EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Intercultural Teaching in the Department of English Language and Literature at Batna 2 University The Current Situation and the Way Forward

MOUAS. Samia
Pr. GHOUAR. Amor
Batna 2 University

Abstract: Reconsidering the aims of English language teaching (ELT) has been a matter of great discussions during the last three decades. This has resulted in shifting emphasis from mere linguistic over communicative to intercultural competence. Various models and theories have been suggested to place new demands on language teachers and help them conceptualize and understand the intercultural dimension (henceforth, ID) in teaching to improve their practices regarding intercultural competence (IC) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. This study draws from Sercu et al. (2005) and seeks to contribute to knowledge based studies done internationally and brings to the fore perceptions and practices of IC teaching of EFL teachers in the Department of English and Literature at Batna 2 University during the first semester of the 2016-2017 academic year, a context in which intercultural approaches to language teaching and learning have not been widely considered. The findings of the study indicated that even though teachers support intercultural objectives, they did not appear to integrate culture related classroom activities.

Key words: culture objectives; intercultural competence in foreign language classes; foreign language education; teachers' perceptions

ملخص: لقد كان موضوع إعادة النظر في أهداف تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية محل مناقشات كبيرة خلال العقود الثلاثة الماضية. وقد أدى ذلك إلى تحويل التركيز من مجرد أهداف لغوية إلى أهداف تواصلية ثم إلى الكفاءة بين الثقافات. ولقد تم اقتراح نماذج ونظريات مختلفة لوضع مطالب جديدة لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ومساعدتهم على تصور وفهم البعد بين الثقافات في التدريس لتحسين ممارساتهم فيما يتعلق بتدريس الكفاءة بين الثقافات. هذه الدراسة مستمدة من سيركيو (Sercu) وآخرين (2005) وتسعى إلى المساهمة في إثراء الدراسات السابقة لمعرفة ما يجري على الصعيد الدولي في هذا الميدان. وتهدف إلى معرفة مدى إدراك معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية والأدب في جامعة باتنة 2 خلال السداسي الأول من العام الدراسي 2016-2017 . وقد كشفت النتائج بأن أغلب أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية المشاركين في هذهالدراسة مدركون للأهداف اللغوية و الثقافية من تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية، ولكن تطبيق تدريس الكفاءة بين الثقافات لا يتم في الواقع داخل الأقسام.

I. INTRODUCTION

Greater than ever before, in the 21st century, people's escalating access to the *World Wide Web*, the growth of contacts between people from different cultural and linguistic settings by means of advances in technology and the increasing mobility of people worldwide have resulted in a growing recognition for the need for an intercultural focus in language education as a necessity rather than an option. As Sercu and Raya[1] advocate: *"There is no doubt that our world has become more complex and international than ever before. The adequate preparation of young people for such complexity and globalisation requires more than passing on an agreed body of knowledge".*

Indeed, this has led educational authorities and policymakers to center their attention more on ways to help learners develop their intercultural awareness across the school curriculum. In Kramsch's[2] own words, "*the goals of traditional language teaching have been found wanting in this new era of globalization*". Given this, and since an understanding of the relationship between culture and language and how interaction across cultures operates is an important component of becoming interculturally competent in a foreign language (Byram 1997[3]; Kramsch 1998[4]), it is now common to find this dimension

---

[1]**Sercu and Raya (2007).** Introduction.In Jiménez Raya, M. y Sercu, L. (eds.), (2007). *Challenges in Teacher Development: Learner Autonomy and Intercultural Competence*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.p.7

[2]**Kramsch, C. (2009b)**. The multilingual subject. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (p.190)

[3]**Byram, M. (1997)**. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

[4]**Kramsch, C. (1998)**. *Language and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

present as an important objective in many foreign language curricula and at all levels of education.

Moreover, developing EFL learners' intercultural awareness can be seen from varied angles. Since learning is a life-long journey, the teacher's role is not to do the entire job but prepare the path for learners to be themselves discoverers of intercultural situations. According to Raya and Sercu[1], "*Teachers can never teach 'all there is to know', since new knowledge is created daily. Foreign language teachers also cannot foresee the many intercultural situations in which their learners may find themselves in the course of their lives*".

I.1. Context of the Study

There is a general consensus in the literature of the link between internalization and intercultural education. Knight[2], for example, identifies the internationalisation of higher education as *".... the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education"*. In line with internationalisation goals influencing universities worldwide, the Algerian universities have been affected by international trends. This has clearly been stated in the official document '*Le Guide Pratique de Mise en Oeuvre et de Suivi du LMD*' (2011), where the Algerian authorities of Higher Education have overtly emphasized on an in-depth renovation of actual practices to enhance the quality of education in all universitiesby the introduction

---

[1]**op.cit., (p.7)**

[2]**Knight, Jane (2003).** *Updating the definition of internationalization*. International Higher Education. (pp. 2–3).

الهيئة للاستشارات

of the LMD[1] system as well as maximizing opportunities to open doors on the international by engaging in the internationalisation of higher education. The latter is one of the determinants that is shaping governmental policy and practice, and influencing some major educational reforms. The effect of the rapidly changing context of globalisation at a general level has made this an imperative:

> *Like all the other countries, Algeria has faced the challenge of the globalization movement of the university training system, which has favoured the LMD. The in-depth renovation of our teachings, the introduction of new practices, the maximization of opportunities and openness to international relations were the main reasons for choosing the LMD[2]. (Our translation)*

I.2. Statement of the Problem

Following the initiatives taken by numerous educational systems worldwide and in response to English being an important communicative tool in the global village[3], the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education has placed a great emphasis on the study of English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) by creating favourable conditions for learning it. Bearing in mind that in the Algerian educational context, English is taught as a second foreign language

---

[1] "The introduction of the LMD in 2004 led to a variety of new teaching practices, which now requires harmonization work in order to ensure greater clarity in the functioning of the system"(p.7) *Guide pratique de mise en oeuvre et de suivi du LMD – juin 2011*

[2]**ibid., p.16**

[3]**Crystal, D. (2003).***English as a global language*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.(p.106)

after French. English is not used extensively outside the classroom to serve people's needs; neither does it have administrative status.

With such enthusiasm for participating in the process of internationalisation and endorsing English as the global language, it would appear that the demands upon and responsibilities of language educators and teachers are now greater than ever before to consider the importance of intercultural language education (ICLE) in EFL programmes in Higher Education in Algeria. The paradigm shift in teachers' role from developing their learners' language skills to promoting their intercultural skills, attitudes and knowledge requires new demands.

First of all, we argue that research demonstrates a strong correlation between language and culture and intercultural education. According to Brown[1], *"A language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of language: The two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate them without losing the significance of either language or culture"*. Moreover, the inseparability of language and culture in the foreign language classroom, as well as the integration of culture into language teaching have long been recognized and has come to the foreground in the last 30 years. Worth mentioning in this context are also the studies conducted by, Byram[2], Kramsch[3], Liddicoat[1], Liddicoat

---

[1]**Brown, H. D. (2007)**. *Principles of language learning and teaching.* (5th Ed.) New York: Pearson Education Company. (p. 189)
[2]**Byram, M. (1989)**. *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education.* Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.
[3]**Kramsch,C.(1993)**. *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

& Scarino[2] and Prodromou[3] to name but a few. Moreover, the ability to understand and cope with cross-cultural differences is as important to students as applying linguistic skills in the global village. Nonetheless, practical applications are still challenging as language teachers tend to know more about linguistic items than cultural aspects[4].

While ICLE worldwide is an area of growing interest and has gained some popularity in second and foreign language (L2) education; to date, however, we have limited knowledge about whether EFL teachers in the Department of English and Literature at Batna 2 University are approaching ICC or not. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no prior empirical investigation has addressed the extent to which EFL teachers are actually developing the ID in their classes. From this position, it was the dearth of practical study investigating EFL teachers' perceptions and actual intercultural attitudes and awareness and to what extent they are approaching culture in their language teaching that motivated the present study.

For this reason, this study aims to help close this research gap by exploring how EFL teachers' perceptions and awareness of ICC influence their practices of intercultural communication.

---

[1]**Liddicoat, A. J. (2002)**. Static and dynamic views of culture and intercultural language acquisition. *Babel, 36*(3), 4-11, 37.

[2]**Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013)**. *Intercultural language teaching and learning*. New York: Wiley and Sons.

[3]**Prodromou, L. (1992)**. What culture? Which culture? Cross-cultural factors in language learning action. *ELT Journal*. Volume 46/1 January. Oxford University Press: 39-50.

[4]**Celce-Murcia, M. (2007).** Rethinking the Role of Communicative
Competence in Language Teaching. In Alcón Soler E & Safont Jordà MP (Eds.). *Intercultural Language Use and Language Learning*, 41–57.Dordrecht: Springer.

By teachers' perceptions, we mean:

> *...the cognitive process and structures that inspires, and are inspired by, what teachers do. This unobservable cognitive dimension of thinking includes beliefs, knowledge, principles, theories, and attitudes, in addition to the thoughts and reflections teachers have before, during and after teaching.[1]*

Since teachers' perceptions and beliefs directly affect their teaching practices in the classroom, it is necessary to explore them as commented by Sercu et al.[2]

> *understanding teachers' perceptions and the reasons why they embrace or reject intercultural competence teaching is crucial for teacher educators who want to design (international) teacher education programmes which can clarify and exemplify to foreign language teachers how they can promote the acquisition of intercultural competence in their classes.* (p.15)

Therefore, teachers' perceptions and beliefs are believed to interpret their classroom practices (Borg, 2003[3]; Sercu & St John, 2007[4]).Against this background, and based on a review and analysis of

---

[1]**Borg, S. (2003)**. Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe and do. *Language Teaching*, 36, 81-109. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261444803001903

[2]**Sercu, L., Bandura, E., Castro, P., Davcheva, L., Laskaridou, C., Lundgren, U., Mendez García, M., & Ryan, P. (2005)**. *Foreign language teachers and Intercultural Competence: An international investigation. Languages for Intercultural Communication and Education, 10.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

[3]**Borg, S. (2003)**. Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe and do. *Language Teaching*, 36, 81-109. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261444803001903

[4]**Sercu, L., & St. John, O. (2007)**. Teachers' beliefs and their impact on teaching practise: a

relevant literature on ICC, the researcher noticed a paucity of research on EFL teachers' situation with ICT in Algerian universities even after the 2004 LMD curriculum reform. Accordingly, to gain a closer insight on EFL teachers' perceptions of ICC and how they shape up their current classroom practices, two research questions (RQ) were formulated:

RQ1: To what extent do EFL teachers in the Department of English and Literature at Batna 2 University perceive the objectives of foreign language education?

RQ2: To what extent do they incorporate classroom practice related to cultural teaching?

In this study, EFL teachers' perceptions of the ICC can be understood as consisting of three components:

(1) Perceptions of the objectives of English language teaching (FLT),

(2) Perceptions of culture teaching objectives,

(3) Teachers' awareness of the importance of ICC in FLT.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

II.1.Paradigm Shift in FLT: From Linguistic Competence to Intercultural Competence

From the end of the 19th century onwards, merely *knowledge about* a language and its grammatical structures turning into *Linguistic Competence*, i.e. the shared knowledge of the ideal speaker-listener set

---

literature review. In M. J. Raya, & L. Sercu (Eds.), *Challenges in Teacher Development:Learner Autonomy and Intercultural Competence* (pp. 39-64). Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang.

in a completely homogeneous speech community was dominant. In Chomsky's[1] (1965) own words,

> *....linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interests, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.*

Within the 1960's and 70's, there has been an increasing and justified concern for an alternative to Chomsky's concept of competence and 'universal grammar' with a shift from grammar-biased language study in Hymes's communicative competence (CC) in language teaching. It came as a natural result of the drastic shift in linguists' perspective of the shortcomings of linguistic competence in foreign language teaching, accompanied with the introduction of the CC approach. To this end, the anthropological linguist Dell Hymes[2] (1972) developed a counter-movement to the strong emphasis on linguistic competence and he realized that the ability to produce well-formed sentences was in itself not enough. Hymes (1974[3], 1987[1]), in

---

[1]**Chomsky, N. (1965)**. *Aspects of the theory of syntax*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Ma. (p. 4)

[2]**Hymes, D. (1972)**. Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Life, In Gumperz, J. J. & Hymes, D. (eds), *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, New York: Holts Rinehart & Winston, pp. 35-71.

[3]**Hymes, D. (1974)**. *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Saville Troike[2], marries Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence to *".... knowledge of **appropriateness** (whether and to what extent something is suitable), **occurrence** (whether and to what extent something is done), and **feasibility** (whether and to what extent something is possible under particular circumstances)"* (p.18, our emphasis).

Nonetheless, it was not until the 1980s, with the North Americans Michael Canale and Merrill Swain[3], that cultural instruction was considered as a vital element and the emerging awareness of the relationship between language, sociocultural aspects, and CC became more structured. Based on Hymes' theory, the Canale & Swain's proposed model shows CC as comprised of three different types of abilities: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Their model was later updated by Canale[4] and it based on the four components: *grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence*, *discourse competence* and *strategic competence*. (See Canale & Swain[5]). Van Ek[6] added two more

---

[1]**Hymes, D. (1987).** Communicative competence. In U. Ammon, N. Ditmar & K.J.Matthier (Eds.) *Sociolinguistics: An international handbook of the Science of Language and Society* (pp. 219-229). Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter. (Draws on new material in Hymes, 1984.)

[2]**Saville-Troike, M. (2003)**. *The ethnography of communication: An introduction*. Malden, Mass: Blackwell Pub.

[3]**Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980)**. Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. Applied Linguistics,1, 1-47.

[4]**Canale, M. (1983)**. From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (Eds.), Language and Communication, 2-27. London: Longman.

[5]**Op.cit. p.27–31.**

[6]**Van Ek, J.A. (1986)**. *Objectives for Foreign language Learning*, Vol.1: Scope. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

components to the above list: *sociocultural competence*, or the ability to function in several cultures, and *social competence*, meaning familiarity with differences in social customs, confidence, empathy and motivation to communicate with others. Only after the introduction of socio-cultural competence as an aspect of communicative ability that foreign language classroom practice has experienced change and culture became to be regarded, not only as *'information conveyed by the language'* but *'as a feature of language itself'* Kramsch.[1]

From the 1990s up to the present, a succession of theorists and a growing body of literature, chiefly in Europe and in the USA, have put the issue of the inseparability of language and culture and the development of ICC their principal focus of interest (e.g. Byram[2], 1997; Kramsch[3], 1993; Liddicoat[4], 2002; Sercu, 2002a[5], to name only a few).

A number of educators and scholars have brought to the fore the fact that cultural competence has often been ignored in EFL classes and the focus of language learning is still premised on the study of grammar and lexis (cf. e.g.Byram[6] and Lázár[1]). Sercu asserts that,

---

[1]**Kramsch, C. (1993)**. *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.8

[2]**Byram, M. (1997)**. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

[3]**Op.cit.**

[4]**Liddicoat, A. J. (2002)**. Static and dynamic views of culture and intercultural language acquisition. *Babel, 36*(3), 4-11, 37.

[5]**Sercu, L. (2002a)**.Autonomous learning and the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence: Some implications for course development. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 15 (1):* 61-74.

[6]**Op.cit.**

> *...foreign language teaching should not only focus on language (and/or literature at later stages), but also include a cultural dimension in a broader sense. Language teaching should demonstrate that there are connections between language and culture.*[2]

This has transformed foreign language education (FLE) and the norms of native speakers have lost ground.

As stated above, the rapid and fast changing world together with the ever-increasing importance of English as a world language have left no empty space to think other than the evidence today that FLE comprises not just *"knowledge and skill in the grammar of a language but also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways"*[3].Thus, CC has been expanded to encompass IC and intercultural awareness has now become a vital part of foreign language learning. Sercu et al.[4] assert that CC alone is not enough with *"the increased frequency of intercultural contacts"* which "*has promoted an intercultural turnaround in foreign language education"*. Therefore,

---

[1]**Lázár, Ildikó. (2003).***Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in language teacher education.*European Centre for Modern LanguagesCouncil of Europe Publishing.

[2]**Sercu (2005)** in the forward, (p.vii). InSercu, L., Bandura, E., Castro, P., Davcheva, L., Laskaridou, C., Lundgren, U., Mendez García, M., & Ryan, P. (2005). *Foreign language teachers and Intercultural Competence: An international investigation. Languages for Intercultural Communication and Education, 10.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

[3]**Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002).** Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching: a practical introduction for teachers [Electronic Version]. Retrieved March 15, 2017 from http://www.lrc.cornell.edu/director/intercultural.pdf (p.7)

[4]**Sercu et al (2005)** (p.484).

> *It has now become commonplace to state that foreign language learning should be viewed in an intercultural perspective. The main objective of foreign language education is no longer defined strictly in terms of the acquisition of communicative competence. Teachers are now required to teach intercultural communicative competence.[1]*

One of the figures whose contributions have been well-acknowledged in FLE since the 1990s is Michael Byram. He redefined the concept of sociocultural competence in education in what has been termed intercultural communicative competence (ICC), a concept which has been recognised of essential relevance in FLE methodologies. Byram and his associates define the intercultural dimension in FLE as:

> *....language teaching with an intercultural dimension continues to help learners to acquire the linguistic competence needed to communicate in speaking or writing, to formulate what they want to say/write in correct and appropriate ways.But it also develops their **intercultural competence** i.e. their ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality.[2] (Bold in original).*

They further assert that:

---

[1] **Sercu, L. (2006)**.The foreign language and intercultural competence teacher: the acquisition of a new professional identity. *Intercultural Education,Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 55–72*. (p.55)

[2]**Ibid.** (p.3)

> *……an intercultural speaker needs some **knowledge**…… However, an intercultural speaker also needs an awareness that there is more to be known and understood from the other person's perspective, that there are **skills**, **attitudes** and **values** involved too ….., which are crucial to understanding intercultural human relationships.[1]*

Byram[2]and Byram et al.[3] identified a number of dimensions of ICC and ways to better understand, measure, and apply it within the FLE comprising:

1.Attitudes: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own culture.

2.Knowledge: of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in the interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.

3. Skills: of interpreting and relating, discovering and interacting, and critical cultural awareness (based on Byram[4]; Byram et al.[5]).

These dimensions stress the importance of providing an opportunity for learners to compare and contrast their own cultural worlds with others to reflect on differences and similarities, together

---

[2]**Byram, M. (1997)**. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
[3]**Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002)**. *Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching: A Practical Introduction for Teachers*. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe.
[4]Byram, 1997
[5]Byram et al. 2002

with an increased understanding of their own and other people's cultures, and a positive interest in how cultures both connect and differ.

III. The Present Study
Introduction

The purpose of this section is to describe and discuss the methodology employed in this study. The participants, data collection instruments, data collection and statistical analysis of the results are all explained in details. This research is a case study of an exploratory nature. Cresswell[1] suggests that *"exploratory studies are most advantageous when not much has been written about the topic or the population being studied"*.

III.1. Participants

The sample meant for this study comprised forty-four **(44)**EFL teachers in the Department of English and Literature at Batna 2 Universityduring the 2016-2017 academic year.A purposeful sampling technique was used to select the sample from the population. According to Lodico et al.[2], ``the *goal of purposeful sampling is not to obtain a large and representative sample; the goal is to select persons, places, or things that can provide the richest and most detailed information to help us answer our research questions*". Therefore, the sampling for the questionnaire included only teachers who met the following criteria:

---

[1]**Creswell, John W. (2003)**. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage. (p.30)

[2]**Lodico, M. G., Spaulding, D. T., & Voegtle, K. H. (2010).Methods in educational research: theory to practice** (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (p.134).

‒ they currently teach English in the Department of English and Literature at Batna 2 Universityduring the 2016-2017 academic year.

‒ they were aware of the requirements set by the Ministry of Higher Education to implement new methods into their teaching.

‒ They were not temporary or supply teachers.

‒ The researcher who is also a teacher at this department was out of the sample.

The number of teachers who met these criteria was **N=44** teachers. Among them, 27.3% (12) were male and 72.7 % (32) were female.To elicit more information from the participants in this study, the first section of the questionnaire aimed to gather background information about their gender, age range, years of experience and their highest academic degrees. More details about the participants will be given in data analysis section (**III.3)** below.

III.2. Data Gathering Tools

To explore EFL teachers' perceptions of ICC as well as theircurrent practices, a questionnaire was chosen as the data collection instrument used in this study since it has the advantage of reaching more teachers in a short period of time and generating quantifiable data to answer the research questions easily.Bryman[1]. The researcher would gain an overview of the situation and answer the research questions.

---

[1]**Bryman, A. (1988)**. *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Unwin Hyman.

III.2.1. Questionnaire Design and development

The questionnaire used in this research was designed by the researcher with the guidance of her supervisor. First of all, prior to the development and administration of the questionnaire to the participants in this study, and to get a general idea of what has been published concerning teachers' perceptions of ICC, the researcher reviewed many documents and papers some hard papers and books and others published online. Another aim of reviewing the related literature was to deepen our understanding of the topic under investigation. At last, the research design needed to analyse teachers' perceptions was a questionnaire adapted from Sercu et al. [1](2005) insightful research investigating the perceptions of EFL teachers from seven European countries of their cultural dimension as well as their students' attitudes towards the target language (TL) countries.

The questionnaire was developed and modified to include four sections.

Section One contained four (4) items which are meant to collect background information about the respondents. This was followed by Section Two (2 items), which asked the teachers to rank by order of importance what they perceive as (1) the objectives of English language teaching (FLT) and (2) the objectives of culture teaching. Section Three inquired about teachers' awareness of the importance of the intercultural dimension in FLE and how much they agreed/disagreed with the fifteen statements. Section Four asked

---

[1] **op.cit**

respondents about their culture teaching practices and how often they practice the thirteen activities in their classrooms.

III.2.2. Piloting the Questionnaire: Validity and Reliability of Data

In this study, some strategies were adopted to ensure validity and reliability. The strategies included the piloting of the questionnaire. The purpose of the pilot test was to check whether there were any misunderstandings, ambiguities or inappropriateness in the questionnaire.

A first version of the questionnaire was piloted on four colleagues holding PhD degree and who were invited to share comments on the question items. The researcher only needed to slightly modify it. Moreover, the draft questionnaire was also reviewed by the researcher's supervisor. The latter made some comments on the wording, and more importantly, insisted on consistency. He suggested replacing 'learning' by 'teaching' in Section Two since the questionnaire is meant for teachers.The questionnaire was revised according to his comments. The revised version of the questionnaire was trialled out in a pilot test to see how well it could generate responses from the teachers. The pilot test was undertaken in November 2016. A sample of 8 teachers was selected from the population. The final form of the questionnaire was e-mailed to the supervisor for final consent.

III.2.3. Administering the Questionnaire

It was recognized at the outset that there would be a number of potential difficulties arising from the manner of delivery of the paper

copy questionnaire. To guarantee a full return rate, the questionnaire was administered to teachers during a meeting held by the Head of the Department with the teachers. Before the distribution of the questionnaire, the respondents were told about the purpose of the study. They were also assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The researcher asked the respondents not to discuss their responses with each other. Besides, the respondents were allowed as much time as was necessary to complete it.

III.3. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section summarises the questionnaire's main findings. In this study, data gathered from EFL university teachers' questionnaire were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22.0) descriptive analysis to convert numbers into assertions.

Section One: Background Information

Before discussing the results obtained to answer the research questions set for this study, the first section helped develop a picture of the participants' gender, age range, years of experience and their highest academic degrees. Although the study was not meant to explore the effect of teachers' characteristics on their perceptions and practices of ICC, they have been found to provide important information about the participants. The following results were reported using frequencies and percentages.

As displayed in **Table.1** below, female teachers are approximately three times the number of male and represent (72.7 %) of the total number of respondents. This is a significant indication of how much the teaching profession is preferred by women than by men

in Algeria. In addition, in terms of their highest educational degree, the data revealed that (84.1%) of the respondents reported to have Magister (MA) degree and (15.9%) to hold PhD degree. This explains the fact that teachers must have at least Magister degree in order to become a teacher at the university level. As far as the length of teaching experience is concerned, participants' experience of teaching varies: (77, 3%) of the respondents have teaching experiences of more than six (6) years. This indicates that the EFL teachers are experienced and have accumulated extensive teaching experience through years of professional practice.

Teachers' Characteristics (N= 44)		Number	Percentage %
Gender	**Male**	12	27.3
	Female	32	72.7
Age	**25-30**	10	22.7
	31-40	21	47.7
	41-50	8	18.2
	More than 51	05	11.4
Academic Degree	**MA**	37	81.1
	PhD	7	15.9
Teaching Experience	**1-5**	10	22.7
	6-10	7	15.9
	11-15	15	34.1
	16-20	4	9.1
	Over 20	8	18.2

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Participants

Section Two: Teachers' Perceptions of the Objectives of Foreign Language Education

In order to explore the ways in which participants perceived the objectives of (FLE), two groups of statements were categorised in order to address the following objectives: five language (linguistic) teaching

objectives and fourteen culture teaching objectives. The statements were randomly selected and the respondents were asked to rank them by order of importance on a five-point Likert Scale, from 1- being not important to 5- being most important. Based on the respondents' responses collected from the questionnaire and analysed using SPSS, the objectives were ranked according to the mean and standard deviation by order of importance. In terms of language (linguistic) objectives, teachers ranked *'to assist students to acquire a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will be useful for them to communicate with English speakers in their future educational career and life* 'which scored (**M=4.20**) higher than the other objectives. (See **Table .2** for Linguistic Teaching Objectives). For them, developing students' learning skills would help them communicate with English speakers and are useful in their daily lives.

Items in the questionnaire	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
Assist students to acquire a level of proficiency in the foreign languagethat will be useful for them to communicate with English speakers in their future educational career and life.	6.8%	4.5%	2.3%	34.1%	52.3%	4.20	1.15
Develop students' long-lasting enthusiasm for learning, good learning habits and self-confidence in learning English well.	0.0%	13.6%	18.2%	50.0%	18.2%	3.73	.92
Help students acquire listening and speaking skills in English for effective oral communication	4.5%	11.4%	9.1%	31.8%	43.2%	3.98	1.19
Help students acquire reading and writing skills	4.5%	9.1%	2.3%	36.4%	47.7%	4.14	1.13
Promote students' interest in the language they are learning, people who speak it and the country/countries in which it is spoken.	11.4%	6.8%	11.4%	47.7%	22.7%	3.64	1.24

Table .2: Language Teaching Objectives

This section aimed at investigating what perceptions EFL teachers at the Department of English and Literature hold concerning culture teaching objectives (CTO). The respondents were given thirteen statements, each denotes a cultural aspect: knowledge, skills or attitudes. High values of mean (M) indicate a higher level of respondents' choice to rate the most important one. Based on the results of the descriptive statistics illustrated in **Table.3** below, we can ascertain that teachers consider the CTO *'to become aware of how behaviour, beliefs, language, etc. are culture bound'* which scored (**M=4.25**) to be the most important culture objective. According to their responses, if students are not aware of the fact that behaviour, beliefs and language go hand in hand, they are not going to be able to learn English or its culture. On the contrary, the lower the mean score is, the least the teachers viewed the importance of the corresponding objective. In this case, *'to acquire knowledge about daily life and routines in target cultures'* was least important with a mean score (**M= 3.66**).This indicates that respondents agreed that what students need is not only factual knowledge and ways of living of the English speaking countries (knowledge dimension), but a deep knowledge of rules of conduct and interpretation of behaviour and beliefs in every-day situations.

Items in the questionnaire	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
Promote students' familiarity with the culture, and the civilisation of the countries where the language, which they are learning, is spoken. (e.g. history / geography/art, etc.).	2.3%	4.5%	6.8%	47.7%	38.6%	4.16	.914
Promote the acquisition of an open mind and a positive disposition towards unfamiliar cultures.	4.5%	4.5%	15.9%	47.7%	27.3%	3.89	1.017
Assist students to develop a	2.3%	13.6%	11.4%	38.6%	34.1**%**	3.89	1.104

better understanding of their own identity and culture.							
Promote students' interest in and understanding of English cultures.	0.0%	0.0%	11.4%	61.4%	27.3%	4.16	.608
Assist students in developing a better understanding of their own identity and culture.	2.3%	6.8%	15.9%	47.7%	27.3%	3.91	.960
Acquire knowledge about daily life and routines in target cultures.	2.3%	11.4%	20.5%	31.8%	34.1%	3.66	1.380
Acquire knowledge about the culture of the country/countries in which the language is spoken (e.g. history / geography/art, etc.).	11.4%	13.6%	6.8%	34.1%	34.1%	3.84	1.098
Become familiar with beliefs and values people belonging to different cultures hold.	9.1%	2.3%	9.1%	52.3%	27.3%	3.86	1.133
Develop respect, tolerance and empathy towards 'otherness'.	2.3%	15.9%	11.4%	38.6%	31.8%	3.82	1.126
Become aware of one's own culture and learn more about it.	4.5%	18.2%	13.6%	22.7%	40.9%	3.77	1.292
Become aware of the similarities and the differences between one's own and target cultures, to compare and analyse them.	4.5%	0.0%	11.4%	45.5%	38.6%	4.14	.955
Become aware of and overcome cultural stereotypes and prejudices.	2.3%	9.1%	4.5%	52.3%	31.8%	4.02	.976
Become aware of how behaviour, beliefs, language, etc. are culture bound.	2.3%	4.5%	9.1%	34.1%	50.0%	4.25	.967

Table.3: Culture Teaching Objectives

Section Three: Teachers' Awareness of the Importance of IC in FLE

Items in the questionnaire	M	SD
In a FL classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the FL.	4.11	.920
Intercultural education has no effect whatsoever on students' attitudes.	2.18	1.334
It is impossible to teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way, you have to separate them.	1.89	1.083
Intercultural competence cannot be acquired at university.	2.09	1.074
Before teaching L2 culture, students have to possess a sufficiently high level of L2 proficiency.	2.84	1.140
The more students know about the target language culture(s), the more tolerant they are.	3.95	1.077
Only native speakers can teach culture properly.	2.34	1.200
Language teaching should enhance students' understanding of their own cultural identity.	3.52	.902
All students should acquire intercultural competence.	3.98	.849
When you have a limited number of teaching periods, culture teaching has to give way to language teaching.	2.98	1.067
Every subject, not only language teaching, should promote the acquisition of intercultural skills.	3.75	1.164
A language teacher should present a realistic image of the culture(s), and therefore, should also touch upon negative sides of this culture and the society.	3.80	1.133
Due to the limited linguistic competence of EFL learners at the Department of English and Literature, it is hard or even impossible for them to develop intercultural competence.	2.91	1.273

Table.4: Teachers' Awareness of the Importance of IC in FLE

This section addresses how much respondents agree/disagree with the fourteen statements displayed in **Table.4** below. The highest value of mean (M) indicates a higher level of respondents' choice to rate the statement which they agree/ most agree on. Therefore, the results reported in **Table.4** provide a more complete understanding of teachers' awareness of the importance of IC in FLE. Respondents acknowledge and are aware of the interrelated relationship between language and culture when they ranked the statement "In a FL

classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the FL", which scored (**M=4.11**) first in the list. Additionally, respondents agree on the fact that "All students should acquire intercultural competence", this is to say that, regarding the place of culture in FLE, teachers are aware of the fact that students should develop IC besides acquiring the language' skills. This justifies why respondents ranked the item "L2 Culture teaching does not improve intercultural competence; it is a waste of time" last with (**M=1.77**).

Section Four: Teachers' Culture Teaching Practices

In response to the second research question (i.e., to what extent do they incorporate classroom practice related to cultural teaching?), the results reported on here were to explore the frequency of culture-based activities and whether the activities participants used in their classroom related to culture objectives. The researcher selected thirteen items and the responses were measured on a scale that included three options: 1 (often), 2 (sometimes), and 3 (never).The lower the mean, the more often teachers practice the corresponding cultural activities in their classes.

As shown in **Table.5** below, findings **strikingly** show that the three main culture-related activities teachers practised more often in their classes are: (1) telling students what they heard or read about the foreign country or culture (M=1.41), (2) asking them to discover the aspects of the foreign culture (M=1.43) and (3) focusing their attention on some culture-loaded new words teaching (1.77).This explains a discrepancy between their awareness of how developing students'

attitudes and skills of IC is important in FLE but when it comes to classroom practices, they stick to factual knowledge of FC. More importantly, it was also found from the respondents' answers that they leave introducing students to their culture as a last option. As can be seen from **Table.5**, the data obtained for teachers participants show that activities that are practised most often delay the role of students to a second position and the statements that ranked first were the ones characterized as teacher-led activities. For instance, "I tell my students....", "I ask my students....", ".... I focus my attention on.....". this is to say that*"...... it is the teacher who talks about the foreign culture and the learner's role appears to be confined to that of listener"[1]*.

---

[1]**Sercu, L. (2005a).**Foreign language teachers and the implementation of intercultural education: a comparative investigation of the professional self‑concepts and teaching practices of Belgian teachers of English, French and German, *European Journal of Teacher Education,* 28:1, 87-105, DOI: 10.1080/02619760500040389. (p.99)

Classroom Practices	1	2	3	M	SD
I tell my students what I heard or read about the foreign country or culture.	**26** (59,1%)	**18** (40,9%)	**00** (00,0)	1.41	.497
I ask my students to discover the aspects of the foreign culture.	**27** (61,4%)	**15** (34,1%)	**2** (4,5%)	1.43	.587
We do role-plays based on intercultural encounters and conflicts with the aim of solving the problems involved.	**7** (15,9%)	**17** (38,6%)	**20** (45,5%)	2.30	.734
I ask my students to recite some dialogues.	**2** (4,5%)	**15** (34,1%)	**27** (61,4%)	2.57	.587
I focus my attention on some culture-loaded new words teaching.	**14** (31,8%)	**26** (59,1%)	**4** (9,1%)	1.77	.605
I teach them some English songs or poems to let them experience the different cultures.	**10** (22,7%)	**18** (40,9%)	**16** (36,4%)	2.14	.765
I ask my students to describe cultural phenomena which appear in texts/newspapers/magazines.	**7** (15,9%)	**21** (37,7%)	**15** (34,1%)	2.19	.699
I show them film videos and discuss what they watch.	**11** (25,0%)	**13** (29,5%)	**20** (45,5%)	2.20	.823
I download some pictures or cartoons having cultural images and let them discuss them.	**6** (13,6%)	**8** (18,2%)	**30** (68,2%)	2.55	.730
I ask my students to compare their own cultures with foreign cultures.	**16** (36,4%)	**19** (43,2%)	**9** (20,5%)	1.84	.745
I encourage learners to do research into different aspects of other cultures on their own and report on the findings.	**12** (27,3%)	**20** (45,5%)	**12** (27,3%)	2.00	.747
I ask my students to act out what they learn in terms of culture learning.	**5** (11,4%)	**14** (31,8%)	**25** (56,8%)	2.45	.697
I use audio tapes in my class and ask them to mime according to what they hear.	**11** (25,0**%**)	**7** (15,9%)	**26** (59,1%)	2.34	.861

Table.5: Teachers' Culture Teaching Practices

Conclusion

The present paper aimed at bringing to the fore EFL teachers in the Department of English and Literature at Batna 2 University perceptions during the first semester of the 2016-2017 academic year

and the extent to which they integrate cultural activities into their classroom practices. From the findings displayed in tables and the analysis presented above it is clear that even though teachers support intercultural objectives, they do not appear to integrate culture related classroom activities and "....their teaching practice can as yet not be characterized as intercultural"[1]. Moreover, results revealed that the facts-oriented approach to culture teaching was the teachers' most common classroom practice mainly in terms of passing on information regarding the target culture.

Therefore, it is highly recommended that teachers should provide more opportunities for their students to engage in more intercultural language learning and make connections between their own culture and foreign cultures as their students' needs are changing according to the globalized world they are living in as *'culture learning is seen as a comparative process in which learners are encouraged to get aware of their own culture and contrast it with the target culture'*[2]. Since the teachers participants in this study were aware of the relationship between language and culture, it is also important that they make it operational in their classes.

---

[1]**Sercu, L., Méndez García, M.C., Castro Prieto, P. (2004)**. Culture teaching in foreign language education. EFL teachers in Spain as cultural mediators. *Porta Linguarum*, 1: 85-102.

[2] **Byram, M. (1997)**. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

References

1. **Borg, S. (2003)**. Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe and do. *Language Teaching*, 36, 81-109. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261444803001903

2. **Brown, H. D. (2007)**. *Principles of language learning and teaching.* (5th Ed.) New York: Pearson Education Company. (p. 189)

3. **Bryman, A. (1988)**. *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Unwin Hyman.

4. **Byram, M. (1997)**. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

5. **Byram, M. (1989)**. *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education.* Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.

6. **Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002)**. *Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching: A Practical Introduction for Teachers*. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe.

7. **Canale, M. (1983)**. From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (Eds.), *Language and Communication*, 2-27. London: Longman.

8. **Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980)**. Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. Applied Linguistics,1, 1-47.

9. **Celce-Murcia, M. (2007).** Rethinking the Role of Communicative Competence in Language Teaching. In Alcón Soler E & Safont Jordà MP (Eds.). *Intercultural Language Use and Language Learning*, 41–57.Dordrecht: Springer.

10. **Chomsky, N. (1965)**. *Aspects of the theory of syntax*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Ma. (p. 4)

11. **Crystal, D. (2003).***English as a global language*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.(p.106)

12. **García, M., & Ryan, P. (2005)**. *Foreign language teachers and Intercultural Competence: An international investigation. Languages for Intercultural Communication and Education, 10.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

13. *Guide Pratique de Mise en Ouvre et de Suivi du LMD*. Ministry of Higher Education andScientific Research, Algeria. **Juin 2011.**

14. **Hymes, D. (1972)**. Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Life, In Gumperz, J. J. & Hymes, D. (eds), *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, New York: Holts Rinehart & Winston, pp. 35-71.

15. **Hymes, D. (1974)**. *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

16. **Hymes, D. (1987).** Communicative competence. In U. Ammon, N. Ditmar & K.J.Matthier (Eds.) *Sociolinguistics: An international handbook of the Science of Language and Society* (pp. 219-229). Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter. (Draws on new material in Hymes, 1984.)

17. **Knight, Jane (2003).** *Updating the definition of internationalization*. International Higher Education. (pp. 2–3).

18. **Kramsch, C. (1993**). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

19. **Kramsch, C. (1998**). *Language and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

20. **Kramsch, C. (2009b**). The multilingual subject. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (p.190)

21. **Lázár, Ildikó. (2003).***Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in language teacher education.* European Centre for Modern Languages Council of Europe Publishing.

22. **Liddicoat, A. J. (2002**). Static and dynamic views of culture and intercultural language acquisition. *Babel, 36*(3), 4-11, 37.

23. **Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013**). Intercultural language teaching and learning. New York: Wiley and Sons.

24. **Saville-Troike, M. (2003**). *The ethnography of communication: An introduction*. Malden, Mass: Blackwell Pub.

25. **Sercu, L. (2002a**).Autonomous learning and the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence: Some implications for course development. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 15 (1):* 61-74.

26. **Sercu (2005)** in the forward. In Sercu, L., Bandura, E., Castro, P., Davcheva, L., Laskaridou, C., Lundgren, U., Mendez , M., & Ryan, P. (2005). *Foreign language teachers and Intercultural Competence: An international investigation. Languages for Intercultural Communication and Education, 10.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

27. **Sercu, L. (2006**).The foreign language and intercultural competence teacher: the acquisition of a new professional identity. *Intercultural Education,Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 55–72*

28. **Sercu, L., Méndez García, M.C., Castro Prieto, P. (2004**). Culture teaching in foreign language education. EFL teachers in Spain as cultural mediators. *Porta Linguarum*, 1: 85-102.

29. **Sercu, L., Bandura, E., Castro, P., Davcheva, L., Laskaridou, C., Lundgren, U., Mendez García, M., & Ryan, P. (2005**). *Foreign language teachers and Intercultural Competence: An international investigation. Languages for Intercultural Communication and Education, 10.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

30. **Sercu and Raya (2007)**.Introduction. In Jiménez Raya, M. y Sercu, L. (eds.). *Challenges in Teacher Development: Learner Autonomy and Intercultural Competence*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

31. **Sercu, L., & St. John, O. (2007**). Teachers' beliefs and their impact on teaching practise: a literature review. In M. J. Raya, & L. Sercu (Eds.), *Challenges in Teacher Development:Learner Autonomy and Intercultural Competence*(pp. 39-64). Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang.

32. **Van Ek, J.A. (1986**). *Objectives for Foreign language Learning*, Vol.1: Scope. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.