the validity of the other as following:

**Questionnaires :** In order to obtain the perception of the students and the teachers, a questionnaire is designed for both populations, with little difference in terms of vocabulary (students questionnaire uses a very simple vocabulary) . The questionnaire is used as the main source of data and seems the most appropriate tool for many considerations like: the large number of the population under study, its guarantee of the respondents' anonymity, and the short period of time if compared to the interview for instance. The questionnaire will be directly administered to the teachers and the students of the department of English at Batna University by the end of the academic year 2004-2005, which corresponds to the period (six months studying) of students' familiarity with the module.

**Second year students' exam copies:** In order to consolidate data obtained from students' / teachers' questionnaire , we will use second year second term students' exam copies in order:

- to measure their capacities to understand questions addressed to them, hence to test their perceptive abilities; and
- the way they use their language proficiency, so to check kinds of errors they make which represents their productive abilities.

The choice of the second term examination instead of the first one, is to reduce the effect of students' unfamiliarity with the module, which may affect in its turn their achievement.

## **Piloting**

Piloting the questionnaire was of a great relevance since it permitted us to bring important corrections namely in students' questionnaire. By piloting it on a randomly selected population of 35 second year students, all of them expressed a difficulty in understanding some utterances like proficiency, and achievement that have been all substituted in this order by competence and performance.

## **10. Data analyses**

All the obtained data will be presented in tables. Statistically analysed to be interpreted . Answers are going to be represented in terms of numbers and percentages .

# *Literature Review*

## CHAPTER ONE

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## **Introduction**

During the last decades, the English language has been firmly established as the uncontested international language all over the world. As a result, a great interest in teaching/learning it is increasingly raising.

Being not neutral, by teaching the language one is already transmitting its culture as well, since beliefs, values and thoughts are all inherent in the linguistic code itself. A fact that pushed educators to reconsider the status of culture in the language classroom so to be recognized later on in the foreign language pedagogy as an integral constituent of the language instruction.

In this chapter, we tend to probe the coming together of the English language to be taught and its relative culture, its role and importance in students' language development.



## I.1. Culture versus Civilisation terms use

Compared to the word ‘culture’, the French term ‘civilisation’ is recent since it appeared in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is inspired from the words ‘civilisé’ and ‘civiliser’ that had already existed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as mentioned by F. Braudel (1987:33). Moreover; both terms had been quickly adopted by the Europeans, in England by 1772, as well as in many other Anglo-Saxon countries however civilisation largely dominated the word culture to the extent that “ ... culture for a long time is considered as the synonym of civilisation” <sup>(1)</sup> (personal translation from Ibid.35). Through centuries, both terms have been used interchangeably in a way that frontiers limiting their use and meaning are becoming unclear and unset mainly when it concerns the field of language classroom as notified by A.G.Radenkovic (2004:47)

**Equivalence between both terms “civilisation”  
and “culture” appears commonly admitted in  
languages’ didactics [...] it even seems that both  
terms had been used in an indifferent manner  
in the language classroom... <sup>(2)</sup>**

(personal translation)

In the language didactic dictionary, Gaisson and Cost (1976, *ibid*: 106) confirmed the same fact, stating that culture is defined as a synonym of civilisation having an equal significance, components, dimensions, and traits, that may be explained in regard to the historical background of their indiffrenciated use.

This interchange ability in use of both terms is not restricted to the language classroom but expanded to different countries all over the world. So what is meant in English culture is named in French civilisation as stated by Kramsch (2004:8) culture“... is called (Fr.) civilisation, (G.) Landeskunde, or (Eng.) culture”.

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1) « longtemps culture ne sera que le doublet de civilisation »

2) « L'équivalence entre les termes ‘civilisation’ et ‘culture’ paraît communément admise dans la didactique des langues [...] il semblerait même que les deux termes aient été utilisés de manière indifférenciée dans la classe de langue... »

Being not a member of the French-speaking countries, however Algeria is highly influenced by the French language, so that culture is referred to civilisation.

Respectively, we wish to inform the reader that what lies behind the teaching of British civilisation in our study, is what is agreed on in many other Anglo-Saxon countries British culture teaching.

## **I.2. Definition of Culture**

To the question “what is culture?”, one will meet many difficulties to give a particular answer as Nemni (1992) and Street (1993) declared “This is not an easy question to answer, particularly in an increasingly international world”(cited in Clouston, 1997: 3) . The reason simply resides in two facts. Firstly, culture for a long time had been the central concern of a large category of researchers from linguists, ethnographers, scholars, anthropologists, to educators, and social scientists. Each one defines it according to his field and discipline, which resulted in an infinite and unlimited number of interpretations that reflect different theories for understanding and valuing human activities. This variety allowed Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1954:3) to find over three hundred definitions in their study mainly when it comes to its relation with language.

Secondly, and besides considering culture as a “broad concept” (Seelye 1984, cited in Hall 2001:1)“complex”(Clouston,1997:4), and “that needs to be handled carefully” (Kerr,2004:1). There is an other relevant element, that contributes largely in the almost impossibility of obtaining a unique definition of culture, which is its “dynamic nature”(Thanassoulas, 2001:8) and its permanent change in relation to who perceives it and when it is perceived as brilliantly advocated by Harklaw (1999,cited

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in Hall 2001:4)“Culture is an elusive construct that shifts constantly over time and according to who is perceiving and interpreting it.”

Though the myriad of definitions attributed to the word culture, and differences in the description of its nature, its variant traits and dimensions, so that it can be an ideology, a philosophy, a belief, a product, a practice or an action, etc. It can be learned, acquired, created, shared, passed, inherited or transmitted; all the researchers admit its humanistic aspect assuming that culture is ‘man made’ (Taibi, 2002: 20).

Similarly, the transmissible aspect of culture reveals that it may be passed through language, which reflects in fact the kind of relation between the two: language and culture. Kramsch (2004:1) advocates this relation and stresses the fact that “One of the major ways in which culture manifests itself is through language. It is because of that mediatory role of language that culture becomes the concern of the language teacher ...”. She also adds to that:

**... culture is often seen as mere information conveyed  
by the language, not as a feature of language itself,  
[...].If, however, language is seen as a social practice;  
culture becomes the very core of language teaching ...**

(Ibid. p8)

A position shared also by the linguists Peterson and Coltrane (2003:1)

“... language is not only part of how we define culture, it also reflects culture”.

On the light of this privileged relation, focus will be made on defining culture as perceived in the language classroom.

### I.3. Definition of Culture in the Language Classroom

The number of ways culture is defined does not prevent educators to have a precise view when it comes to its relation with language .Valette (1986) explains it as follows:

**There are two ‘major components’ of culture in the language classroom.’ One is the anthropological or sociological culture .... The other is the ‘history of civilization’ which traditionally represents the cultural element in foreign language teaching, it includes geography, history and achievements in the sciences, the social sciences and the arts.** (p. 179)

Accordingly, we will define language culture in respect to both anthropologists’ and teachers' point of views.

#### I.3.1. Culture in Anthropology

Culture has been defined in a number of ways, as noted by Useem, J, & Useem, R (1963:169 cited in Hall, 2001:6) especially by anthropologists. This abundance covered the concept only on its general aspect and from a global view what makes the difference with the teachers’ definition.

For instance, Lado (1957,cited in Cloustan,1997:3) and Trivedi (1978:93 cited in Taibi,2001:21), both define culture as “The ways of a people”. What Brooks (1960,cited in Thanassoulas,2001:5) on his part names ‘*The modus-vivendi*’. Carlyle and Coleridge however, (cited in Williams,1963:124-125,cited in Paulverness,2002:3) align themselves with Montgomery and Reid-Thomas (1994:5 cited in Thanassoulas,2001:9) and adjust slightly the meaning by adding two words to the former expression. Thus, the result is “It is the whole way of *life* for a *people* or a group”.Kallenbach & Hades (1963:11,ibid) changed only the structure of the same expression that resulted in the following “The total life way of people”.

Williams (1965:3,cited in Byram,1989,cited in Taïbi,2002:21)on the other hand by defining culture, distinguished between three of its aspects .He names the first ‘the ideal’ which reflects according to him 'certain universal values' common to all humans. The ‘documentary’ concerns the recordings of all human intellectual works. Whereas the 'social' type and last one consists of meanings and values that one may extricate from all man’s productions and achievements. Furthermore, and beside this evident agreement concerning the meaning of ‘culture’, a number of anthropologists agreed on three of its traits:

**Social scientists and especially anthropologists have been redefining the concept culture . Although one can find a variety of definitions , many anthropologists have agreed on three basic traits that are common to all . These traits are: culture is shared, cultural components are interrelated and culture is learned.** (Hall, 2001, p.13)

To understand these traits it is easier to go back to the definition of culture itself and to deal with each one solely for their importance.

For instance, since culture has been ranged in the category of all what is ‘man made’ as mentioned earlier, and encloses all features of humans' lives .So it goes without saying that it takes its roots inside of a community whose members accept and agree on its different and variant features as claimed by Birslin (1990, cited in Kramsch, 1993:11)

**Culture refers to widely shared ideals, value formation, and uses categories assumptions about life and goal-directed activities that become unconsciously or subconsciously accepted as “right” and “correct” by people who identify themselves as members of a society’**

This reflects a logical interaction and exchange that take place as a natural social practice which clearly explains the notion of “sharing” as asserted by many anthropologists like Hall(2001:38) and Seelye (1984) to whom culture “embraces all aspects of *shared* life in a community». Ruth-Benedict (p.46, cited in Peck, 1984:1), Montgomery and Reid-Thomas (1994:5,cited in Thanassoulas,2001:9) all qualify culture as what “binds people /or a group of people together”. To that and with more force, Brown(1994:3,cited in Hall,2001:2) refers to culture as the “glue” connecting people together.Goodenough (1964:36, cited in Byram, 1989,cited in Taibi,2002:22)specifies that sharing any cultural aspect is closely connected to a mutual exchange of respect among all members of a community so that to be themselves accepted in it.

If comparing both traits sharing and learning of culture, difference will be clearly notified in the direction that culture undertakes to pass within members of a community. When sharing is meant its spread among individuals of the same generation, by learning culture, anthropologists point its travelling through time. Hence its transmission from one generation to an other within the same social group, as stated by Duranti “Culture is something learned, transmitted, passed down from one generation to the next, through human action, often in the form of face – to face interaction, and of course through linguistic communication.” (1997:24,cited in Thanassoulas, 2001:8). Because of its transmission, many consider culture as a heritage like Bowers who designates it as “An inherited wealth...passed on to us from different sources.”(1992:31cited in Taibi, 2002:22).

In many other definitions the term ‘learned’ had been substituted by ‘acquiring’ like in Kalbenbach and Hodges (1963:11 cited in Thanassoulas,2001:10)one. They confirm that “It is the social legacy the individual acquires from his group”. Yule

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(1985:246) also used the term ‘acquired’ when defining culture as ‘a socially acquired knowledge’.

What is worthwhile to mention, however, is that culture’s transmission, though is carried out through a myriad of ways, but can not be conveyed via genes as stressed by Hofstede (1984:8)

**Culture ...consists in those patterns relative to behaviour and the products of human action which may be inherited that is, passed on from generation to generation independently of the biological genes.**

Evidence in both traits’ definitions, and their attributed chronological order, it is clear that people first share and then learn as in Bodley’s definition “shared, learned, symbolic, transmitted from generation to generation” (1994:36). Admittedly, that learning is limited in its meaning to the transmission of culture from one generation to another, this does not prevent two members belonging to the same generation to learn from one another and thus, sharing their cultural knowledge as maintained by Peck (1984:1), and supported by Useem, J S. Useem, R (1963:169, cited in Hall, 2001:14), who all specify that culture “is that facet of human life learned by people as a result of belonging to the same particular group, it is that part of learned behaviour shared with others”. Seen from this perspective, people learn first the culture to share it latter on with others, as being a common possession to the whole community.

When the two first (learning and sharing) deal with the way culture is spread out, the third trait however, treats the essence of culture itself, its different constituents and the relation binding them together. Anthropologists attempted, each and from different stand points, to assemble as much elements as possible, that suit their perceptions. By including distinct constituents, that may vary from rudimentary, humans’ needs and different aspects of their daily lives like ‘the table manners’,

according to Chritophersen (1973:32 cited in Taibi, 2002:21), “diet, costume, language” according to Jaramillo (1973:51.Ibid.p22) going to Kallenbach&Hodges(1963:20,cited in Thanassoulas,2001:8) more complex aspects covering ‘the biological processes’ such as vomiting, weeping, fainting, sneezing and other sensations of pleasure, hanger and lust, which effectively and harmoniously fits the definition of culture as " the whole" and which expands its connotation to cover larger horizons of humans’ life, and so elevates to reach the higher arts and superior needs, as mentioned by Saville-Troike (1975:83) “the whole material manefestations’ that are easily seen and that means the physical and concrete aspects and ‘the non material-one’ ” which embraces the abstract prospect such the religion, beliefs, morals, values, skills and all the like.

### **I.3.2. Culture as Perceived by Teachers**

On a more specific level, educators opted for defining culture in respect to two distinct aspects but with a great relevance in teaching .Though the diversified manners of naming both, they all converge in the same sense. Whether, it is pointed out the formal/ deep culture by Brooks (cited in Peck 1984:2), the high/ low culture by Singhal(1998:3), the achievement/behaviour culture of Tomalin & Stempleski (1993, cited in Pulverness, 2003:2) or the MLA/BBV for Hall (2001:1);all refer to what is agreed on the ‘capital C culture’ (the Olympic or “Big –c” ) and ‘small c culture’ (the Hearthstone or “little –c”) (Ibid) .Both are prominent in the foreign language classroom.

When the capital C culture, reflects the ‘humanities’ Kramsch(1994:8) and all the material productions like architecture, technology and even politics, including Brooks’s MLA, which are Music, Literature and Arts .The ‘small c culture’ however,



concerns the other facet of humans' lifestyles and every day occupations that Brooks again, qualifies as BBV Beliefs ,Behaviour and Values, that represent for him every thing in human life. Which signifies for Nostrand "the ground of meaning"(1989:51 cited in Kramsh,1994 :1).

For a further precision, Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990:3-4,cited in Clouston, 1997:4) suggest an other classification that comprises four 'senses', including the 'capital C and small c cultures', but with a slight difference in nomination. In that, the first is referred to as the 'aesthetic sense', and by which people "tend to develop the highest faculties, the imagination, the sense of beauty and intellectual comprehension" according to Rivers (1969:263,cited in Syed,1988:45,cited in Taibi,2002:23). Whereas Hall(2001:3) qualifies it as the 'best in human life', and moreover precises that it is restricted to the elitists .The 'sociological sense' which equals the "small c" culture refers to family organisation and nature such customs, interpersonal relation , institutions and all what a society is built on.

In respect to teaching, these two types are intended ,each a part, for a specific learning stage as outlined by Taibi (2002:23) .That is the 'small c culture' is 'much suitable for beginners and intermediate foreign /second language learners, while the 'capital C culture' would suit advanced learners "who wish to explore the society's contributions to the world knowledge and civilisation in greater depth and breadth" (Chastain, op.cit.388; Ibid).

'The semantic' and third sense on the other hand, encompasses the whole conceptualization system which conditions perceptions and thought processes(Adaskow.et. al .op.cit2).

The last sense is the 'pragmatic or socio-linguistic one' that involves all the linguistic and non-linguistic symbols, features, and skills; the background knowledge necessary for successful communication.

At any rate, and to conclude what had been said about culture, though the myriad of definitions attributed to the term, either by teachers or anthropologists, culture resides in the fabric of human's lives and regulate them at any turn. What is more important now is to identify what the relation binding language and culture is about.

#### **I.4. Language and culture**

No one would deny the existence of a strong connection between language and culture that had been and for a long stressed by many scholars mainly when it concerns language teaching/learning. This relation was too far emphasized, so that very powerful terms had been used to designate it and to depict each of its patterns. Researchers, each in his way and according to his domain tempted to come as nearly and closely as possible to the reality of describing it to the best.

Alptekin (1993:136,cited in Taibi,2002:20), claims that "language and culture are inextricably tied". Malinowski (1923) also maintains that "language is essentially rooted in the reality of the culture". Even the famous linguist Edward Sapir, who in the 1920's (cited in Hinkel,1999:2) stated that "language and the culture of its speakers cannot be analyzed in isolation", sooner contradicted his first statement by 1921 and firmly claimed, that "language, race and culture are not necessarily correlated" (1921:215,cited in Thanassoulas,2001:8). To finally admit, later on that "language and our thought-grooves are inextricably interrelated, are, in a sense, one

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and the same”(ibid,217-218) .Along after and exactly by 1970, he came to insist that “language does not exist apart from culture” (op.Cit,7) .

By the same concern of defining the connection between language and culture, Kramersch (1991:217 cited in Thanassoulas, 2001:7) affirms that “culture and language are inseparable and constitute a single universe or domain of experience”. More recently, many other ethnographers such as Buttjes (1990),Ochs and Schieffelin (1984), Poyatos(1985), and Peter & Boggs (1986) ( all cited in Buttjes, 1990:55, cited in Lessard-Clouston, 1997 :2) all assume that “language and culture are from the start inseparably connected”. Thanassoulas (2001:8) on her side claims that “Language is intertwined with culture[...].In the past, language and culture were lumped together as if they automatically implied each other ”.

This interrelatedness may be easily identified in the definitions of both culture and language. Since and by the way of defining each independently, many incorporated and mentioned the one as being an integral part of the other. For instance, when defining culture, Goode, Sockalingam, Brown and Jones (2000, cited in Peterson and Coltrane, 2003:1) all referred to language as an important component of culture. Similarly, a permanent allusion to culture is largely noticed in the many definitions of language. The secret is in the essence of language itself as well as its general role, so that, at each time language is assigned, it is immediately related to the ‘milieu’(environment) in which it evolves from simply because it “...is a social institution, both shaping and shaped by society at large” (Armor-Thomas & McNicol,1998,cited in Thanassoulas,2001:6). Fairclough also joins Eleanor and denotes that “Language is not an autonomous construct but social practice both creating and created by the structures and forces of the social institutions within which we live and function”(1989,Ibid). Which means that, language does not exist in

vacuum, but appears in a specific social setting characterized by particular regulations, a spread of a set of beliefs, ideas, costumes, thoughts in which language is looked at as either part or /a subpart of these elements which by the end constitute culture, as noted by Douglas-Brown (1994, cited in Hall, 2001)

**A language is part of a culture, and culture is a part of language ; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. ( p. 10)**

A fact also stressed by Byram (cited in Pulverness,2002:2) as “Language is regarded as a cultural phenomenon, embodying the values and meanings particular to a specific society, referring to the traditions and artefacts of that society and signalling its people's sense of themselves –their cultural identity”

Being not only an ingredient of culture, language is also the mirror, or as described by Duranti “an important window on the universe of thoughts”(1997:49, cited in Thanassoulas, 2001:8), since it reflects and transmits beliefs, thoughts and ideas. Hence, “language is not only part of how we define culture, it also reflects culture” (Peterson and Coltrane, 2003:1) and as claimed by Lixian and Cortazzi “Language reflects culture, language is part of culture and it also constitutes culture”. (cited in Byram and Fleming, 1998:100).

In return, all the mentioned elements belong and constitute culture ,a fact highly apparent in many definitions of the latter for example the one provided by Sapir (1921:218,cited in Ibid:9) “culture may be defined as what a society does and thinks. Language is a particular how of thought”.Similarly, Bruner (1996:3, Ibid.9) implies that even thoughts and ideas are confined in humans’ minds, they originate and take their significance in the culture in which they are created. Kramsch (1993) who asserts that “culture is the ways of thinking, speaking and viewing the world [...]”, moreover specifies concerning the mean by which all these patterns may pass from one person to an other

**One of the major ways in which culture manifests itself is through language. Material culture is constantly mediated, interpreted and recorded among other things - through language [...]. Culture in the final analysis is always linguistically mediated membership into a discourse community ,that is both real and imagined . Language plays a crucial role not only in the construction of culture, but in the emergence of cultural change.**

(Ibid .p.23)

and adds “Language use is indissociable from the creation and transmission of culture” (Ibid.9) . An opinion shared by Montgomery and Reid-Thomas (1994; cited in Tavares and Cavalcanti, 1996:1) “Culture and language are interrelated and language is used as the main medium through which culture is expressed”.

When defining language, Humboldt (1907, cited in Salzamana,1998:39,cited in Thanassoulas,2001:8) assumes that “language is the outward manifestation of the spirit of people” .Dukheim then went further this surface perception and clarified “language is not merely the external covering of a thought; it is also its internal framework. It does not confine itself to expressing this thought after it has once been formed; it also aids in making it”(1912,ibid:7), which provides language with a more effective value and relevance than that of being part of culture or just reflecting it.

This interdependence (Durkheim 1947), interpenetration (Duranti, 1997,cited in Thanassoulas, 2001:7-8) connection (Hinkel ,1999) or transfusion at constant work between both language and culture , seem to go unnoted and undetected by many people though it clearly impregnates even their everyday language as mentioned by Thanassoulas (Ibid.7) “By the very act of talking, we assume social and cultural roles, which are so deeply entrenched in our thought processes as to go unnoticed». This invisibility may be caused by the fact of being almost implicit as stressed by the same author who continued “culture ... is inextricably and implicitly related to language”. (Ibid,9). She is supported by Lyons (1981:325, cited in Hinkel, 1999:4) who notes that

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“There are certain aspects of the interdependence of language and culture that are not widely appreciated as they ought to be”. Variation in systems of meaning, ways of perceptions and manners of conceptualizing the world by speakers belonging to the same language community openly reveals that these systems are governed by what Howell & Vatter(1976:376 cited in Thanassoulas, 2001: 9) name as the 'Grammar of culture' which floats on the language surface and by which it is transmitted.

All what had been said concerning the coming together of language and culture, Agar (1994,cited in Barro et al,cited in Byram,1998:79-80)brilliantly and briefly summarized it as “**Languaculture**” just to show the kind of link binding them together and that both form almost a unique entity. Thanks to the force of the relation specifying both, that culture evolved and got its way in FL/SL teaching classroom and so has been included as a vital constituent in the language syllabus, thus “Learning a language is never independent from a learning of its culture” (4) (personal translation from Porcher et al., 1986 : 44). Be it implicit or explicit “It is impossible to teach a foreign language without its culture” (Alptekin, 1993:136cited in Taïbi,2002:20)a fact not really admitted, despite its importance, in the early decades but may be easily tested through the foreign language teaching historical background.

## **I.5. The Historical Background of Culture and Language Teaching**

A commonly wrong and widely spread assumption among many teachers, concerning the historical relation existing between language and culture and its recent incorporation in the language classroom. Whereas the reality is far from this and once exploring the historical background of language teaching, it will be clearly proved that both culture and language, despite their flow through different historical steps with

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4)"Un apprentissage de langue n'est jamais indépendant d'un apprentissage culturel »

many ups and downs, but still they went together right from the first day of language teaching /learning .

This interrelatedness is in fact apparent and easy to detect in the origins of the language teaching itself which goes back to the days when the only academically taught languages were the Roman, Greek and mainly the Latin. This latter (Latin language) represented along nine years the only “best entrance ticket to the universal culture of the European educated elite” (Kramersch,1994:3).A period where people, learned a foreign language in order and for the unique objective to accede to the great literary works as stated by Clouston (1997:1) “In the past people learned a foreign language to read and study its literature” and confirmed by Allen (1985, Ibid.)

**...prior to the 1960's, the lines between language and culture were carefully drawn. The primary reason for second language study in the earlier part of this century was access to the great literary masterpieces of civilization. (p.138)**

Flewelling (1993, 339) joined them and notes “it was through reading that students learned of the civilization associated with the target language". The aim behind this reading of literature was itself not by chance, but to fit certain needs of the time. Firstly, they were religious so to permit the reading and understanding of the “Holy Scriptures or Cicero's oratories” (Kramersch, 1994:3), and later on expanded to respond to a more aesthetic requests so that the sacred books have been replaced by more secular ones.

Literary texts had been then, translated and/or explained in the mother tongue which corresponded with the ‘Grammar-Translation’ era (GT)and some of the ‘Direct Method’ (DM) era that emerged by the 20's to the 30's . Though it is rarely referred to in the literary works, yet it is briefly mentioned by Jill Kerper Mora (1997:1) from San Diego University, who by the way of describing the Direct Method states that

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“Advanced students read literature for comprehension and pleasure....The culture associated with the target language is also taught inductively. Culture is considered as an important aspect of learning the language”.

Thus, it is evident that culture is taught with language through literature, which reflects it; it is part of it and so the main medium of it. Considering that literature was the main concern of language teaching of that time which implies the 'Capital c culture' to be dealt with. Kramsch maintains that “Culture was acquired together with and through the knowledge of the absolute ablatives and the conjugation... ” (Ibid:3). This relation is pointed at, always by her as the ‘Universal link’ since literature and for an important period of time unified people speaking different languages coming from different countries and so it succeeded to drop all geographical boundaries . Accordingly, language teaching becomes culture teaching even if it was not clearly admitted, and so “the link between language study and culture was an immediate and uncontested one” (Ibid: 4).

What was said about the ancient languages was generalized and applied to include later on all the modern languages simply because “For all modern languages the way to universality was through their literature ...., the sole rationale for teaching was access to the “great works”” (Ibid). As a natural reaction to literature reading, a new phenomenon emerged and caused the temporary split between language teaching and literature which obviously means culture teaching “Within this national perspective, not only did language teaching get separated from the teaching of literature, it get separated from the teaching of culture as well .”(Ibid.4) . This phenomenon is the raise of literary criticism and ‘Philology’ beside the spread of linguistics as an absolute field study. This, resulted in the break down of the already settled relation existing between both. Therefore each one stood independently as an autonomous entity and as a field in its own right. Language learning became the



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learning of the four skills naked from any cultural value, and new linguistic disciplines appeared forming the variant constituents of language teaching programs that Bausch (et al ., 1989) listed in ‘the German 1989 encyclopaedic Handbuch Fremdsprachenunterricht’ (cited in Kramersch,1994:4) and which are “applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, education, learning theory, literary studies.” and each in a separate category . The new tendency of learning languages permitted later on the growing interest of the reading of the national literature with a unique cultural value that Kramersch names the “National links” (Ibid). Culture however developed distinctly and apart so to be “enclosed in textbooks within culture capsules, cultural notes, glossy photographs and more recently an array of so-called authentic texts”. (Ibid).

Nonetheless, this ‘theoretical and pedagogical’ advances caused some prejudices to language teaching. In that, educators totally neglected to mention at least the mediating function of language in culture, as being the main important vehicle of it, furthermore and instead of treating it on equal footing with language skills possessing the same value “the separation has kept language teaching with strict structural or functional bounds, with culture often considered to be a fifth skill, after speaking, listening, reading and writing” (Kramersch,1994:4). This period corresponded with almost the ‘Reading approach method’ (RM).

The transitory passage, however, took place by the 60’s and a noteworthy come back toward the teaching of culture arose mainly because it emerged simultaneously with the ‘audio-lingual era’ in language teaching and coincided on the other hand with the development of social sciences and so" resulted in an increased focus on the disciplines of anthropology and sociology, and a more widespread understanding of culture” (Clouston, 1997:1).

The first who openly tackled the question of teaching culture was Nostrand (1996) when he presented something of challenge by suggesting two educational purposes of FL teaching which are “cross-cultural communication and understanding”. He was not the only one to observe and to stress the growth of the communicative aspect of teaching languages mainly considering the requirements of that particular period. Steel (1989,155) adds “communication began to take a centre stage, along with spoken rather than written language, and what is often termed ‘small c culture’”.

Brooks by 1968, set out the relevance of culture teaching in language teaching as separated from other aims, he mainly pointed at the reading of literature, its studying and understanding, and so instead offered sixty-four topics regarding culture learning in his book ‘Language and Language Learning’ (1960). These ‘hors d’oeuvres’ as he called them constitute vital cultural elements such as greetings, expletives, personal possessions, cosmetics, tobacco and smoking, verbal taboos, cafes, bars and restaurants, contrasts in town and country life, patterns of politeness, keeping warm and cool, medicine and doctors[...]” (cited in Thanassoulas, 2001:4). These components marked a revolution and the great shift from teaching geography and history to introduce more anthropological aspects of the target society. Following Brooks’ model, Nostrand (1974) evolved the ‘Emergent Model Scheme’ which comprised six main categories (Ibid) which are:

**The first, culture, regarded value systems and habits of thought ; society included organization and familial, religions, and other institutions .**  
**The third category of conflict was comprised of interpersonal as well as intrapersonal conflict. Ecology and technology included knowledge of plants and animals, health care, travel etc, while the fifth category, individuals, was about intra/ interpersonal variation. Finally, cross-cultural had to do with attitudes towards other cultures.** (p.4)

If the 60's represented a period of almost renaissance of culture instruction, the 70's represent its golden period since it emerged in the height of a mere communicative context which favoured the communication within the cultural context 'as claimed by sociolinguistics. Therefore, culture's role in FL/SL curriculum grew and many educators as Canale and Swain (1980:31,cited in Clouston,1997:3)assumed that "a more natural integration of language and culture takes place through a more communicative approach than through a more grammatically based approach». This communicative approach to language learning was primarily designed to meet the needs of the time from different perspectives economic, technical, technological, and academic and it stressed particular situations mainly for adult learners, tourists or people engaged in the foreign countries.

This relation between culture and language in this communicative world was qualified by Kramersch (1994:4) as the 'local link'. And the cultural component of language teaching came to be seen as the pragmatic and semantic functions expressed through language.

In the 1980's, research into manifestations of culture in SL /FL teaching and learning focused on the effects of body language, eye contact, and other overt behaviours and addressed such general topics as posture, movement and eye contact (Morain, 1986, cited in Clouston,1997:2).

By the 90's, there was a much more important emphasis on the learning of culture mainly from the European side and in short

**Culture in L2 / FL education today is clearly much more than great literature. As our understanding of language and communication has evolved, the importance of culture in L2 and FL education has increased .This reality is reflected in current methods of language learning and teaching (Ibid)**

## I.6. Teaching /Learning Culture in FL/SL Classroom

For many the notion of teaching/learning a language, be it foreign or second, is restricted to the supplies with a host of vocabulary, syntax and /or grammatical structures and rules governing it. The whole is intended for specific ends mainly to enable the learner both on the one hand to understand the language through reading and listening and/or to produce it by speaking and writing. Which means to only confine to the teaching /learning of the four 'language skills' (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and to adhere to them along the teaching /learning process as admitted by many authors . This limitation and this perception of language teaching /learning from this unique narrow perspective seems insufficient so that even linguists claim it like Widdowson (1978) who certifies:

**The aims of a language teaching course are very often defined with reference to the four' language skills' : understanding speech ,speaking, reading and writing .These aims , therefore, relate to the kind of activity which the learners are to perform [...] however it is unsatisfactory . We may readily acknowledge that the ability to produce sentences is a crucial one in the learning of a language.It is important to recognize, however , that it is not only ability that learners need to acquire. Someone knowing a language knows more than how to understand, speak, read and write sentences**

(p.1)

This statement raises one of the more important and complex questions concerning the teaching/learning of languages, as far as, English language is concerned in our work, and overtly reveals that, the strict knowledge of the four skills(reading,writing,speaking, and listening) is far to be sufficient and remains poor to meet all learners' needs .However ,one of its 'duties' is to cover other areas than the focus on the forming and composition of a sentence and to stagnate on its surface

structure simply because a “teaching of a foreign language is not tantamount to giving a homily on syntax structures or learning new vocabulary and expressions...” (Thanassoulas,2001:1). And as advocated by Peck (1984:2) “Language learning should be more than the manipulation of syntax and lexicon” mainly when it comes to a mere communicative era, where the ‘functional’ aspect of language reflecting the different social meanings and systems that control it and regulate the linguistic attitudes and behaviours, is stressed more than ever, and more than the form of the sentence which, ones isolated from its communicative token, or used as an independent unit, became useless and meaningless. Therefore, a foreign language learner is asked to look deeper, and adequately handle it for best communicative effect as advocated by Bryam (1998:3) “language learners need to go beyond the acquisition of a linguistic system...”.He is totally approved by Widdowson (1978:2) ,who states in his turn that “When we acquire a language we do not only learn how to compose and comprehend correct sentences as isolated linguistic units of random occurrence ,we also learn how to use sentences appropriately to achieve a communicative purpose.”. In this respect Hymes aligns himself to them to precise “... Being competent in communication involves more than just an understanding of the syntax and range of expression within a language” (1972, cited in Baker,2003 :1).

Consequently, language teaching/learning is no more devoted to the unique teaching/learning of the pure linguistic systems but largely expanded to include the cultural aspect of language and stressing the communicative goal as explained by Hymes (Ibid.) “Language teaching has also changed to incorporate this link between culture and language...”. The incorporation of the cultural element is not done by chance but was obligatory, unavoidable and a necessity at the level of the language classroom practice . “Without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete. For foreign language students ,language study seems

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senseless if they know nothing about the people who speak it or the country in which it is spoken”(Peck,1984:2) .Helen Wilkes claims that language learning is comprised of 3 integrated components which are “linguistic, cultural and attitudinal”(Ibid.4).

Furthermore and even in the opposite case ,if culture is not openly and consciously involved in the language teaching /learning process, nevertheless it remains present as an integral part, though passively, on the light of what had been denoted earlier in regard to the link binding it with language. Any attempt to separate the one from the other or to deny its existence will be unfruitful. Therefore, and since both are inexorably tied as such that cannot be separated and the one can never go without the other ,it implies that culture is part of language teaching /learning and so “Language teachers are so much teachers of culture, that culture has often become invisible to them”(Kramsch,1993:48,cited in Baker, 2003: 4) . Higgs also recognizes that the “unbreakable bond between language and culture that motivates our profession’s implicit commandment that ‘thou shall not teach language without also teaching culture”(1990:74, cited in Clouston, 1997:3). Simultaneously, and since teaching logically implies learning, so “In learning another language, students are exposed to, and inevitably learn something about, one or more other societies in their cultural practices.”(Byram and Fleming,1998:1).He also adds “learning a language as it is spoken by a particular group is learning the shared meanings, values and practices of that group as they are embodied in the language” (ibid:2). This means that language naturally contains culture, in a sense incarnates it and vice versa.

Approaching the role of both the foreign language learner and the source of culture, that is the language community, Byram explains teaching and learning as follows

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**The learning and teaching of foreign language has traditionally been predicated on the distinction between native speakers and non native speakers. Non native speakers are supposed to learn the rules of the native speakers' standard of grammar, vocabulary and idioms. In turn the native speaker is supposed to provide the norm against which the non native speakers' performance is measured .** (Ibid .16)

In this way, culture is disseminated in the language classroom involuntary so that even ignored, it cannot be dispelled whatever efforts to do so as highlighted by many scholars among them Valdes (1986, 1990) Byram and Fleming(1998), Kramsch (1993)( all cited in Baker, 2003:3) who assume that "...Whether culture is consciously or unconsciously part of the teachers' pedagogic aims, the transmission of culture is unavoidable. The content of what we teach will always be in a way or another linked to culture", and as Valdes (1990:20) points out "every lesson is about something and that something is cultural".

Cultural importance in the FL/SL teaching/learning process, attained higher degrees as such that even those who questioned the aim of incorporating it in the language classroom come to accept that a teaching of any language instils automatically culture like Guest (2002,cited in Baker,2003:4)who specified English language as his field study "...accept that in teaching English we will also be transmitting the values of English culture"

## I.7. Importance of Language Culture Teaching/Learning

A foreign or a second language may be to a certain extent taught /learned independently and rinse of any cultural element as assumed by Pulverness(2003:3) “...language can **somehow** stand alone and be taught/learned as a value-free symbolic system...” .However, the use of ‘somehow’ in this statement is not arbitrary, but intended for specific purposes . Which reveals, that there is no absolutism, no supreme assurance or an ideal guarantee in the perfect separation of language and culture mainly when it comes to teaching, and so falls in the sense of what Valdes (1920: 20, cited in Baker, 2003:3) explained above concerning the evidence that language teaching is indeed culture teaching since whatever the linguistic element to introduce embodies a hidden cultural value.

Nevertheless, the possibility of language teaching without culture will appear at a first impression contradictive with what had been underlined earlier , yet it is still logical and realizable on the terrain to the simple perspective that it had been effectively already tested and experimented thanks to the ‘behaviouristic approach’. This latter which adopted language as an absolute compendium of rules and strings of words and sentences to be imitated and repeated, and totally rejected the language social background as a base to rely on once put outside the classroom context and facing other things than language drills. Which proved its failure and unsuccessful path, proving later on that any attempt to neglect the cultural aspect of language would lead to a shaping of a sort of automaton, mastering pure grammatical rules but unable to go beyond or break through the linguistic structures. A sign that a come back towards society as the natural core of language, and so the incorporation of culture, is inevitable so that even Pulverness (Ibid) corrects his first declaration and moreover stresses “But the social nature of language militates against separating it from its original culture points of reference, ...it seems almost perverse to attempt to divorce language learning from its cultural implications”. Which clearly mirrors the



significance of teaching culture by the same way of teaching language as an indispensable pedagogical instrument, with the same value to accompany the other linguistic skills and classroom elements. As Kramsch (1993:1) designs it

**Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill , tacked on , so to speak , of the teaching of speaking , listening ,reading, and writing it is always in the background, right from day one , ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their inability to make sense of the world around them**

This importance, however stems from the exclusive relation existing between language and culture which emanates, in its turn, from the language nature itself, in as much as this latter encompasses the grammatical as far as the meaning systems as identified by Hymes “social meanings are encoded linguistically”(1972:4,cited in Hinkel,1999:18), so that even unintentional and compulsory, culture would be present in the language to be taught/learned unconsciously as claimed by Peterson and Coltrane (2003:1-2) “In many regard, culture is taught implicitly, embedded in the linguistic forms that students are learning”.

On an other hand, and admittedly that one would effectively succeed to break the link between culture and language, which is far to be feasible, so it would be impossible to master a language by stressing only one of its aspects, and to pass over the other one, seeing that “linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language” (Krasner,1999,Ibid :1). Instead both language’s aspects “the function and the form”, have to go hand in hand, constituting a unique entity because a “ Knowledge of the grammatical system of a language [grammatical competence] has to be complemented by an understanding of culture –specific meanings [communicative or rather cultural competence] ”(Byram,Morgan et al.,1994:4,cited in Thanassoulas,2001:1-2) , and “Students will master a

language only when they learn both its linguistic and cultural norms”(Peterson and Coltrane,2003:1-2). In this manner, to give FL/SL learners the opportunity to acquire cognitive rules governing the language, by the way of learning new social values and meanings that regulate them and give them the appropriate connotation as explained by Byram“...to provide them [learners]with the opportunity to acquire new competences and to allow them to reflect upon their own culture and cultural competence”(Byram,cited in Pulverness,2002:2) , and claimed by the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1996:27,cited in Peterson and Coltrane,2003:1)

**Through the study of other languages, students gain a knowledge and understanding of the cultures that use that language; in fact, students cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs”**

Hence, the final outcome in one hand , is to permit a real and accurate language use as described by Straub who further explains“... actually equipping students with the cognitive skills they need in a second culture environment ”(1999:2,cited in ibid:1) , and on the other one, assures a future best achievement , mainly for communicative ends.

By 1990, Buttjes emphasized the importance of culture learning in regard to first language acquisition and states that “the native learner, in addition to language, acquires also the paralinguistic patterns and the kinesics of his or her culture” (1990:55,cited in Clouston,2001:2). He went further by pointing that “first language teachers primary concern is not with grammatical input, but with the transmission of sociocultural knowledge”(Ibid) How about when it concerns a foreign or a second language, though differences existing in many respects between first and SL/FL, where a non native speaker is facing a new and unfamiliar social norms and attitudes

beside the newness of the linguistic code itself as notified by Byram (cited in Pulverness,2002:2) “To teach foreign language is to introduce[learners] to new meaning systems and their associated symbol...” . On his side, Buttjes (1990, pp.55-56, cited in Clouston, 2001 :2 ) continued and summarized the different reasons as how teaching of language is a teaching of culture and its importance in FL/SL teaching as following:

- Language codes cannot be taught in isolation because processes of sociocultural transmission are bound to be at work on many levels, e.g. the contents of language exercises, the cultural discourse of textbooks (Kramsch, 1998),and the teacher’s attitudes towards the target culture;
- In their role of “secondary care givers” language teachers need to go beyond monitoring linguistic production in the classroom and become aware of the complex and numerous processes of intercultural mediation that any foreign language learner undergoes...

In this wise, culture teaching importance is in the correlation existing between the linguistic codes and their significance in the social context, behaviours and even in the different intonation patterns, which are specific to the target language community and may completely differ from those of the native one. Thus, by isolating the linguistic messages the result would be their misunderstanding or no understanding at all as maintained by Pulverness (2002:1) “ To attempt to divorce language from its cultural context is to ignore social circumstances which give it resonance and meaning ” and supported by Politzer (1959:100-101,cited in Thanassoulas,2001:3) “If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates ,we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning...” and claimed by Malinowski “An utterance becomes intelligible when it is placed within its context of situation.”(1923, cited in Kerr, 2004:1).

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Furthermore, what Kramersch herself seems to insinuate is that, to learn how much leeway the target language allows learners to manipulate grammatical forms, sounds, and meanings, and to reflect upon (cited in Thanassoulas,2001:13) and adds “Without the cultural dimension, successful communication is often difficult: comprehension of even basic words and phrases (such as those referring to meals) may be partial or approximate, and speakers and writers may fail to convey their meaning adequately or may even cause offence (DES 1990:37, cited in Byram and Fleming, 1998:4).

### **I.7.1. The Importance of Culture in Communication**

Communicative competence is a target in itself in as far as teaching foreign languages in general and English language in particular are concerned. Considering that it should be one of the actual substantial pedagogical goals, so it deserves to be dealt with apart and consecrated a much more intention than to be a subpart of a section for its importance.

Being more than a transmission and exchange of 'pure information', to communicate requires to scrutinize behind words and sentences and not to be restricted to their direct or surface meaning so to obtain an effective discourse values – laden. Thus, culture is the best and only mediator which meets these conditions considering that, it assumes a vital role since it“...enhances or even inhibits communication” (Thanassoulas, 2001:3). By providing a background and significance to items principally because “People do not communicate by expressing isolated notion or fulfilling isolated functions any more than they do so by uttering isolated sentence patterns”(Widdowson, 1978:1). Moreover and even before the acquiring of the abilities of producing and so to communicate , it involves other specific

implications and further needs since it implies firstly understanding which calls in its turn for an immediate link with culture as specified by Kramsch (1993)

**After all, communication requires understanding, and understanding requires stepping into the shoes of the foreigner and sifting her cultural baggage, while always' putting [the target] culture in relation with one's own .** (p.205)

English among other languages obeys to the same charges, Pulverness (2002 :2) describes it “In teaching English for communication and neglecting culture , we may actually be giving learners access to an impoverished means of communication, effective for survival and routine transactions, but lacking much of the cultural resonance that makes it fully meaningful for native speakers”. Wu and Stephens(1991:29,Taibi,2002:28) hold that most of the students' errors “stems from their lack of cross-cultural awareness rather than weaknesses in knowledge of language”. Stagitch (1998:73,cited Ibid)assumes that “in the teaching of a foreign language, understanding the culture context is the most effective way to learn real meaning and to read, write , and speak competency ”

### **I.8. The aim of culture teaching/learning**

Culture holds its relevance from the role it performs in the language classroom when it affects the learning process by providing meanings and values required to facilitate learners' understanding and so improves their language learning.However, culture teaching aims to achieve far beyond this function mainly because as soon as, incorporated in the language curriculum, it may create, as it may solve problems, and may generate positive as well as, negative effects .The reason lying behind those effects is the meeting of the target and first culture that learners bring to the language classroom, and that predisposes them to either accept or reject the new culture. Possible effects are the preconceived judgements, stereotypes, attitudes and feelings

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toward the foreign community, their customs, traditions, beliefs, ways of life and so forth. Add to the fact of learners' tendency to rely on subjective rather than objective reasoning, which may lead to a misconception and misunderstanding of the target group. Being prejudicial on the target culture it may alter students own culture and values since what may be taught about any other culture; may be reflected on the native one .

To remedy to this phenomenon, culture teaching points to raise learners' awareness as a pedagogic objective in its own right by means of stimulating their intellectual curiosity and inciting their critical thinking, so that they question facts that had been for along taken for granted, starting first by referring to elements in their own culture and analyzing their role as citizens in society “ In order to question and reinterpret, L2 culture, L1 observers must first become aware of what it means to participate in their own culture and what the contents of culture are.”(DES,1999:3,cited in Byram 1998:4). And as stated by Reynolds and Skilbek “ To develop pupils' understanding of themselves and their own way of life ”(1976:2,cited in Thanassoulas,2001:10) .

To come to the understanding of the native culture, which is intended to expand to the target one. Both comparing and contrasting facts by the same time of observing differences as well as similarities, if any, are key instruments in order to come to accept the diversity as advocated by Taveres and Cavalcanti(1996:20,Ibid:13) “The diversity should then be understood and respected, and never ...over or underestimated .” Any change in learners' attitudes toward the target culture, imply to accept the culture itself. Furthermore, to be conscious that there is no superior or inferior culture but each group is unique and specific, and each society stands with its positive as far as negative aspects and traits and no one is best qualified to judge them

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either from within or outside but only to respect and accept them. It seems even that comparisons as well as contrast are the best and most efficient tools to reach this state of empathy and consideration and so an immediate outcome “Cultural learning will only be truly meaningful if it is comparative and contrastive ...” (Pulverness ,2003:3)“ Cultural understanding and cross cultural comparisons are necessary components of language pedagogy ”

Cultural awareness may be achieved through a careful selection on the part of teachers of the texts to be implemented in the language classroom ,exercises and activities, and which must be neutral and containing no racist or things that may harsh or harm learners’ sensitivity or beliefs “The challenge to those teachers who are interested in transcending the often narrow limits of language teaching is to make cross cultural awareness a central issue in teaching at the same time as developing students' linguistic competence” (Pulverness,2002: 5).

### **I.9. To What Extent Culture Should be Taught/Learned?**

Be it overtly admitted or no in the language classroom, culture remains an unavoidable and prominent parcel of the foreign language learning process so that “At any rate, Foreign language learning is foreign culture learning, and in one form or another , culture has even implicitly, been taught in the foreign language classroom –if for different reasons”(Thanassoulas,2001:2). What is still debatable, however, is the amount of culture to be introduced into the language classroom mainly in relation to the other components of the curriculum for instance grammar, syntax and vocabulary.

Consequently, and for exploiting culture to the best benefit of learners in one hand, and to make it the most profitable in order to facilitate their language mastery and “enhance the learning experience” (Valdes, 1920:20, cited in Baker, 2003:); culture teaching should neither exceed, to the detriment of the other elements of the

language learning, as assumed by Peck (1984:7) “It should begin on the first day of class and should continue every day after that”. This, does not imply that linguistic constructs will be ignored., nor to be restricted to a set of facts or reduced to few lessons as advocated by Peterson and Coltrane (2003: 3) “...the culture associated with a language cannot be learned in a few lessons...”.But instead a balance should be kept and an equilibrium must be maintained between all constituents as claimed by Baker (2003:4) “...Culture would surely be best approached in the same kind a systematic way as other aspects of language ,such as grammar and vocabulary”, and supported by Littelwood who advocates the value of culture learning but still keeps language proficiency “as the overall aim of communicative competence.”(cited in Byram, Morgan et al., 1994:6, cited in Thanassoulas, 2001:4).



## Conclusion

Before tackling the role of language when studying the culture, we opted for starting from the reverse situation ,and so to first clarify the role of culture teaching in foreign language learners' linguistic improvement ,and hence its importance. Along our reading , two points we consider of relevance have to be discussed.

First of all, culture teaching in the foreign language classroom, is a very attractive domain, which is incessantly captivating researchers' intention and interest, though the difference of their fields .This variety offered us the possibility to find out a diversified and a rich literature to refer to on one side, and on the other, caused the dilemma of selection, as what point to mention and which to omit though their importance.

The second point, is related to the aim lying behind culture teaching itself, which exceeds the generally apparent foreign language learners' progress, to cover a more humanistic area, as to raise learners' awareness by bringing different cultures as closer as possible, to erase the geographical boundaries and judgements so to lead to empathy, the acceptance of differences and similarities of people. This aim is claimed, mainly by the Western world but not perceived from the same perspective in the East. A fact, that we tend to investigate in the second chapter specifying culture teaching in Algeria.

CHAPTER TWO  
*English Language Culture Teaching  
Implication*

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## **Introduction**

Linking foreign language learning with its relative culture is neither easy nor comfortable for the many complexities it may cause or meet in the language classroom. In this respect ,this chapter tends to highlight the most relevant problems culture teaching arose mainly in regard to learners' linguistic abilities, required to treat the cultural message .Further consideration will be given to the most important aspect of the language proficiency needed and meaning systems connected to such cultural learning .

As far as the study's concern is second year Batna University students' English language proficiency, it is obvious if not necessary to primarily privilege their English language learning background and invest the status of the latter (English Language) in Algeria and its presence in their ' direct environment.

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## II.1. English Language Teaching in Algeria and its Effect on Learners'

### Language Proficiency

In the shade of Globalization, the English language has an indisputable status as the first language all over the world as noticed by Baker (2003:2) "English has become firmly established as the international language of the present time" . Being not only the language of music, literature, politics, technology and /or sciences, the English language imposes itself in every single field of human beings' daily life. As a result, it becomes a hard task nowadays, for someone who does not know English to read an instruction about a drug or an other of how to make use of a household electrical appliances .If illiteracy's definition was restricted in the few past decades to those who do not know how to write and read, it refers today and with no exaggeration to the person who does not master English at least to know about its basic rules, adding to the computing sciences which is not our concern.

Subsequently, a great interest and a large awareness' wave of its importance are increasingly raising day after day in different parts of the world mainly in the developing countries, the case of Algeria. Where and even though the existing linguistic confusion specifying the Algerian society, regarding the many unsettled questions like what is the real native language of the country either Arabic or 'Tamazight'? And or what is the real status of the French language in the Algerians' daily speeches?. Yet, the English language found its way to the Algerian people in the early 60's and 70's mainly in respect to the economic tendency of the country as stated in the British Council Profile on ELT in Algeria 1975 (cited in Khelloufi,1983:56,cited in Taibi,2001:7) "Algeria's interests in the field of petroleum, natural gas ,iron , steel , .... Orientates her increasingly to the English speaking west...".

Nevertheless and despite its importance, the English language remained and still in a perpetual competition with the French language at least in respect to three points:

- Unlike the French, which is considered as a first foreign language, English has the status of a second foreign language.
- English is latterly introduced to the Algerian learners during their schooling in the 8<sup>th</sup> A. F(Année Fondamentale /Fundamental schooling) in the middle school comparing to French which is inserted in the 4<sup>th</sup> A.F in the primary school (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year after the reform) <sup>1</sup>.
- Though its rank as a foreign language, the French language is part of the Algerian learners' daily life since they use it in their ordinary speech and it is present in their direct environment in media like newspapers or on TV, and even in the official speeches of the Algerian official. Whereas, English is restricted to the classroom use only as a school subject.

Considering that these differences between the two languages are quite legitimate in regard to the historical background of the French language comparing to the English one in the country. However, this confinement and restriction in use, only in the classroom, is systematically, reflected on the kind of the Algerian learners' language proficiency that may vary between average and poor. Taking into account that statistically, classroom exposure to English is about 524 hours counting 3 hours a week for a period of 5 years (2 years in the middle school and 3 years in the secondary school), remains insufficient to master a foreign language and meet learners' communicative needs as explained by Mountford and Mackay (1978):

**When English as a foreign language is taught to children at the primary school and early secondary levels of education, it is generally taught with a general aim in mind – that is, it is regarded as a 'good thing' for them to learn a foreign language as a part of a broad education . There is usually, however ,no immediate and specific requirement for such children to make use of the language in any communicative situation**

p.2

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<sup>1</sup> This implies the situation before the incessant, frequent and unsettled reforms made by the Algerian ministry of education, mainly because the population included in our study is not concerned by such reforms

They carry on stressing the fact that "Inevitably what is taught to primary and secondary level children is not a communicative knowledge of the English language use, but a knowledge of how the syntax and lexical rules of English operate" (Ibid.p.3). Hence, students arriving at University lack many aspects of the language that negatively effects their performances like the communicative competence which is required in the utilitarian purposes ,to travel abroad , to find a job or simply to study which is the concern of the actual research as stated by Brumfit (1979) :

**The problem is that students and especially students in developing countries , who have received several years of formal English teaching frequently remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language ,to understand its use ,in normal communication , whether in the spoken or the written mode** p.116

Algerian students' English language gaps covers also the vocabulary area, if we consider that the English language vocabulary include '988968' words until 21<sup>st</sup> of Mars of the year 2006, according to the Centre of Foreign Languages Control in San Diego, (Elchourouk,2006:17).Furthermore, a recent research performed by the same institution denotes that any individual possessing 3.000 English words may be in the possibility to fluently handle the language which comes to support what had been previously advocated by Laufer (1992,cited in Richards and Renandya,2002:259) "Knowing a minimum of about 3.000 words was required for effective reading at the University level. Whereas knowing 5.000 words indicated likely academic success". In regard to all these researches, many questions arise: Do Algerian students' possess the 3000 words required at University? and does the offered period of learning English permit such number of words learning?

That is why, an immediate reconsideration and urgent changes must occur on both English language status, and the way it is regarded by the Algerian people as being restricted to an international language. Which considerably effect their proficiency

"English is often used as an international language rather than as a means of communication with English speakers not from English speaking countries " (Baker, 2003:9 ). So, to adapt with the current events, all over the world, as far as, to respond to the economic and political conditions of the Algerian country itself.

## **II.2. English Language Culture Teaching in Algeria**

English language teaching had been stressed more than ever in the Algerian schools mainly in the last decades for its relevance on the one hand, and its uncontested status as the first language all over the world on the other one as mentioned in the British Council 1989-1990 Annual Report (cited in Ratuawati,1996:6)

**English has a dominant position in science , technology, medicine, and computers; in research, books, periodicals, and software, in transitional business,trade,shipping,and aviation; in diplomacy and international organisations...**

In spite of its importance, as a foreign language it remained considered as “The pursuit of colonialism ...contributing to the decay of minority languages and culture in many parts of the world» as asserted by Pulverness (2003:1). Thus, the English language teaching had been purposely restricted to the transmission of the linguistic code devoid of any cultural aspect. In the middle and secondary schools, where teachers rely exclusively on textbooks to present lectures, some exceptions may be cited as elements, slightly referring to the British and American cultures like the notion of certain sports, some famous people, some artefacts ...,etc.

For an English Bachelor of Arts(licence), at university, adult learners are conscious and more aware of the strong link binding both the foreign language to be learned ,and the target community, either British or American , as the natural social context of the language in a way they highly show a curiosity and interest to the

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studying of the target culture as maintained by Byram and Fleming (1998:46) “Studies of the motivation of University language learners ... invariably show the importance of an interest in the foreign people and their culture”. Hence, courses of British and American civilisations are included in the curriculum to bring university students as closest as possible to the foreign society. Though limited to the geographical or historical aspect, it is recently problematised as being not sufficient to meet their communicative needs in relation to the respective communicative era dominating the language teaching pedagogy of these past decades.

### **II.3. What is British Civilisation Module?**

In respect to the notion of consciousness in foreign and second language teaching, the items learning and acquiring are usually referred to : the former as the conscious incorporation of information, whereas the latter as the unconscious aspect of internalizing knowledge. However and in both definitions an other aspect and which intermediates the two precedent procedures (conscious and unconscious ) and which is the subconscious process, seem missing and totally neglected though its relevance and role in learners' linguistic progress as stated by Littelwood (1998:90-91) "People make conscious efforts to learn. Progress also occurs as a result of spontaneous, subconscious mechanisms..." .

Therefore, many attempts are made "to come to a new understanding of its importance"(Ibid.91).By introducing new elements in the language classroom, either foreign or second language, that would permit the spread and development of the subconscious learning by other means than teaching grammar and syntax ,that have been and for along the central concern of language teaching. Hence, culture and literature are increasingly stressed in foreign and second language curriculum since



they appropriately respond to such kind of learning; mainly for advanced learners in order " to develop language ability by teaching other material ( e.g.: history ,geography or science) through that language "( Ibid 92-93).

Similarly and corresponding to the actual study; British civilisation module is introduced to students in the department of English at Batna University, so to allow learners, enrolled for an English Bachelor of Arts, to have a general overview about the British society and more precisely, it targets the historical aspect. By the same way of acquiring the language proficiency, without concentrating much efforts or having their attention on the language itself except when they are concerned by the communication of meaning itself necessary to understand the historical message.

Thus, the course of British civilisation and the like hold their importance for the dual role they perform in the language classroom "An experience of gaining increased cultural as well as linguistic awareness" (Pulverness,2003:2), since they introduce learners to the target community by the same way of enhancing their linguistic abilities by giving rise to their "internal processes mechanisms" (Ibid).

#### **II.4. Problems of Teaching Culture**

In spite of the clear lines binding language and culture, the unquestionable importance of the latter and its role in the foreign language learning, yet to concretely insert it, remains a complex and a hard task to perform .As far as being itself an entity of different interconnected elements, language is one of its important constituent by the way of being the vehicle transmitting it; but it simultaneously encounter many hindrance by the same way of engendering others.

Hence, culture teaching problems may be represented into two categories:  
 Problems encountered when teaching culture and problems caused by culture teaching

### **II.4.1. Problems Encountered When Teaching Culture**

In respect to the required period to settle them, we may consider problems encountered when teaching culture in the foreign language classroom as long term problems and short term problems.

#### **II.4.1. 1. The Culture to Learn Culture**

When learners integrate the foreign language classroom, they are far away to doubt that by learning the language they are similarly learning its culture. Whatever the aspect through which it is presented to them ,culture remains an indisputable component of the language classroom as claimed by almost all educators, Zaid (1999:112) among them "...culture and language are an integral part of the language acquisition process. One cannot learn a language without its culture".Supported in his position by Allwright who argues that "the socialisation of their learners into the target language community is the prime and ultimate goal of language teachers"(1996)

For beginners and/or learners in the intermediate stages, culture is discreetly included in textbooks and not clearly distinguished by them among the other materials. So, whatever the simplest topic to tackle; the sentence structure for instance; takes its roots from the culture of the target community as affirmed by Widdowson (1978:17) "A language course has to make use of topic areas of one kind or an other " .

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For advanced learners, the challenge is of another nature, since culture is implemented in the language classroom as an independent subject in its own right

**It is common place to think of foreign language teaching as bringing a target culture to learners. This is culture as content .The aim is that students should acquire knowledge of a target culture.**

(Byram, 1998:245)

So, learners are completely confronted to a situation to which they are not familiar .A long their learning process, they have been used to study history, geography or whatever the subject to be learned only through L1. However and by introducing culture in a so direct way, learners are asked to cope with this new element relying on their foreign language proficiency to understand those information by the way of learning the language. So, the cultural course represents a new environment to which students are at the beginning reluctant since they are not accustomed to it. Viewed from this perspective, it may be assumed as an additional negative factor added to the list of other problems of target culture teaching .

The newness as a factor, hence effects learners' predispositions to learn the target language, nevertheless being itself a matter of time and learners habit, simultaneously it carry on the solution since it is universally accepted “Everything new is strange until it becomes familiar and taken for granted” (Jordan and Roberts ,cited in Byram and Fleming, 1998:76).That’s why, we ranged this element as a short term problem, so all what teachers have to do, is to be patient and help their learners to adapt with the new cultural course. Seen from an other perspective, there is an other culture required to study or learn the culture, which is the proximity and/or distance of the two cultures: the learners’ one and the target. As mentioned by Warner, who reports how students at an African university had trouble understanding British texts “because of their entire lack of familiarity with English background, exemplified by Father Christmas, cricket jargon, and potting sheds”(cited in Ratuawati, 1996:11)

## II.4.1. 2. The Culture to Teach Culture

There is an unbreakable tight link between culture and language so that each of both transmits the other .Even though it may not be overtly embodied in the foreign language classroom, since culture is conveyed through the linguistic code itself. More importantly and once again, culture teaching "doubles the usefulness of the lesson in adding another dimension and making it more interesting therefore easier to learn" (Valdes,1986:121,cited in Taibi,2001:29). Consequently, many scholars, Risarger among them, claims its utility in the language classroom and confirm that " Language teaching should offer insights into the culture and the civilization of the countries where the language is spoken"(cited in Byram and Flemming, 1998:242).

However, implementing it is in no way an arbitrary task to perform but should obey to certain norms and conditions as well as to a specific pedagogy on the part of the language teacher and which is of an absolute necessity if we consider all problems caused by culture teaching. This latter ,the teacher' and who beside providing with the needed language knowledge, is furthermore and primarily asked to possess a sufficient and adequate cultural competence required to lead his or her learners to a lucrative construction of both the linguistic as far as the cultural knowledge as maintained by Widdowson ( 1978)

**After all , the language teacher always has to know about something other than language he is teaching. Traditionally , this knowledge has been of the culture and literature associated with the particular language in question. Thus , the English teacher is expected to know a good deal about British and /or American institution, social customs, traditions and so on.**

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The amount of knowledge the teacher possesses, should be carefully handled in regard to learners' predispositions and preparation to absorb such kind of information to which they may not be accustomed mainly if it concerns foreign learners. Hence, by adopting such attitudes, the teacher may enhance learners assimilation, their curiosity toward the target community and most importantly he may reduce the negative psychological and or sociological effects that may arise by introducing the foreign culture into the foreign language classroom like the misunderstanding ,stereotyping or the cultural shock generally generated from the meeting of C1 with TC, either C2 or FC. In this respect, Byram and Fleming (Ibid.3) stress the language teacher's role as an instructor and as a guide to help learners in their building of cultural awareness "Language learners need to go beyond the acquisition of a linguistic system and the language teacher need to find new ways to help them do so".

#### **II.4.1. 3. The Linguistic Obstacle**

Many are those to claim the cultural learning's value and importance in the foreign language classroom mainly educators. They stress the fact that whatever the aspect under which it is introduced ,either direct or indirect ,explicit or implicit; it can not but only positively affect and enhance learners' language knowledge "Nowadays, some researchers claim that cultural learning positively affects students' linguistic success in foreign language learning .Others state that culture can be used as an instrument in the process of communication when culturally determined" (Baker,2003:2) .Thus, the attempt is to include the cultural element in the early stages and right in the very first day of language learning as assumed by Peck when responding to the question : "When should the study of culture begin?... The study of

culture should begin on the very first day and should continue everyday there after."(1984:2).

In this way a hand in hand relation between both the target language and the target culture may be maintained along the learning process. Thus “the foreign language becomes a tool for learning about the target culture and the target culture becomes a source for learning the foreign language” (Ibid.3).

Ideally and at the level of theory it is quite feasible, however once concretely in reality is far to be the case in respect to different elements most important of all is the linguistic factor.

In as far as introducing the culture in the foreign language classroom, learners are obviously asked to process the cultural information using the target language. An activity totally new for them and to which they are completely not familiar with, since they are not used to study science, geography or history only but through L1. Far more complex, and if we consider Peck's position concerning the suitable timing of incorporating the target culture ,in one hand and the requirements of the course itself in the other one; so learners are asked to make use of something they do not possess yet. As such the language proficiency is rather an impediment than a positive element that immediately affects learners' success as questioned by Tavares and Cavalcanti (1996:23) "Is this success possible when students do not possess the adequate linguistic competence to study this culture ?"

Furthermore, even if considering that learners have a pre-acquired linguistic ability of the target language, be it second or foreign ,the cultural aspect to be taught is in no way devoid of some vocabulary relative to it as explained again by Cavalcanti and Tavares “By introducing culture, we insert some new linguistic items which may

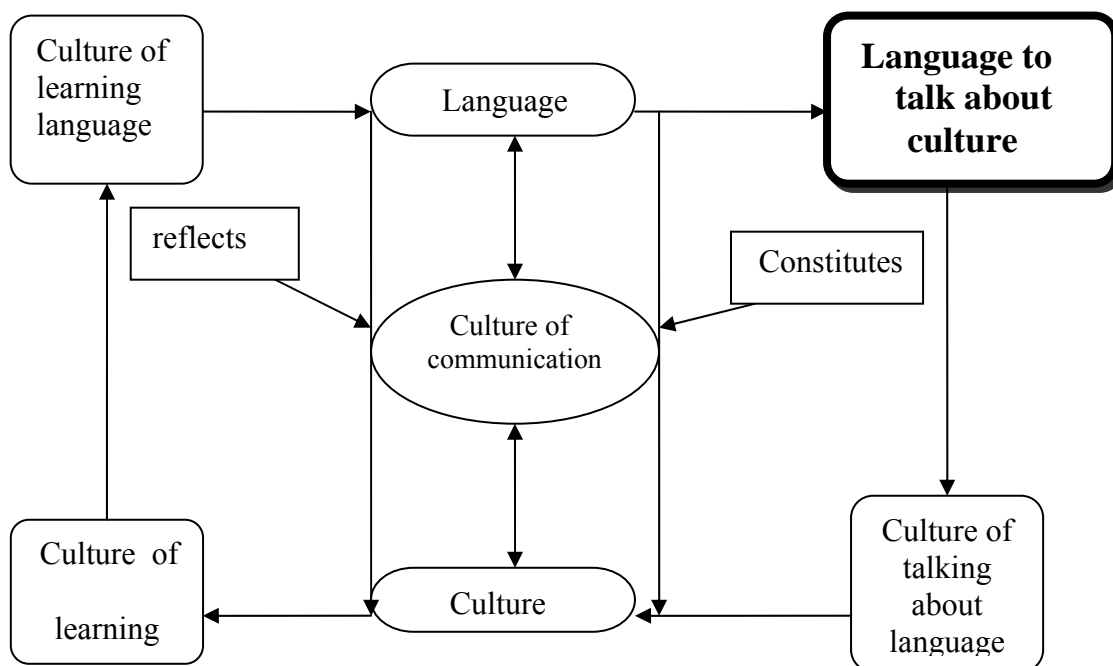
be used with the cultural aspect emphasized” (Ibid) . Which is the case for instance of the teaching of British civilisation in the current study, where students are presented to the British history by the same way introduced to “vocabulary related to historical events and respective to the language itself ” (Ibid).

Consequently other questions may arise, as what amount of foreign language learners may possess so to meet the needs of the cultural material which, in its turn stems from an other question, how much time do they require to learn the necessary language competence?. This corresponds to Brumfit (1976:118) advice to language teachers who has to ask themselves when incorporating the cultural course “How much value meaning students’ may use and how much signification meaning students’ may possess to understand the content”.

In this sense and though it totally apposes what have been mentioned earlier concerning Peck's theory ,which is also shared with many other educators, a period of pre-construction of the language proficiency should precede culture teaching and is essential in order to adequately corresponds to its acquisition in terms of quantity as far as quality. Otherwise "How we may obtain success when our learners do not even have sufficient time to learn about the formal properties of the language "(Ibid).

Thus, and it goes without saying ,that the target culture teaching in the language classroom is not an easy task to perform since it calls for a combination of variant highly connected elements as perfectly sum up in Jin's and Cortazzi 's figure (1996,cited in Byram and Flemming ,1998:9) where they assume that:

**In learning about target cultures, students  
need a set of terms : a language to talk  
about culture ... It may include folk  
linguistic terms used with varying degrees  
of understanding. pp.99-100**



**Figure n° 1** :Complex links between language and culture: a framework of communication and learning (copied from Byram and Flemming, 1998.99)

Being the vehicle to transmit the cultural information, it is impossible to do without it thus "culture should be our message to students and language our medium" and what educators should always have in mind when teaching culture is "to provide them with some kind of met a language in order to talk about culture" (Straub, 1999:5, cited in Thanassoulas, 2001:13)

#### **II.4.2. Problems Caused by Teaching Culture**

By introducing any element in the language classroom, consideration should be put on learners' requirements as well as their level. Culture teaching and more than any other element has to be handled carefully in respect to the variant effects it may creates in the language learner and many questions should be given most attention as what to teach and what effects it may have on learners ?



### II.4.2.1. The content

Learners' interest and motivation are key instruments in their achievement and success. Many elements are relevant to effect this motivation either by enhancing it or in most of the time by hindering it. Content as one of the valuable ingredients should be submitted to a meticulous selection on the part of the teacher who beyond being aware of the psychological impact of culture teaching on foreign learners, has furthermore to consider when designing his cultural course, learners' requirements, needs as well as their level as claimed by Pulverness (2002)

**The organization of an individual syllabus and the methodology employed will depend on familiar variables, such as the language level and interests of particular groups of learners, but will also be influenced by more specific cross cultural similarities and differences. It is in the domain of content that we should look.**

p.5

Accordingly, Brian and Cain, who totally approve Pulverness sayings concerning the choice of themes, and sustain that students' interest and their degree of cognitive affective development are important parameters to be taken into account; their final researches on culture teaching, revealed the existence of two distinct areas of knowledge likely to be covered by the course of the foreign language culture: "The privileged areas", which represent according to them domains connected to learners affective life and emotion and most important of both: "Blank areas", where learners have some gaps about the target community and that should be fulfilled like "knowledge about history, social and political organization, and literature." (1994, cited in Byram and Fleming, 1998:36).

Though the usefulness of such subjects and role in learners 'linguistic progress', however attention should be made on the method to apply, the material through which to present the cultural element and more important the choice of the information itself which should be varied and diversified so to not annoy learners and or demotivate them. Peck (1984) for instance insisted on the value of geography or history teaching which according to her permit learners "...to understand contemporary behaviour patterns". On the other hand, she went further warning teachers on the way they introduce them to the language classroom as follows:

**If we provide our students only with a list of facts of history or geography and a list of lexical items, we have not provided them with an intimate view of what life is really like in the target life.** p.3

Cunningsworth (1984, cited in Pulverness, 2002:1) on his side, criticizes teachers' use of materials which according to him "concentrate on the structuring of the social world in which the learner is never likely to find himself". This phenomenon is widely noticeable in the foreign settings where there is no direct contact with the target society excepts via text books

**A limitation of the culture specific course book is that it will only be of relevance to students who understand the cultural background in which it is set...Indeed ... a strong portrayal of British life might well prove to be impediment rather than a help to the learner** (Ibid)

Hence culture is a basic component of language classroom but both quality: what culture to teach? and quantity: how and to what extent to teach this culture? should be carefully tackled since they have a great role to influence learners' predispositions. Therefore, equilibrium should be maintained between the methods, the material and the content to introduce.

### II.4.2.2. Psychological Problems

Culture language teaching is not neutral since it generates a host of psychological effects on foreign language learners, and that may range from positive to extremely negative as assumed by Byram and Fleming (1998:7) “A shift in perspective involving psychological processes of socialisation”.

Language teachers on their side, have not the possibility to control those effects but only to reduce their impact on learners who ones in the language classroom, bring their own culture reflecting believes, convictions and perceptions of the social group to which they belong and which inevitably work out the target culture introduced to them as stated by Cain and Byram (1989 op.cit)

**Every person born into a society has built up systems of perspective and interpretation which are grounded in their native context, and which being unconscious and non verbalised escape their control and interfere with their perception of other systems .In the course of foreign language and culture learning ,learners construct their knowledge of other cultures and countries and during the process ,partial learning will necessary take place ,involving the construction of intermediary systems**

p 35-36

Consequently, an immediate process takes place resulting from the encounter of two distinct cultures and which develops in the learner’s mind the impression of travelling from one culture to an other and hence causes a real dilemma to him consisting of “understanding one culture and belonging to an other” (Ibid.79).As noticed earlier here are some outcomes of culture teaching

## II.4.2. 2.a. Acculturation

Depending on the degree of learners' involvement in the learning of language culture, acculturation may generate completely opposite effects.

Being a process of adapting to the new culture, according to the International Teachers Training Organization's definition (2005:1), acculturation may be looked at as a positive factor, which interferes on learners' linguistic progress, since it brings them nearer to the target community. And hence, permits a better understanding and perception of thoughts, values and beliefs of that group considering that the learner stands as an objective observer. A fact stressed by the organization mentioned earlier "successful learning is more likely when learners succeed in acculturating" (Ibid).

However, and insofar learners' exposure to the target culture, exceeds the aspect of observers to the one of active participants, who adopt it and are influenced by it to the extent of identifying themselves through it. So, acculturation becomes rather a threat than a beneficial process as assumed by Byram "This could be seen as a threat to learners' cultural identity, learning the foreign language to the extent of being able to identify, even to identify with others' intentions and cultural meanings could imply losing one's own identity" (op.cit.117). Doyè (1992,Ibid,6) on his side goes further describing this phenomenon which he treats as a "Tertiary socialisation" and explains risks of acculturation "This meeting with otherness which challenges and 'denaturalises' the learners own culture". Hence, acculturation is a real danger for learners who may relinquish their own culture and values and totally reject their origins and begin to perceive the world with the eyes of the target community thus "It is not possible, nor desirable for learners to identify with the other nor to deny their own identity and culture unless teachers guide them and help them becoming 'Intercultural speakers' as suggested by Byram and Zarate (Ibid16).Schuman who

contends that the degree of acculturation determines the learners' language competence, without acculturation, Schuman argues, their competence will be incomplete.(cited in Ratuawati,1996:1)

#### **II.4.2. 2.b. Misunderstanding**

By the way, the foreign learner undergoes the different effects of the exposure to a foreign culture, in a like manner he or /she may cause prejudices to the target community with the preconceived ideas, negative attitudes and misinterpretation of their values and beliefs. This behavior is generally the outcome of a subjective and immature perception of the other .That is why culture teaching should focus on changing such attitudes so to remove learner's misunderstanding and push him or /her to accept and respect differences of the speaker of the target language as stated by Straub (1999,cited in Thanassoulas,2001:13)

**To foster...understanding of the target culture from  
an insider's perspective –an empathetic view that  
permits the students' to accurately interpret foreign  
culture behaviour.**

#### **II.4.2. 2.c. Cultural shock**

While Hornby (1995:285) defines culture shock as “a feeling of confusion and anxiety caused by the contact with an other culture “,others consider that a person ,in general and a foreign language learner ,in particular, faces new cultural environment. He feels lost and insecure because what he knows and understands is absent. Being an obstacle to learning ,culture shock, as Brown (1986,cited in Taibi ,2002:31)argues ,may be a positive cross-cultural learning experience that helps the learner either to get positive values(cultural awareness),or to reach a more successful stage of language and culture learning.

#### **II.4.2. 2.d. Stereotyping**

Within the scope of language teaching /learning , stereotyping is a restraining factor in language learning since new experiences and learning consolidate the existing stereotype that effects badly the learner's understanding of both the foreign language and its culture(Clark,1990:33,cited in Taibi,2002:34). To define stereotyping, Clark assumes that it may emerge from the encounter of the learners' own culture with the target one. Reinforced by the teaching materials which are published in the West to be imported into other countries. Despite the efforts attempting to reduce this effect of the foreign language culture teaching,yet they remain insufficient as maintained by Byram,Morgan et all(cited in Thanassoulas,2001:14) "Text book writers intuitively avoid bringing learners' existing hetero-stereotypes into the open and hope that their negative overtones...will be...counteracted by presenting positive ...images of the foreign country"

To recognise the hidden stereotypes that may limit good understanding and communication, Griffiths (1995 :51)proposes that an awareness about cultural messages and differences is helpful for both the teacher and the learner. Finally, Stern (op.cit.36)confirms that it is preferable to state cultural similarities to avoid stereotypes about a particular culture.

#### **II.5. Language Teachers' Role to Solve Learners' Psychological Problems**

Language teachers, and in order to help their learners to remedy to these phenomenon, and so to permit their comfortable move from one cultural environment to an other, and hence reduce the effect of culture teaching, must first by their own adopt and show a neutral attitude towards the target culture as far as to show a total respect to learners' values and convictions as explained by Rivers (1968, 271, cited in Thanassoulas, 2001)

**Teachers are not in the classroom to confirm the prejudices of their students' nor to attack their deeply held convictions Their task is to stimulate students' interest in the target culture and to help establish the foreign language classroom**

p13

Therefore, accent should be made on the teaching of culture “rather than to posit a specific way of seeing things” (Ibid). This would be possible if teachers succeed to bring learners questioning their own values and culture in order to understand the target one “learners must first become conversant what it means to be part of a culture ,their own culture .By exploring their own culture ;i.e. values, expectations and traditions, they are ready to reflect upon the values, expectations and traditions of others”(Ibid.)

In the same sense Byram 1997a and Doyè 1992(cited in Byram and Fleming b,1998: 6) distinguished two different kinds of questioning of learners' culture:an implicit and an explicit one. This latter presents according to them a threat to learners own culture since “it can lead to a critical stance, to critical cultural awareness”.

On an other perspective teachers must accept that by solving those problems “Cultural problem solving is yet another way to provide cultural information” (see Singhal, 1998, Thanassoulas,2001:16)

## **II.6. Language Proficiency and Linguistic Competence**

In education and mainly in the field of foreign language learning, language proficiency and linguistic competence are widely used but as two distinct terms. However and when scrutinizing both terms' definitions, it is clearly noticeable that both deal with learners ability to produce and understand the language.

Language proficiency is generally defined as learners' mastery of language needed to meet their basic communicative tasks or academic purposes (I.T.T.O, 2005:7). Brumfit and in respect to teachers' and learners' objectives identified two aspects of language proficiency which are accuracy and fluency. According to him accuracy is required when "the teacher and learners are chiefly concerned with 'getting the language right' that is "to get learners say the sounds right, to use the words, to express the meanings or to construct their sentences in a way that sounds acceptable" (1991:103). Courses that call for accuracy competences are the teaching of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Fluency on the other hand is interested with the communication of meanings as defined by the same author

**In the teaching of a language content within the more  
'holistic' categories of topics or functions we are  
beginning to move over towards fluency with more  
emphasis on producing appropriate language in context  
–equal importance is attached to form and message (Ibid)**

Linguistic competence, which is also referred to as "a person's knowledge of grammar, lexis and sound patterns"(Edunet International,1996:22) ,is useful when teachers are interested by accuracy. Though its importance, linguistic competence alone can not lead to fluency required when the concern is to convey and receive messages "Linguistic competence is very important, but on its own it isn't enough to make you a fluent speaker and writer or a competent listener and reader" (ibid). Seen from this perspective and linked to the current study, students may possess an important linguistic competence, that they struggled hard to obtain, however, are not fluent when it comes to make use of it in real communicative situations like to absorb information of British civilisation course.

Brown ,and in order to explain linguistic competence's deficiency when it concerns fluency, linked it to performance and suggests "the relationship between linguistic competence and performance is most usefully perceived as one of continual,



mutual modification of one by other” (1996:185). Lyons (Ibid) on his turn and by defining linguistic competence related performance to learners’ familiarity with activities that require the transmission of meanings

**the knowledge which enables a speaker to use language,  
is treated as only minimally dependent on the initial  
system, and as maximally dependent on experience,  
including practice in receptive and productive linguistic  
performance**

(cited in Brown and Williams 1996:185)

## **II.7. Vocabulary in Language Proficiency and its Effect on the Learning Process**

When learning a content course like in learning history, many competences are activated. Vocabulary represents a key instrument for its relevance on both areas language learners’ comprehension as well as production. Any deficiency in this element will be reflected on the message either to convey or to receive, and that will be inaccurate or misled. Saville and Troik (1984, cited in Jordan, 1997:149) stress its importance and claim that “Vocabulary knowledge is the single most important area of second language competence”. Richards and Renandya (2002), defined it as central component of language proficiency that reduces language learners' performances and assume that

**Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency  
and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak,  
listen, read and write .Without an extensive vocabulary...  
learners often achieve less then their potential and may be  
discouraged from making use of language.**

p.255

In respect to vocabulary importance Jordan (1981, cited in Jordan, 1997:149) states that “vocabulary emerged as the cause of most difficulties for the students of a foreign language”.

## **II.8. Aspects of Meaning Needed in Language Comprehension and Production**

By introducing culture in the language classroom, learners who are still acquiring a stock of basic vocabulary and simple grammatical structures, are presented with a new set of vocabulary related to the cultural topic. The challenge is then to use their precedent vocabulary knowledge in order to decode new meanings that will be stored later on for future uses. Presented from this perspective, it seems quite feasible, however and if considering that “a new item of vocabulary may be more than a single word” (from *A Course in Language Teaching*, 1991:60), other parameters should be taken into account to permit a coherent language understanding and production.

According to many linguists, language comprehension is the most important process in language teaching and should be attributed due consideration as claimed by Nattinger (1988, cited in Jordan, 1997:149) “Language comprehension should precede language production in language teaching”. Language comprehension implies three aspects of meaning which are denotation, connotation and appropriateness. What is generally noticed is that foreign language learners may handle language meanings in terms of denotation with more ease if compared to connotation or appropriateness. This may be explained in relation to cultural differences binding the different social groups, the natural environment of the language. As such, what may be appropriate, positive and adequate in a specific social context within a community may be perceived and interpreted in the opposite sense by members of an other group. This

comes to confirm language culture teaching role and reject the conviction assuming that learnability of foreign languages is predicated on the fact that all humans share the same code so that they can easily understand each other once mastering it.

Nevertheless, to use this code accurately and appropriately, they must go beyond forms and comes under functions. Thus teaching a language implies “teaching people how to use somebody’ else’s linguistic code in somebody else’s cultural context” (Kramsh,1994: 3).Consequently, in order to understand content courses, for instance, learners should rely on their language proficiency so to receive meanings in the appropriate way. In this respect O'Malley and Chemot identified learners language proficiency as an obstacle in language comprehension “We would add that the difficulty of the task depends upon the proficiency of the learner”(1990:37). The more proficient may a learner be, the most easier he may understand the new vocabulary presented to him and hence assimilating the content of the course he is introduced to .

Language production on the other hand, is the process of retrieving the stored vocabulary and its expression either oral or written. It is rather concerned by another linguistic competence if compared with language understanding according to Vollmer and Sanya (1983, Ibid: 38) who indicate that knowledge of syntax is required in production than in comprehension but this does not lessen vocabulary necessity or importance.

## **Conclusion**

The attempt in this chapter ,was to clarify and denote the different aspects of culture teaching in the foreign language classroom, either in terms of effects it may generate on the learner's psychological state, believes and involvement; or more importantly at the level of requirements and implications like "the language to speak about culture". This latter, and despite its relevant role as an essential vehicle transmitting the cultural information, and mediator between the learner and the target community so to offer him the possibility to decode the message, however very few corresponding literature is found mainly if compared to the one in chapter one.

*Field work*

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Students' Questionnaire*

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## **Introduction**

In order to identify second year students' problems in the module of British civilisation, mainly those connected to their language proficiency, and to check their attitudes and perceptions of the subject under study after being exposed to the module for a whole year; the students' questionnaire is designed to provide us with the needed data.

### **III.1. Description of students' questionnaire**

An introducing paragraph precedes the 22 items. All items are spread out of four sections, each one is aimed to provide with a specific set of information but with a relative aim, organised in a deductive order from general facts to more precise and closed elements.

The following is a brief description of each section:

#### **Section one: General information (01→03)**

It contains four items designed to obtain general information about the students' age, sex, the learning background as far as their secondary school studying background.

#### **Section two: Students' general evaluation (04→06)**

This second section, which consists of 3 questions is meant to provide with students' general opinions and evaluations of their personal English language proficiency connected to certain courses of the second year. The attempt behind addressing general questions in this section, is to test if British civilisation course will be mentioned or no so to confirm or reject our hypothesis concerning its difficulty or linguistic requirements without directing the participants' opinions.

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**Section three:** British civilisation classroom interaction (07 → 16)

As opposite to the second section, this section is purposely designed to provide with some information closely connected to the course of second year British civilisation in terms of interest, difficulty, and mainly students' classroom interaction all in relation to their language proficiency.

**Section four:** (17 → 22) General assessment

By the fourth and last section, we tried to bring some consistency and support to what had been said in the previous three sections and detect contradiction, if any, in the already provided answers. That's why it consisted of direct statements summarizing certain suggestions and permitting respondents to reveal the degree of agreement or disagreement.

The last item offers students a free space to give what they think best for a better achievement in the module of British civilisation.

**III.2. Administration of the questionnaire**

Problems met when piloting the students' questionnaire, completely disappeared when we introduced it. Even though, the situation seemed uncomfortable, mainly for students, because the questionnaire had been directly administered during lectures of British civilisation and in the presence of teachers of the module under investigation. We succeeded to lessen students shyness, reassure them and make them feel more confident specially when insisting on the fact that they are free in expressing their opinions and points of view and all what will be said, even negative criticism, will remain anonymous.



The reason of choosing the lecture of British civilisation is to avoid problems met when piloting the questionnaire ,since by administering it to randomly selected students, found in the corridor of the department, in the library or in the yard of the faculty; the biggest majority did not give it back. That is why, we opted for a more restricted, structured situation and the formal context of the classroom so to have the certitude of getting back all questionnaires.

As mentioned earlier second year students official number according to the attendance sheets designed for teachers' needs, obtained from the administration of the department of English, is 349 students officially enrolled for the academic year 2004-2005. Students are listed according to the alphabetic order, divided out of seven groups. Each group contains an important number varying from 46 to 56 each .Fifty two students have never attained lectures for the whole year and eight students' names are written twice(a typing mistake) .An information obtained from the final annual *Procés Verbal* which revealed their absence ,but no reason had been mentioned like *transfer* or an other cause.

By introducing the questionnaire we insisted on the fact that students are free to use the language it suits them best so they may express themselves in English, Arabic or French, since the important thing is to obtain their answers. To avoid any misunderstanding or misinterpretation, we provided them only with the literal explanation of the items to not influence them.

The choice of this period of the academic year, which is by its end, is justified in relation to the duration of students' studying of the module and getting familiar with it.

### III.3. Data Analyses

Data will be treated in tables, and information will be presented and analysed according to the order of items in the questionnaire and not according to the obtained rate (not from high to low or the inverse).

When administering the questionnaire, students attaining the last lecture of British civilisation was 210 out of 288 .When filtering the questionnaire 22 students did not gave back the questionnaire ,though we insisted along on this point, whereas 17 copies contained no answers and would not be taking into consideration. Thus the number of copies to be analysed is 171.

#### Section one: (01→03)

##### Item 01: Gender

	Number	Percentage
<b>Male</b>	26	15.20%
<b>Female</b>	145	84.79%
<b>No answers</b>	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n° 1:** Students' gender

It is clear from the above table that the leading majority is females with 145(84.79%), which largely exceeds males' number representing 26 (15.20%) only.

**Item 02: Age**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>18</b>	01	0.58%
<b>19</b>	14	8.18%
<b>20</b>	44	25.73%
<b>21</b>	43	25.14%
<b>22</b>	28	16.37%
<b>23</b>	14	8.18%
<b>24</b>	08	4.67%
<b>25</b>	04	2.33%
<b>26</b>	03	1.75%
<b>27</b>	02	1.16%
<b>32</b>	01	0.58%
<b>No answer</b>	09	5.26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n° 2: Students' age**

According to table n° 2, students' age varies between 18 to 32 years. This reflects a great interest to study the English language by different categories of people.

**Item 03: Streaming**

<b>Streaming</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-Literary	38	22,22%
-Scientific	128	74,85%
-Technical	05	02,92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°3:** Students' streaming

From the obtained results, it is clear that the majority of students' representing 128 (74, 85%) came from a scientific stream, and only 38 (22, 22%) students studied in literary streams. This fact considerably effects students' language proficiency, if we consider that English language time allocation in the literary streams is more important compared to the scientific one.

**Section two :**( 04→06)**Item 04:** How do you evaluate your English language competence?

<b>Possibilities</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-Very satisfying	06	03.50%
-Satisfying	86	50.29%
-Not satisfying	78	45.61%
-No answer	01	0.58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°4:** Students' personal evaluation of their linguistic competence

86 (50.29%) students out of 171 claim that they are satisfied by their language competence, unlike 78(45.61%) students who state that they are not satisfied; whereas a very small group of 6(03.50%) students only seem very satisfied.

**Item 05:** *In respect to your English language competence*, name the second year module you think is the most difficult

Possibilities	Number	Percentage
American Literature	8	4.67%
American Civilisation	12	7.01%
British Literature	5	2.92%
British Civilisation	131	76.60%
Grammar	4	2.33%
Linguistic	1	0.58%
Phonetic	1	0.58%
Written Expression	2	1.16%
Oral Expression	00	00%
No answer	7	4.09%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°5:** The most difficult module according to second year students in respect to their language competence

According to table n°5, the majority of students with 131(76.60%) named the British civilisation as the most difficult module. Followed by the American civilisation with 12 (7.01%) ,then the American literature with 8 (4.67%) , then British literature 5(2.92%),then grammar according to 4 students (2.33%),then written expression 2(1.16%) ;and finally in the last position with equal number of answers both linguistics and phonetics with one student each (0.58%)

**Item 06:** Name the second year module that requires a more important language competence according to you

<b>Students' suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-American civilisation	19	11.11%
-British civilisation	128	74.85%
-Written expression	22	12.86%
-No answers	2	1.16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n °6:** The module that requires a more important language proficiency

Among the nine modules composing second year curriculum, three modules only are pointed out by second year students as requiring a more considerable language competence if compared to others. The module of British civilisation appears on the top of the students' list with 128 (74.85%) answers. In the second position we may find Written expression with 22(12.86%) and in the last one American civilisation with 19(11.11%) answer.

This may be explained in relation to the content of these courses and the kind of activities they make use of. For instance to understand the courses of British and American civilisation students must possess an important language proficiency. For written expression they are usually asked to produce written pieces which requires also an important set of language. Hence, all those courses make use of more important productive and receptive language if compared to grammar activities for instance.

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**Section three :( 07→ 16)**

**Item:** To what extent do you like British civilisation course?

Since interest and motivation are, key instruments to better achieve, so by this question we are trying to identify second year students' appreciation of the module of British civilisation

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a-Much	71	41.52%
b-Little	74	43.27%
c-Not at all	26	15.20%
No answer	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°7:** Students' interest to the module of British civilisation

74 students representing (43.27%) of the population seem little appreciating the module of British civilisation and 71(41.52%) students like it much, whereas the remaining 26 (15.20%) totally dislike it.

**Justify your answers:**

Students' justifications		Number		Percentage
<b>Much</b>	History is interesting	69	<b>71</b>	41.52%
	No explanation	2		
<b>Little</b>	Like it but it is difficult and they are unable to understand it	54	<b>74</b>	43.27%
	They dislike the content	14		
	No explanation	06		
<b>Not at all</b>	They are unable to understand	13	<b>26</b>	15.20%
	Do not want to waste time	05		
	They dislike the content	03		
	The teacher	02		
	They refuse to study a Foreign culture	02		
	No explanation	01		
<b>Total</b>		<b>171</b>		<b>100%</b>

**Table n°8:** Students' justifications of the British civilisation appreciation

It is clear from the obtained answers that there is a set of reasons lying behind students' difference in appreciation of the module of British civilisation and the most important is their inability to understand.



**Item 8:** In respect to your English language competence, is British civilisation

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a-Very difficult	48	28.07%
b-Difficult	60	35.08%
c-Average	55	29.23%
d-Easy	08	4.67%
e-Very easy	5	2.92%
No answer	0	00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°9:** Students' evaluation of British civilisation course accessibility

48 (28.07%) students qualify the module of British civilisation as very difficult, and 60(35.08%) students qualify it as difficult which nearly correspond to what has been reported in item six when students' had been asked to name the most difficult module. Then those to whom it is average 55 (29.23%). Followed by 8(4.67%) students who qualify it as easy. In the final position, we may find those who consider it as very easy and who represent only 5 (2.92 %) students.

**Item 9:** Do you think that your poor English language competence is an obstacle to study British civilisation?

<b>Possibilities</b>	Yes	No	No answer	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	145	26	04	<b>171</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	84.79%	15.20%	02.33%	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°10:** Students' perception of the linguistic competence importance in British civilisation

145 students (84.79%) agree that language proficiency is an obstacle to study British civilisation, whereas 26 students (15.20%) assume the opposite.

**Item 10:** During lectures of British civilisation, do you understand:

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a-Easily	32	18.71%
b-With difficulty	113	66.08%
c-Not at all	26	15.20%
No answer	0	00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°11:** Students' understanding during lectures of British civilisation

113 (66.08%) of students assume that during lectures of British civilisation they understand but with difficulty. However, 26(15.20%) students reveal that they do not understand at all and that only 32(18.71%) students understand with no difficulty.

To understand by our turn, causes of students' problems of understanding we asked them to provide with an explanation.

### **Students' justifications**

89 Students explain their difficulty to understand the courses of British civilisation in respect to their poor language proficiency .15 students state that they waste the majority of time trying to explain and decode difficult words and neglecting the content itself .For those who have no difficulty to understand, link it to the good explanation provided by teachers.

**Item 11:** Do you ask questions to your teachers during lectures of British civilisation?

	-Yes	-No	No answer	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	59	110	02	<b>171</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	34.50%	64.32%	1.16%	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°12:** Students' asking questions in lectures of British civilisation

It is clear from the table n°12 that only 59 students (34.5%) out of 171 ask questions during lectures of British civilisation, whereas 110(64.32%) students do not ask.

Furthermore we tried to investigate reasons behind students' refusal to ask questions on their teachers, and for the second group (those who ask questions), we attempted to identify kinds of questions. The results are illustrated in the following tables:

**-If yes, questions are generally related to:**

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a-to the meaning of certain items	37	62.71%
b-to facts related to the content of British civilisation course	19	32.20%
c- questions related to other topics	02	03.38%
d-no answer	01	01.69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°13:** Subject of students' questions

Within the group of students who ask questions, the leading majority is formed by students who ask questions related to the meaning of difficult words and new items and are 37(62.71%) out of 59, and only 19 students (32.20%) ask questions related to the content .A smallest number only seem confident to their teachers and ask them about other facts which are not related to the module of British civilisation and represents 3.38%.

**If no, is it because:**

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a-lectures are easy	05	04.54%
b-you are a shy person	30	27.27%
c-for your inability to express yourself	58	52.72%
d-lectures are well explained and there is no ambiguity	15	13.63%
No answer	02	01.81%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°14:** Causes of students' refusal to ask questions

According to the results presented in table n°14, representing the second category of students, variant reasons lay behind students no asking of questions. But they are in no case related to their good understanding since only five students (4.54%) state that courses are easy which represents a very small number, and 15 (13.63%) other students assume that they are well explained. However a considerable number of students 58(52.72%) do not ask questions because they are unable to express themselves, whereas 30 students (27.27%) do not ask questions because they are shy persons.

**Item 12:** Your teachers' questions, during lectures of British civilisation are:

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a-Very clear and easy	55	32.16%
b-Ambiguous because of your problems with language	99	57.89%
c-Ambiguous because you have no idea about the lecture	17	9.94%
No answer	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°15:** Students' evaluation of British civilisation's teachers' questions

Only 55 (32.16%) students reported that teachers' questions are clear and easy. 99(57.89%) are unable to understand the questions' language. On another side, 17 (9.94%) students explain their inabilities in relation to their understanding of lectures.

**Item 13:** What is the most difficult thing to do during lectures of British civilisation?

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a-to answer a question	17	9.94%
b-to ask a question	12	7.01%
c-to understand a question	15	8.77%
d-to understand the course	64	37.42%
e-all of the above	56	32.74%
f-none of the above	5	2.92%
g-No answer	2	1.16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°16:** Students' most difficult activity to do in British civilisation lectures

For 64 (37.42%) students the most difficult activity they meet during lectures of British civilisation is to understand the courses.17 (9.94%) students are unable to answer questions followed by 15 students' who do not understand questions. 12(7.01%) students claim that the most difficult thing is to ask a question .56(32.74%) students seem to have problems in all activities stated above, whereas only 5 (2.92%) students state that they have no difficulty.

**Item 14:** What is the most difficult thing you meet during examinations?

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
a-to understand questions	32	18.71%
b-to answer questions	78	45.61%
c-both	54	31.57%
d-None of the above	5	2.92%
No answer	2	1.16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°17:** Students' most difficult thing met during exams

During examinations, 78 students (45.61%) reveal that they have problems to answer questions. However, 32 (18.71%) students admit that they are incapable to understand exams' questions .54 students (31.57%) confess that they find difficulties in both understanding the questions as well as to answer them .Only 5 students seem not complaining .

When asked to explain reasons behind their problems during examinations 107 out of 164 of students, claim that despite their good preparation but, they are still incompetent when it comes to reproducing in their own styles using the target language.

Furthermore, 48 students make the link between the evidence of their problems met for understanding the content of the British civilisation courses and which directly causes problems for both understanding questions and the ability to provide with coherent answers. 5(2.92%) students frankly declare that their difficulty stems from their poor output and investment.

**Item 15:** Students' marks when tested during examinations, reflect what?

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
a-Your linguistic weakness	70	40.93%
b-your misunderstanding of the question	32	18.71%
c-your bad preparation	26	15.20%
d-an other reason	39	22.80%
No answer	4	2.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°18:** Students' marks when tested during examinations

70 (40.93%) students explain their marks in relation to their poor writing skill. Yet, 32 (18.71%) students interpret them in terms of their misunderstanding of the question that logically affect in its turn the kind of answers that they would provide during exams. However, 26(15.20%) students confess their bad preparation. 22.80% refers to other reasons that they explain in respect to the teachers' way of evaluation.

**Item 16:** To understand the course of British civilisation, the best way is to:

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
a-to refer only to the English language	95	55.55%
b-to use the native language	75	43.85%
No answer	01	0.58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n° 19:** Students' preference of language use

95 students (55.55%) prefer the use of the English language alone during lectures of British civilisation though the numerous difficulties they may meet to understand.

Unlike 75 students (43.85%) who prefer translation to the native language (Algerian Arabic) and all, explain it as following:

### Students' Explanations

The first group formed by students refusing translation, claim that this is the only way to learn a foreign language and firmly appose translation, on the contrary of members of the second group who privileges the rapid understanding even by using translation mainly in regard to the difficulties they usually face and information they miss.

### Section four: (17→ 22)

**Item:** British civilisation course requires a high English language competence:

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
a-Strongly disagree	06	03.50%
b-Disagree	24	14.03%
c-Agree	99	57.89%
d-Strongly agree	42	24.56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°20:** Students' evaluation of British civilisation linguistic requirements

The table n°20 reveals a diversified positions, 42(24.56%) students strongly agree that the module of British civilisation requires a high language proficiency they are supported by 99(57.89%) others who only agree on its importance apposed by 30 students, 24 (14.03%) among them strongly disagree where 6 (03.50%)others strongly disagree.



**Item 18:** Second year British civilisation module presents a difficult vocabulary

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	04	02.33%
Disagree	15	08.77%
Agree	95	55.55%
Strongly agree	57	33.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°21:** Students' evaluation of the difficulty of British civilisation vocabulary

Concerning students' evaluation of the linguistic difficulty of the module of British civilisation the biggest majority approve that the course offers a large stream of new items, they are 92 to agree and 57 to strongly agree. Again 15 students disagree and 4 strongly disagree.

**Item 19:** In respect to your language competence, have you really made advantage from studying British civilisation as it is expected?

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	89	52.04%
Disagree	52	30.40%
Agree	10	5.84%
Strongly Agree	20	11.69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°22:** Students' evaluation of their fulfilment in second year British civilisation module

According to the table above, 89(52.04%) students strongly disagree that British civilisation was beneficial for them whereas 52(30.40%) agree with them. 20 students assume the opposite and strongly disagree while 10(5.84%) disagree.

**Item 20:** In respect to your language competence, do you think that the second year is the most appropriate to introduce British civilisation course?

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-Strongly disagree	15	8.77%
-Disagree	63	36.84%
-Agree	75	43.85%
-Strongly Agree	18	10.52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°23:** Second year as the most appropriate to study British civilisation

In respect of to their linguistic competence, 63 (36.89%) students disagree with the fact of introducing British civilisation in the second year .15(8.77%) others strongly appose it while 75(43.85%) agree with, and 18 (10.25%) strongly agree with its studying.

**Item 21:** In respect to your language competence, do you prefer that British civilisation should be postponed to next stages?

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	76	44.44%
Disagree	10	05.84%
Agree	45	26.31%
Strongly Agree	40	23.39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n °24:** Students' position towards postponing second year British civilisation course

76 (44.44%) students strongly disagree with the fact of postponing the module of British civilisation to the next stages. 10 (5.84%) also disagree with this. While 45 (26.31%) disagree and 40 (23.39%) others strongly disagree.

**Item 22:** What do you suggest for an easier understanding and *best* achievement in British civilisation ?

Students' suggestions	Number	Percentage
1-To change the historical content	59	34.50%
2-To add other cultural aspects of the British civilisation like arts, the people way of living, traditions...,etc	50	29.23%
3-To not teach completely the module	20	11.69%
4-To use authentic materials like movies	100	58.47%
5-To add other sessions of British civilisation ,an hour and a half a week is not sufficient	02	01.16%
6-To facilitate the language and use a simple one which suits their level	80	46.78%
7-To tackle cotemporary events and not the very old ones which will be of no use	52	30.40%
8-More training of the teachers of the module	05	02.92%
9-To postponed the studying of British civilisation	25	14.61%
10-To teach the module by translating	56	32.74%

**Table n°25:** Students' suggestions to ameliorate the studying of British civilisation

### III.4. Findings

Before revealing the results of the analyses of the questionnaire by sections, certain unsuspected points and that come to sustain the current research and may add an additional support to the work, should be mentioned

-Only 147 out of 171 students expressed themselves in English which represents 85.96% from the whole population, 20 students (11.69%) wrote in Arabic while 4 students (2.33%) wrote in French. This fact reflects a linguistic incompetence if we consider that we are dealing with second **year** students in the department of **English** and answers expected to provide with are simple sentences expressing their personal perceptions.

**Section one:** This section revealed that we are dealing with “heterogeneous classes” (Ur, 1996:302-303) either in terms of gender or age .The leading majority is formed by females and that Rezig (2001-2002:77) explains in relation to a pure “feminist learning». There is another criterion but with a great relevance in our work which concerns students’ diversity of background learning, which reflects a mixed English language abilities.

**Section two:** This section is designed to introduce to section three and collect certain general information without influencing students’ opinions. Second year students admit that they are not satisfied with their language proficiency and point out the British civilisation as the most difficult module requiring the most important language proficiency.

**Section three:** Classroom interaction reflects students’ interest, active involvement and application in the language course. In this section, students clearly declare that their English language proficiency stems behind their passive role during lectures of British civilisation. In as far as it prevents their understanding of the courses and questions addressed to them, either during ordinary lectures or during examinations, which the majority qualify as ambiguous; the students’ poor language proficiency also

acts upon their language production and restrains it to the extent that they are unable to answer questions nor to ask others even if they need to do so, which lately appear on their examinations' marks. Beside the negative effect of students' poor language proficiency on the classroom interaction, on both perceptive and productive abilities, it exceeds to alter and lessen their motivation and predisposition to study the module of British civilisation. Students' preference and agreement on translation use, reveals a discomfort with the target language use, which reflects in its turn their poor language proficiency.

**Section four:** British civilisation course fails to concretise its supposed pedagogical objective according to the students, if we consider that it presents a very difficult vocabulary and requires a more important language proficiency. Hence, it generates much more problems than it solves like students' less confidence in their own abilities. Though all the difficulties, the majority of the students disagree with postponing the module to the next stages. For a best benefit on both areas: the development of their cultural knowledge and their language proficiency, second year students claim the use of authentic materials and to facilitate the language of the course and insist on the use of translation. Students opposition of postponing the module to future stages reflect an awareness about the importance of foreign language culture teaching ,and the tie relation linking both culture and language.

## **Conclusion**

The analyses of the students' questionnaire allowed us to confirm our hypothesis on the one hand, and to further highlight certain unsuspected points but with a great relevance on the other one. Firstly, evidence is that second year students' personal language proficiency does in no way correspond to the linguistic requirements of the course of the British civilisation, hence creates a gap between the information to be sent and the receptive tool, causing a deficiency in the message itself either by a misunderstanding or no understanding at all on the part of the learner. Not limited to this damage, students' linguistic handicap exceeds to work out other areas like their motivation and predisposition to study the module, which ultimately alters their involvement. On the psychological side, students are confronted to a situation where they are less confident and doubt of their own competences resulting in shyness and discomfort, which restrains their active participation in the course, and their flexibility to express themselves.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Teachers' Questionnaire*

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## **Introduction**

In order to obtain teachers' opinion about the subject under study, we used a questionnaire designed for second year British civilisation teachers. It includes common issues already used in the students' one.

### **IV.1. Administration of teachers' questionnaire**

Before administering the questionnaire, we piloted it on two teachers of British civilisation in the department of English at Batna University to test its validity.

After bringing some relevant corrections, the questionnaire has been directly administered to all teachers who either already taught second year British civilisation module, or they actually teaching it for the academic year 2004-2005. Their number is 7

### **IV.2. Description of teachers' questionnaire**

The questionnaire contains 18 items organized in three sections. 17 of the questionnaire items are common in both: the students' questionnaire as well as the teachers' one in order to compare both viewpoints concerning certain facts that need to be evaluated and dealt with from both scopes the one of students and the other of teachers.

The questionnaire is a combination of different types of questions .It consists of open form items, the closed form items with yes/no questions where respondents after choosing their answers have a free space of about five lines to either explain their choices or justify them.

The following is a detailed description of each section:



**Section one: (Q1 → Q2)**

This section contains 2 items .The first one investigates teachers' evaluation of second year students' language proficiency, and the second one examines its importance in the course of British civilisation.

**Section two: (Q3 → Q12)**

This section contains ten items numbered from three to twelve and the focus is made on the relation between students' language proficiency and their classroom interaction during British civilisation lectures. What is meant by interaction is students' understanding and the different aspects it undergoes such as kinds of questions they ask or the way they answer teachers' questions .

**Section Three: (Q13 →Q18)**

This section is designed to provide with a kind of consistency to previous sections. It consists of five items .Four of them are statements to which respondents provide with their agreements or disagreements concerning what had already been discussed in section one and two. In the last item teachers are given an open space to provide with some suggestions, solutions, or comments to facilitate second year British civilisation module teaching and learning.

**IV.3. Presentation of Data**

Data gathered will be presented in tables, where symbols including the number and percentage of respondents at each time will be included .All tables are presented by a number and a title representing questions in order. The obtained results will not be ordered according to rates but according to the order of questions.

#### IV.4. Data Analysis

Questions are going to be analysed by sections

##### Section one: General Facts

**Item one:** As a teacher of British civilisation, how do you evaluate second year students' English language proficiency?

	N °	Percentage
a)-very satisfying	00	00%
b)-satisfying	00	00%
c)-average	01	14.29%
d)-poorly satisfying	02	28.57%
e)-not satisfying	04	57.14%
<b>total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n° 01:** Teachers' evaluation of students' language proficiency

According to the results of table n°01, four teachers evaluate second year students' language proficiency as not satisfying. Two other teachers estimate it as poorly satisfying. Whereas one teacher claims that, it is average.

**Item two:** Do you think that English language proficiency is an important element for studying British civilisation in the second year?

<b>Respondents</b> <b>Responses</b>	-Yes	-No	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	07	00	07
<b>Percentage</b>	100%	00%	100%

**Table n°02:** Teachers' evaluation of second year students' language proficiency importance in British civilisation

All the seven teachers agree on the importance of English language proficiency so to permit the study of second year British civilisation course.

Teachers' are asked to explain for their answers:

**-If yes to what extent:**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a- extremelyimportant	05	71.42%
b- important	02	28.57%
c-not important	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n° 03:** Degree of language importance according to teachers

For five teachers, the English language proficiency is a very important tool to study second year British civilisation. The remaining two teachers declare that it is important.

They explained this as follows:

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-Students can not learn if they are not equipped with the adequate linguistic tool which will help them	01	14.29%
-The mastery of language enhances or hinders the acquisition of knowledge	02	28.57%
-Without the linguistic tool students can not learn	01	14.29%
-The lack of language knowledge is a handicap	01	14.29%
-Language proficiency is the mediating instrument between learners and information	02	28.57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n ° 04:** Teachers' arguments for students' language proficiency importance

All the seven teachers argued that courses of British civilisation are presented in English and students own English proficiency is the only tool, which helps them to

understand and mediates the information. Therefore, if they are not able to read, write, hear and understand correct English they will not be able to learn anything related to civilisation. One teacher goes further and points it as a “handicap”.

## Section 2: Classroom Interaction

**Item Three:** When presenting lectures of British civilisation for second year students, the *focus* is made on:

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
a-presenting information related to civilisation program	01	14.29%
b-presenting vocabulary and grammar	00	00%
c-both presented at an equal level	00	00%
d-both but presented on a different scale	06	85.71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°5:** Teachers’ way of presenting British civilisation lectures

Six teachers report that there is a combination when presenting the course of British civilisation between both vocabulary/grammar information and facts related to the course itself but at a different scale. One teacher explains that focus is made on teaching the cultural content.

**Why?** Teachers’ explanations are illustrated in the following table:

Teachers' suggestions	Number	Percentage
-It is immediate, when teaching one is presenting vocabulary.	01	14.29%
-The double aim of the course is to present facts and enhance the linguistic proficiency.	01	14.29%
-It is true that the purpose from British civilisation is to teach history, yet we have to refer to grammar from time to time.	01	14.29%
-When a student is asking for the meaning of a word or expression the teacher is no more presenting historical facts but vocabulary .	01	14.29%
-Both are inseparable	01	14.29%
-When a student is expressing him/herself and making an error of a grammatical order, forgetting a plural "s" for example the teacher's duties is to correct him/her	01	14.29%
-We are not teachers of grammar but we have a syllabus to go at its end	01	14.29%
<b>Total</b>	07	100%

**Table n°6:** Teachers' explanations

Though differently expressed ,but six teachers confirm that by transmitting the cultural information, they are inevitably making use of grammar and vocabulary but on a different scale, since they are neither teachers of grammar nor written expression but have to focus on the transmission of the events .

**Item four:** Along the academic year, when presenting lectures of British civilisation to second year students, how do you evaluate their understanding of the courses?

	Number	Percentage
a-with high difficulty	04	57.14%
b- with difficulty	02	28.56%
c-with ease	01	14.28%
d-with high ease	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	07	100%

**Table n°7:** Teachers' evaluation of students understanding

Four teachers out of seven assume that students have considerable problems to understand so they evaluated it as occurring with a high difficulty. Two teachers state that it occurs with difficulty .Only one teacher qualify his or her students' understanding as easily performed.

**Item five:** Beside other factors like motivation or content, do you think that second year students' language proficiency is at the origin of their understanding problems?

<b>Responses</b>	Yes	No	<b>Total</b>
<b>N°</b>	07	00	07
<b>%</b>	100%	00%	100%

**Table n°8:** Identifying students' linguistic competence as the origin of their understanding problem

All the seven teachers think that beyond students' motivation and the content, the linguistic element may be considered as an important fact causing difficulty in lectures of British civilisation.

**Item six:** In relation to students' language proficiency, how do you evaluate their classroom interaction?

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-Very important	00	00%
-Important	01	14.28%
-Not important	06	85.71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°9:** Teachers' evaluation of students' classroom interaction

Six teachers qualify students' classroom interaction as not important as far as connected to their language proficiency. One teacher estimate it as important.

**Item seven:** In regard to students' language proficiency, what is the most difficult thing for them to do during lectures?

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a-To understand the course	01	14.29%
b-To understand teacher's questions	00	00%
c-To answer teacher's questions	00	00%
d-To ask a question	00	00%
e-All of the above	06	85.71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n° 10:** Teachers' evaluation of students' difficulties

Again six teachers explain that second year students have different kinds of problems related to classroom interaction like understanding the course or teachers' questions, their inability to ask/answer a question. One teacher says that they have problems mainly to understand the courses and which in one way or another will ultimately affect the other domains.

**Item eight:** When interacting in the classroom, what kind of errors do students make?

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
a-are of grammatical order	01	14.29%
b-are of vocabulary order	02	28.56%
c-both of the above	04	57.14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°11:** Teachers' evaluation of students' errors nature

One teacher identifies the nature of errors from a grammatical order, and two others identify them as being vocabulary errors, whereas the four remaining teachers claim that errors are of both orders grammatical as far as vocabulary, which clearly reflects a linguistic deficiency.

**Item nine:** The most frequent questions asked by learners are related to:

<b>Responses</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
a-The meaning of difficult or new items	02	28.56%
b-Linked to the content of the course itself	03	42.85%
c-Both	02	28.56%
d-related to other topics	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n° 12:** Teachers' evaluations of students' questions kinds

Two teachers connect students' questions to the meaning of difficult items and terms. Three others claim that questions concern the content of British civilisation course, and two teachers state that they are related to both the content as well as the meaning of new and or difficult words.

**Item ten:** Do second year students ask you to explain the lecture of British civilisation using the Algerian Arabic language (**to translate**)?

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>-Yes</b>	<b>-No</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	07	00	<b>07</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	100%	00%	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°13:** Students' request for translation



All the teachers report that they make use of the native language (Algerian Arabic) when presenting lectures of British civilisation in response to second year students' claims.

-If yes how frequently?

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a-Always	02	28.57%
b-Very often	05	71.43%
c-Rarely	00	00%
d-Never	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n 14°:** Frequency of teachers' use of translation

From the obtained results in the table above, it seems that translating is part of British civilisation course application since five teachers reveal to refer to it very often, whereas two teachers specify that they always explain translating into the Algerian Arabic.

-Why do students prefer translation?

Teachers' suggestions are presented in the table bellow:

<b>Teachers' suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a-To understand	03	42.85%
b-the lack of proficiency in the target language	03	42.85%
c-The lessons are a little bit difficult to them	01	14.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°15:** Teachers' explanation about students' need of translation

It is clear from the above table that there is a clear gap between students' language proficiency and the language through which the course of British civilisation is presented what explains students' requirements of translation.

**Item eleven:** When tested during examinations of British civilisation, the most difficulty second year students meet is:

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
a-To understand the question(s)	02	28.57%
b-To answer questions because they do not have the sufficient linguistic competence	01	14.29%
c-To answer questions because they do not have the adequate feedback	01	14.29%
d-All the above	03	42.85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°16:** Students' difficulties during exams

Two teachers explain that second year students are unable to understand exam questions addressed to them. One teacher out of seven, confirm that they have difficulties to answer because of their poor language proficiency, and an other one explains it in relation to their poor feedback. Three teachers qualify that students, and during examinations meet all kinds of problems. An important fact if we consider that it concerns second year students mainly for question's understanding.

**Item twelve:** When you correct second year students' exam copies, the focus is made on:

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
a-Only the feedback	05	71.42%
b-The written skill	01	14.29%
c-Both on an equal scale	00	00%
d-Both but not on an equal scale	01	14.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n° 17:** Teachers' manner/way of correction

According to the results obtained in the table n°17, five teachers report that when correcting students exam copies they stress the kind of information only. One teacher evaluate the written skill, whereas one other teacher focus on correcting both, students' information and their written skill but on a different scale.

**-Why?**

<b>Teachers' justifications</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-we are teachers of British civilisation not teachers of written expression and we have not enough time	03	42.85%
-If we will take into consideration the written skill ,no one of our students will obtain the average	02	28.57%
-if we consider that the aim of teaching British civilisation is the teaching of the language and not the information itself, so we must focus on the written skill	01	14.28%
-Both are complementary ,we can not correct one aspect of answers	01	14.28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°18:** Teachers' justification about their exam copies correction

**Section three:** Teachers' personal perceptions

**Item thirteen:** British civilisation course requires an important language proficiency:

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
a-Strongly disagree	00	00%
b-Disagree	00	00%
c-Agree	00	00%
d-Strongly agree	07	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n° 19:** Linguistic wealth of British civilisation module

All teachers strongly agree on the fact that the module of British civilisation requires an important language proficiency.

**Item fourteen:** British civilisation presents a large new stream of *difficult* vocabulary to second year students:

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
a-Strongly disagree	00	00%
b-Disagree	01	14.29%
c-Agree	02	28.57%
d-Strongly agree	04	57.14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°2:** Language difficulty of British civilisation module

In respect to second year students' language proficiency, what British civilisation course offers is strongly agreed on as being difficult by four teachers of the module. Two teachers agree on its difficulty whereas one teacher only disagrees.

**Item fifteen:** In respect to second year students' language proficiency, does the British civilisation fulfil its meant pedagogical objective as a course?

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
a-Strongly disagree	07	100%
b-Disagree	00	00%
c-Agree	00	00%
d-Strongly agree	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°21:** Teachers' evaluation of the fulfilment of the module of British civilisation

It is clear from the table n°21, that the course of British civilisation missed its intended pedagogical objective because of second year students' linguistic level.

**Item sixteen:** In respect to students' language proficiency, do you prefer that second year British civilisation should be postponed?

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
a-Strongly disagree	03	42.85%
b-Disagree	01	01.42%
c-Agree	02	28.57%
d-Strongly agree	01	01.42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table n°21:** Teachers' attitudes toward delaying British civilisation module

Two teachers agree on postponing the module of British civilisation to the coming years, whereas one teacher strongly agrees on the same fact. Three other teachers strongly disagree and another one disagrees.

**Item seventeen:** In respect to students' language proficiency, what do you suggest for an easier and best achievement in the second year British civilisation course?

<b>Teachers' suggestions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-To use an easiest set of vocabulary so that to be understood by all students.	3	42.85%
-Students' problems are: the number, means and future career so teachers need to focus on these factors to build an interesting and viable curriculum.	1	14.29%
-More use of authentic materials.	3	42.85%
-A reconsideration of the content and techniques used.	1	14.29%
-To raise students motivation.	2	28.57%
-To show students the value of the module in the actual context.	1	14.29%
-To postponed the teaching of the module until students would reach considerable language proficiency for a more beneficial studying	2	28.57%

**Table n°22:** Teachers' suggestions for an easier learning of British civilisation

#### **IV.5. Findings**

By designing the teachers' questionnaire the aim was to bring a professional perception of the question under the study, and more importantly to obtain solutions they may provide with to help students to pass over the linguistic obstacle.

Despite highly stressing the role and the importance of the students' language proficiency in lectures of British civilisation, as being the vehicle to transmit the information, and the tool by which they communicate in the language classroom. Nevertheless, teachers consider that second year students' language proficiency is not sufficient to meet their needs in such important module, if we consider what new items British civilisation presents to them. Which results in students' difficulty to understand the courses, questions addressed to them in both ordinary lectures or during examination. Hence, restrains their classroom interaction, having repercussions on the fulfilment of the module's pedagogical objective. The result is that second year students are neither able to retain the cultural information nor to develop their language proficiency. To remedy to this, teachers reveals that they frequently use translation to facilitate their learners' understanding.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude this chapter, two points had to be stressed; teachers' responses perfectly correspond to the students' ones which clearly highlights the real existence of the problem and which should be attributed much more importance to help students' better achieve in this important module either in terms of language acquirement or culture learning. A confirmation of our hypothesis is obtained via teachers' responses unanimity, mainly concerning the items closely linked to the question under study.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### *Students' Exam Copies Analyses*

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## Introduction

In order to identify kinds of problems second year students seem to meet during examinations of British civilisation, mainly related to their language proficiency, we tried to go beyond teachers' and students' explanations obtained via questionnaires and certify all sayings by analysing students' exam copies.

Referring to students' exam copies instead of directly using their grades, is done in purpose, since when asked about the basis on which teachers attribute the grade (in teachers questionnaire, section 2 –item 12), all of them confirmed that they focus mainly on the feedback. Hence, students' marks do not refer to their language competence. Furthermore, we are mainly interested in identifying second year students' linguistic problems like spelling mistakes, written skill in terms of both grammar and vocabulary, questions' understanding and ability to respond. Focus on these two particular areas of language (grammar and vocabulary) may be explained in relation to their importance in the foreign language learning as maintained by Byram and Fleming (1998:120) “learning a language can be analysed as being fundamentally concerned with mastery of knowledge of grammar and vocabulary”

Taking into account that an academic year comprises two semesters each one is concluded by a general assessment .Only the second examination is to be considered in our study since students' unfamiliarity with the course may interfere in their first term exam achievement .

## V.1. Description of exams' questions

For the academic year 2004-2005, the number of teachers concerned by the teaching of the module of British civilisation is two. Two different teachers, implies two different exams questions. The diversity of questions cannot but only be beneficial to the study, since it diminishes the probability of question's (es) difficulty. So that two different teachers, two different manners of asking questions, and two ways of evaluating

Second term exam questions in the module all covers the same period from the 14<sup>th</sup> -to 15<sup>th</sup> century in the British history ,that is the same courses are presented to them. The different fact is the teacher, and even the method is the same since courses for all second year students are presented through handouts.

It is worthwhile to notice that students in this exam are evaluated in respect to the correct answers they would provide and not the way they are presented, and they are evaluated out of 20.

Each of the exam question copies included two sections where second year students are asked to develop their answers in small paragraphs. Questions are direct and concern either names of British famous persons, that students are asked to identify and speak of their deeds or some particular events. The following is a description of each exam question apart:

**-The first exam questions:** Contained in its first section 6 names (names of persons or events) marked out of 12. In the second section, which is marked out of 8, students have to develop a short essay where they speak of the 15<sup>th</sup> century events.

**-The second exam questions:** Included a first section which contained in its turn 5 names (also names of persons and famous events), it is marked out of 10 and followed by a statement in the second section that students have to analyse and which concerns the 15<sup>th</sup> century and it is marked out of 10.

It is noteworthy to insist on the fact that teachers did not confer when designing the exam questions but this resemblance is due to chance and the similarity of the courses they present as confirmed by both teachers.

## **V.2. Students' Exam Copies Sampling Procedure**

The complete number of students' second term exam copies is 281 (including students participating in the students' questionnaire and expanding to those who had been absent).

The first criteria on which exam copies are selected, is all those containing the complete number of answers, since the study is concerned by students' answers weaknesses in terms of the language proficiency and not their abilities to provide with correct answers (the way to provide with answers and not the ability to provide with information). Hence, all copies including a missing answer or more are excluded. 100 (representing 35,58%) copies out of 281 contained all answers and are going to be sampled.

Since marks are not attributed according to students' language proficiency, they will not be taking into account in the analyses, but based on in sampling to represent all the population abilities (good students, average students, weak students) .A

stratified sampling will be used . That is why the 100 copies have been divided out of three categories according to the obtained grades.

- Categories are as follows: - Low from 01 to 06 → weak students  
-Average from 07 to 10 → average students  
-High from 11 to 19.5 → good students

Fifteen copies, representing 15% of the whole population, are going to be used so that five copies had been selected from each category to be analyzed.

### **V.3. Data treatment**

Results are going to be treated in one table .Information are going to be ordered according to the alphabetical order of students' names which will be replaced by numbers, since we have not the participants' approval on revealing their marks with their names .



5	03	<u>margaret</u> -revivle <u>-diffecult</u> <u>legislatores</u>	Margaret -revival -difficult legislators	-in the following reasons -issuing a number of act -the Yorcist king and Lancastrian kings and the church was -legisltores for <u>people</u> and <u>his life</u> of economic, political, <u>society</u> and cultural. -In this reason -it appears struggle	-for the following reasons -issuing a number of acts -the Yorkist king and Lancastrian kings and the church were -legislators for people and their lives of economic, political, society, and cultural -for this reason -Struggle emerged	Jane Grey is <u>king</u> -to <u>produce</u> the alliance, <u>and</u> <u>revivle</u> the house, and protect the throne -the Yorkist king and Lancastrian kings and the church was Forced a <u>tense diffecult</u> -legisltores for <u>people</u> and <u>his life</u> of economic, political, <u>society</u> and cultural. Between religious and the church -The protestanism was <u>against</u> laws of church -The rule of the throne....	Jane Grey is a <u>queen</u> -to make an alliance, to revivle the house, and protect the throne -the Yorkist king and Lancastrian kings and the church were facing difficult -legislators fought for people to ameliorate their ways of lives , socially, politicaly, econonmicaly and culturally -Incoherence in the meaning -Protestantism apposed the catholic church -The role of the throne
6	07.5	sentralising gouverning -comen -enjiven -thrown	Centralizig governing -common -Anjevin -throne				

7	11	<p>-claim</p> <p>-<u>steward</u></p> <p>-catesby</p>	<p>-claim</p> <p>-Stuart</p> <p>-Catesby</p>	<p><u>-Jane he</u></p> <p>-two great power in European</p> <p><u>-wagged</u></p> <p>the war was ended</p> <p>-A member of archbishops have an operation</p> <p>-to assassinated</p> <p>-to killed</p> <p>-later become York claim</p> <p>-who cold</p> <p>-the war was end in 1485</p> <p>-security it appear</p> <p>-admit such as spanish, after, <u>netherlands</u></p> <p><u>-the England</u></p>	<p>-Jane she</p> <p>-two great powers in Europe</p> <p>-waged</p> <p>-the war ended</p> <p>-A member of archbishops has an operation</p> <p>-to assassinate</p> <p>-to kill</p> <p>-later becomes York claims</p> <p>-who named</p> <p>-the war ended in 1485</p> <p>-security appears</p> <p>-admit such as Spanish, after, Netherlands</p> <p>-England</p>	<p>two great power in European</p> <p>-through his mother</p> <p>-A member of archbishops have an operation</p> <p>Steward dinastic</p> <p>-the originator the battles happened in the war of Scotland against England</p> <p>-later become York claim</p> <p>-the two houses were uniting</p> <p>-Many battles within war</p> <p>-security it appear</p> <p>-admit such as spanish,after, netherlands</p>	<p>Two great powers in Europe</p> <p>-thanks to his mother</p> <p>-One of the archbishops performed an operation</p> <p>Stuarts' dynatsy</p> <p>-Origins of the war between Scotland and England</p> <p>-later York claimed</p> <p>-the two houses were unified</p> <p>-Many countries in wars</p> <p>-Security is established</p> <p>-admit such as Spain, after, Netherlands...?</p>
8	10	<p>-ther</p> <p>parliemet</p> <p>-He was using His</p> <p>-he achive</p> <p>-exept</p>	<p>-there</p> <p>parliament</p> <p>-He was using his</p> <p>-he achieves</p> <p>-accept</p>	<p>He achive</p>	<p>He achieves</p>	<p>Discussed <u>over ther</u></p> <p>-that comes in favour of his <u>wishes</u></p> <p>-he was using his power in the church to achive what he wants</p> <p>-leving taxes from the poorer classes</p> <p>-refused to exept</p> <p>-led the king</p>	<p>-Discussed there</p> <p>-that suits his expectations</p> <p>-To reach his ends, he used his authority</p> <p>-raising taxes</p> <p>...?</p>



						maker to support Edward to claim -insured its strength	
9	07	-frans -scotland -scottish -henry -happend	-France -Scotland -Scottish -Henry -happened	A treaty which <u>it</u> is made -One of the greatest war were knowing with the red roses this war is made up because of conflict	-A treaty which is made -One of the greatest wars which was known as the red roses, and which resulted because of a conflict	-the war is because of -France is included in the war to help -Henry was the father of dynasty building	-the war is due to two causes -France entered the war to help -Henry was the first who built a dynasty
10	09	-wer -charles -philip -inivitabl -dinasty -hasband -doter -sivil -yourk -hous -duck -defited	-were -Charles -Philip inevitable -dynasty -husband -daughter -cilvil -York -house -duke -defeated	two great power -sister to the king	-two great powers -sister of the king	some of the gentelmen of the such as -condisively the grow head won the war plantagement in the later year -his son proclaimed	-some gentlemen such as ...? -Plantagenet in the last year -his son was proclaimed
11	12	-with ended -wich -excuted -duch -referce -scottish -thrown -struggel -dugther	-which ended -which -executed -duke -refers -Scottish -throne -struggle -daughter	The hundered years <u>was</u> -throw him	-The hundred years <u>were</u> -threw him	The helpness Regained its lands -Bloodless -become populas -throw him	The help Got back its lands -With no blood -became popular -rejected him

12	05	-edward -the eare of Elisabeth -bringh -here	-Edward -the era of Elizabeth -bring -heir	His reasons <u>was</u> dismised	His reasons were dismissed	Reformation extermination  The first wives can't bringh him male here England was excammincated	.....?  The first wives can't present him with a male heir .....? .....?
13	06	-frence -gane -frenche -scotish -wor -sacceded -thrown -Jams -panish -A liver cramwel	-France -gun -French -Scottish -war succeeded -throne -James -punish -Oliver Cromwel	-Led by Robert he wanted  - <u>This</u> <u>two</u> battles <u>was</u> <u>happened</u> between <u>the</u> <u>France</u> England sacceded  James was didn't equal king  -Was <u>happened</u> <u>To returned</u>  Two <u>battels</u> <u>was</u> In the end  An <u>England</u> <u>dinasty</u> <u>to panished</u>	-Led by Robert who wanted  -These two battles took place between France, England won  James was not equal king  -happened  To return  Two battles were By the end  An English dynasty punished	France in the finally  It left many results  To panish jams from the thrown  People revolt for jams  -All this found a need from A liver Cramwel -They revolt a people from jams to panished him -James was didn't equal king -Conflicted Lost members in the lives	France finally  It resulted in  To remove James from the throne  People protested against James  There was a need to Oliver Cromwel' help -they pushed people to revolt to punish him  James was not a loyal king ...?
14	02.5	-sone -bombe -syporter -scotland -role -walas -defeted -exuted -hasband -fore Colwer cromwel -english	-son -bomb -supporter -Scotland -rule -Wallace -defeated -executed -husband -for Oliver Cromwel -English	He escape  He invite  He <u>was</u> ruled England	He escaped  He invited  He ruled England	Adventage to kill the king  Was <u>very</u> <u>catholic</u>  -Defeted from the <u>english</u> <u>powerful</u> army  -The greater of this idea	Saved the king  Was a catholic believer  -Defeated by the <u>strong</u> <u>English</u> army  -The most important in this idea

15	13	-reing	-reign	Jane Grey appointed Edward as <u>her</u> successor	Jane Grey appointed Edward as <u>her</u> successor	But he <u>did</u> not <u>liked</u> <u>by</u> a people	But he was not appreciated by people
		-john	-John	<u>his</u> successor			
		-inaddition	-in addition	-He chose <u>decision</u> he took <u>it</u> without the agreement of parliament <u>he</u> was invalid	-He chooses -But any decision he would make without parliament's agreement, is not valid	But any decision he took it without the agreement of parliament he was invalid	But any decision he would make without parliament's agreement is not valid
		-king Dom parliament	kingdom parliament	To rule without <u>parliament</u> however, the <u>parliament</u> He executed by the parliament	Repetition	He was executed by the parliament	He was executed by a parliament order

### IV.3. Findings

From the table above, we may classify second year students' errors from less important like a forgetting of a letter, to a more significant and typical errors that stem from a serious linguistic problems like transfer, overgeneralization and omission. Deeply affecting their writing performances and the given answers, errors presented in the table in no way correspond to the level of second year students, and here is a detailed classification of their errors:

**-Punctuation:** In 93.33% copies (14 out of 15) punctuation is totally omitted.

**-Spelling mistakes:** They are numerous and the most frequent and common in almost all copies is capitalization of proper nouns, either names of persons or names of countries and famous places. This kind of error is noticed in 12 copies out of 15 (80%) like in anjevin, france, scotland, margaret, walace, england...etc.

Followed by usual typical committed spelling mistakes that originates from the fact that many students write utterances the way they sounds, such as in wor ,syporter A liver

cromwell(OliverCromwell),james,panish,hasband,revive,espicially,thrown,defited,refere  
e,king Dom,contry, centry, doter, sentralizing ,comen, sivil, inaddition, achive,  
shose...etc. In the same category, there is the problem of the omission of the final “e”  
like in thron, wer, tax, ther,...etc or by adding an extra one like in sone ,fore, bombe,  
withe, aime,...etc.

In the final position, there are words that had been wrongly heard and may be wrongly  
written by times of taking notes or dictation during lectures for instance: clain,  
archpishop,...etc. Though the explanation that may be attributed to all these errors, yet;  
what is worth to mention is that certain errors are already correctly written down in the  
typed questions submitted to students who wrongly copied them for instance: enjiven  
instead of Anjevin.

**Grammatical errors:** Mainly consist of:

-The verbs’ agreement with its subject such as : he choose, he invite, reasons was, the  
hundered years was, it appear, he escape, he work, the king accept, the long parliament  
defeat, decisions is, two battels was,...etc.

-Misuse of pronouns: this daughter(instead of his),Edward which (instead of Edward  
who), she sister (rather than his sister), Decisions who he makes (decisions which /that),  
people and his life (people and their life),Jane appointed Edward as his(Jane/her).

-The subjects’ agreement with its object: people and his life (instead of people and  
lives), two great power.

-Prepositions use: sister to the king (instead of: sister of the king), in this reason(for  
this reason, agreed by when the intended meaning is agreed on, found a need from(a  
need to),in the end.

-Misuse of articles:-omission of articles “Jane is king”

-addition of an article “The England”, “the frence”

- wrong choice between articles “a people”

**Tense:**

- Incoherence between the tense of the verb and the adverb of time: was stated actually.
- Misuse of tenses such as future tense: will married instead of the infinitive form of the verb.
- Simple past: The war was ended, he did not liked, he was ruled England,was happened.
- The negative form of the simple past: James was did not
- Infinitive form: to assassinated, to killed, to returned...
- When two verbs follow one another: he start put
- Past participle form of irregular verbs: wagded

**Syntax errors:**

- The order of the different parts of speech in the sentence: it appears struggle instead of struggle appeared.
- Misplacement of the adjective and noun: tense difficult instead of difficult tense
- Order of adjectives in the same sentence: English powerful army instead of powerful English army
- The agreement of the noun with its adjective : An England dynasty (an English dynasty).
- Repetition and over use of the same subject like in: Edward will married with this daughters but when Edward.
- The use of the object and its pronoun in the same sentence like in: Any decision he took it.
- The use of the subject and its pronouns in the same sentence: Robert he wanted

**Vocabulary errors (semantic):** What is meant by vocabulary errors, is to test second year students' ability to produce coherent and meaningful sentences as responses to their teachers' questions. The most important fact is that, what teachers are expecting most is rudimentary correct sentences .But even this, second year students have many difficulties to achieve, since they are unable to distinguish between a female's name

and a male's one like to say "Jane is a king". On the other hand, language interference stems as the first cause of students' errors, reflected in the clear literal translation from Arabic to English. Though totally different in the script and many other aspects, students seem thinking in Arabic and writing in English.

-throw him instead of reject him. In English, the verb "to throw" may be used for the following meaning: "to throw a ball, yet it can not be used "to throw a person" unlike in Arabic where it may be used in a same manner for a person or an object.

- through his mother instead of via his mother. The use of through here, stems from a literal translation from Arabic (interference) using the equivalent preposition .

- In the end :The same case of the previous example.

-The greatest of this idea

- can't bring him male heir. In this example transfer is from the Algerian Arabic (the mother tongue) to English

-To produce the alliance

-How believe of God

-Certain gentelman of the such as

-Very catholic

-France in the finally,

All these errors stem from a negative transfer from Arabic to English and sometimes even from the Algerian Arabic (the mother tongue).

Overgeneralization is widely noticed like the use of synonyms as "powerful army" instead of "strong army" and "difficult tense" instead of "difficult time" knowing that in English tense is used as a grammatical form and time as a concept. Also the overgeneralization of some grammatical rules of making nouns by adding "ess" like, happy-happiness, over generalized to the verb to help- helpness.

Many sentences are totally meaningless, even put in the context meant by the students, to the extent that some sentences or expressions belong neither to the English nor the Arabic nor even to any other human language.

### **Students' ability to understand questions**

Students' ability to assimilate questions' meaning is essential in order to permit a coherent answering, which seems not the case of all students starting from the inability to identify a female's name from a male's one, which persisted in three copies (20%) though their correct answers and which is a very serious problem. Three other students (20%) however, provided answers which do not correspond to the questions

.

## **Conclusion**

From the analyses of students' exam copies, we noticed a considerable language incompetence affecting not only the writing skill, but even their ability to understand questions addressed to them to the extent that they can not make the difference between a female name and a male one.

On another side, and the most striking element is the clear contradiction between the attributed marks that may go to 15 in some times, and the huge number of errors in the relevant copies. Evidence, is that teachers of the British civilisation, focus on the content of the answers that is the "what" and totally neglect the "how". However, the evaluation should be the result of a combination of both "the what and the how" on equal footing for their importance in both students' language development as far as their cultural knowledge. This reflects a less consideration of their status as firstly teachers of a foreign language having a prior role as to teach the foreign language.



## Recommendations

Teaching and learning a foreign language is a highly complex task, that should consider both parties, the teacher's and the learner's, requirements, needs and wants so to reach their expectations and objectives. Through our literature reading and the obtained results from both students' and teachers' questionnaires, here are some recommendations designed to attract teachers' attention on the importance of learners' language proficiency role, and so to reduce its impact on the learning process during lectures of second year British civilisation:

By assuming that British civilisation course presents second year students with a set of new and/or difficult vocabulary, the first spontaneous suggestion is to adapt and adjust the classroom language, so to suit the English language proficiency level of the students teachers are working with. Being a possible plausible solution, yet there are other aspects that have to be considered for learners' easier understanding and best achievement:

-British civilisation teachers and right from the first contact with second year students, should prepare them to the new challenges of the course, and mainly attract their attention on its linguistic requirements, and so to adapt with the new linguistic environment since it

is newly introduced to them.

-Learners' linguistic problems must not be seen or treated as signs of failure or weakness, on the contrary, teachers have to consider them as learners' developing linguistic systems.

-Teachers have to anticipate learners' needs and requirements, and consider that no asking of questions does in no way reflect a good understanding, but may be regarded as a language inability of question formation; whereas no answering of questions may reflect in no way ignorance of the appropriate answer but an inability to formulate the answer, hence a linguistic incompetence.

---

-Learners' linguistic errors should not be subject to an overcorrection on the part of the teacher, and that may be negatively perceived and interpreted by the learner.

-Teachers should stress the fact that making an error is a quite natural phenomenon and even an important aspect of the learning process and linguistic development, so to encourage students to get rid of their shyness and frustration, hence to improve their classroom interaction.

-Learners' understanding should be the prior goal and objective of the teacher despite any other considerations, like to get to the end of the syllabus.

-When tested, learners have not to be evaluated only on the information related to the content of British civilisation course, but taking into account the different linguistic aspects like the style, vocabulary and even grammar. So, to make students understand the importance of language proficiency even in courses like British civilisation, and that teachers should bare in mind the fact that they are firstly teachers of a foreign language not a foreign culture.

content may bring students to look behind the linguistic difficulty and pass through it. - Teachers have to avoid permanent reference to translation as a mean of explanation, but rather to explain English by English, so to make students get familiar with the English language. Most importantly to surround the effect of interference in general, and the phenomenon of thinking in Arabic or French and speaking English in particular, which is widely and seriously causing important damages on both receptive and productive language performances. Secondly, translation as a teaching tool needs to take into account a number of different aspects, such as grammar (e.g. transitivity of verbs), syntax, collocation and connotation. Uncritical use of translation may give learners insufficient, confusing or even inaccurate information about the target language

-Considering the long content and target objective of the course of British civilisation on the one hand, and learners' poor language proficiency on the other one, time allocation of the module, an hour and a half a week, is not sufficient to meet all the needs of students and has to be reconsidered.

-Use of authentic materials so to join the spoken language to an effective image.

-Motivation is a key instrument in learning, and an attractive

## General Conclusion

The attempt along this research study, was to isolate the language proficiency as one of the many factors affecting the studying of the module of British civilisation by second year students of English at Batna University. The aim was to analyze its role and to measure its involvement in the learning process on both areas students' achievement and English language development. Through literature reading, it has long been stressed that there is a high connection between the foreign language to be mastered and its relevant culture that stems as the natural environment of that language. What implies that one has to learn the foreign culture so to adequately speak the foreign language. Ideally, it is a logical necessary step mainly if considering the variant pragmatic and meaning systems governing the language like the English one. However, once effectively applied in the foreign language classroom, the culture to speak the language would arise the question of the language to speak about the culture. Hence, a vicious circle where to situate what should come first: the culture or the language. This exactly what corresponds to the challenges met by second year students since they have to face a large set of information presented to them in the English language that they do not adequately handle. Which means, an unmeaningful vocabulary, grammatical structures that they do not well master with the frustration of memorizing the British cultural information. A fact widely confirmed thanks to the obtained results from both teachers' and students' questionnaires. Furthermore, at the beginning of this research, we hypothesized that students' poor language proficiency affects the learning process. Again and thanks to the questionnaires results, it has been proved that the poor linguistic effects extends to affect the affective side of the learner like motivation, apprehension, self-esteem, empathy, uneasiness, negative attitudes toward the studying of the module of British civilisation. Being not the only element stemming behind students' difficulty in the module, this research's study results can

not be over generalized ,since students possessing an adequate English language proficiency, mentioned other facts that should be reconsidered like the content, the method adopted by the teachers, time allocation...etc .Thus, the linguistic element can not be seen but only as one of the many factors affecting the learning process. If teaching a foreign language is not an easy task to perform, teachers have to bare in mind that teaching its respective culture is far complex and they have to adopt their lecturing in terms of their learners' level, needs and wants.

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# *APPENDICES*

# Appendix n°1

## Students' questionnaire

Dear Students;

This is a research work aiming at identifying English language competence as a basic element to study British Civilisation course by Second year students of the department of English. Please, have the kindness to provide us with the necessary answers to the following questionnaire either by ticking the appropriate boxes or by making full statements whenever necessary.

N.B: We rely on your collaboration as far as your honesty

**Thank you**

### Section one:

1-Sex:

♂ Male

♀ Female

2-Age:.....

3-Your stream in the secondary school

-Literary

-Scientific

-Technical

### Section two:

4-How do you evaluate your personal English language competence?

-Very satisfying

-Satisfying

-Not satisfying

5-In respect to your English language competence, what is the most difficult module in the second year?

American literature	
American civilisation	
British literature	
British civilisation	
Grammar	
Linguistics	
Oral Expression	
Phonetics	
Written expression	

-Why?.....  
.....

### Section three

6-To what extent do you like British civilisation course?

-Much

-Little

-Not at all

-Explain why:

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

7-In respect to your English language competence, is British civilisation:

- Very difficult
- Difficult
- Average
- Easy
- Very easy

5-Do you think that your poor English language proficiency is an obstacle to study British civilisation?

- Yes
- No

8-During lectures of British civilisation ,do you understand:

- Easily
  - With difficulty
  - Not at all
- why:

.....  
.....

9-During British Civilisation lectures do you ask questions on your teacher:

- Yes
- No

-If yes, questions are mainly related:

- to the meaning of certain items you can not understand.
- to facts closed to the content itself.
- questions related to other topics.

-If no, is it because:

- Lectures are easy
- You are a shy person
- For your inability to express yourself
- Lectures are well explained
- Other reasons

Explain:.....  
.....

10-Your teachers' questionnaire, in the module of British civilisation ,are :

- Very clear and easy
- Ambiguous because of your problems of English language competence

11-What is the most difficult thing during lectures of British Civilisation:

- to answer a question
- to ask a question
- to understand a question
- to understand the course
- all of the above

12-The most difficult problem you meet during British Civilisation exams is:

- To understand questions
- To answer questions
- Both

-Why:.....

13-After an exam of British Civilisation, your marks reflect:

- Your bad writing skill
- Your misunderstanding of the question(s)
- Both of them
- An other reason

-If an other reason name it:.....

14-For you, the best way to understand British Civilisation courses is:

- to refer only to the English language
- to use the mother tongue

#### Section four:

15-In respect to your language competence, do you think that the second year is the most appropriate to introduce British civilisation course?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

16-In respect to your language competence ,have you really made advantage from studying British civilisation as it is expected?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

17-In respect to your language competence ,do you prefer that British civilisation should be postponed to next stages?

- Strongly agree
- agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

18-What do you suggest for an easier understanding and best achievement in the British Civilisation course:

## Appendix n°2

### Teachers' questionnaire

*Dear Colleague;*

This is a questionnaire designed for the purpose of providing data for a research aiming at identifying English language proficiency as a basic element to study British Civilization course by second year students of the department of English.

Please have the kindness to provide us with the necessary answers to the following questions either by ticking the appropriate boxes or by making full statements.

*Thank you*

#### **I-Section one:**

1-As a teacher of British Civilisation, how do you evaluate second year students' English language competence?

- a) - Very satisfying
- b)-Satisfying
- c)- Average
- d)-Poorly satisfying
- e)-Not satisfying

2-Do you think that English language proficiency is an important element for studying British Civilisation in the second year?

-Yes  -No

Why?

.....

.....

.....

-If yes to what extent?

- a)-Very important
- b)-Important
- c)- Not important

#### **II-Section two:**

3-When presenting lectures of British Civilisation for second year students, the **focus** is made on:

- a)-Presenting information related to the civilisation program.
- b)-Presenting grammar and vocabulary
- c)-Both presented at an equal level
- d)-Both but presented on a different scale
- Explain

.....

.....

4-Along the academic year, when presenting lectures of British civilisation to second year students, how do you evaluate their understanding of the courses:

- a)-Very difficult
- b)- Difficult
-

- c)- Average
- d)-Easy
- e)-Very easy

5-Beside other factors like motivation or content, do you think that second year students' language proficiency is at the origin of their understanding problems?

- Yes  -No

How: .....

.....

.....

6-In relation to students' language proficiency, how do you evaluate their classroom interaction?

- a) - Very important
- b)- Important
- c)- Not important

7-In regard to students language proficiency, what is the most difficult thing for them during lectures?

- a)-To understand the course
- b)-To understand the teacher's question
- c)-To answer the teacher's question
- d)-To ask a question
- e)-All of the above

8-When interacting in the classroom, what kind of errors do students make?

- a)-are of a grammatical order
- b)-are of a vocabulary order
- c)-both of the above
- 

9-The most frequent questions asked by learners are related to:

- a)-The meaning of difficult or new items
- b)-Linked to the content of the course itself
- c)- Related to other topics

10-Do second year students ask you to explain using the Arabic Algerian language?

- Yes  -No

-If yes how frequently:

- a)-Always
- b)-Very often
- c)-Rarely
- d)-Never

11-When tested during exams of British Civilisation, the most difficulty second year students meet is:

- a)- To understand the question (s)
- b)- To answer questions because they do not have the sufficient linguistic competence
- c)- To answer questions because they do not have the adequate feedback
- d)-All the above

12-When you correct an exam paper, the focus is made on:

- a)-The feedback
-

- b)-The written skill
- c)-Both on an equal scale
- d)-Both but not on an equal scale

-Why: .....

.....

.....

**Section three:**

13-British civilisation course presents important and large source English language proficiency

- a)-Strongly agree
- b)-Agree
- c)-Disagree
- d)-Strongly disagree

14- British Civilisation presents a large new stream of vocabulary difficult to second year students

- a)-Strongly agree
- b)-Agree
- c)-Disagree
- d)-Strongly disagree

15-In respect to second year students' language proficiency ,does the British civilisation fulfilled its meant pedagogical objective as a course?

- a)-Strongly agree
- b)-Agree
- c)-Disagree
- d)-Strongly disagree

16-What do you suggest for an easier and best achievements in second year British Civilisation course:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Appendix n°3

### Second Term Exam copies (Teacher:1)

HADJ LAKHDAR UNIVERSITY-BATNA  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Groups5,6,7

23.05.05

Time:9H-11H

### Second examination in British Civilisation

I-develop a short paragraph about:( 10 marks)

1-The hundred years war:

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

2-The Gun Powder Plot:

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

3-The Anjevin dynasty:

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

4-Falkirk and Stirling battles

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

5-The Glorious Revolution

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

II-“A horse,a horse!My kingdom for a horse”

This was the exclamation of richard III,king of England during the battle of Bosworth field against the house of Lancaster during the last phase of the Wars of the ROSES

-In no more than 120 words (12 lines)write a composition about the Impact the wars of the roses had upon the English monarchy during the late 15 th century.(10marks)



**Appendix n°4**

**Second Term Exam copies (Teacher2)**

HADJ LAKHDAR UNIVERSITY-BATNA  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
Groups1-2-3-4

**SECTION ONE :**

Identify The following:

- 1- Jane Grey : .....
- 2- The peasant's revolt : .....
- 3- The anglican church : .....

Answer briefly the following questions:

- 1- Pop innocent III put England under the interdict of 1208:  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 2- What was his reason for doing so Eduard IV:  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 3- The long parlement insured its strenght by issuing a number of acts, state two of them:  
.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION TWO :**

- 1- The adoption of protestantism in England was political rather than a religions move. Explain.  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....