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Title:
**Achieving Equilibrium in Learning a Foreign
Language and Maintaining Cultural Identity:**

The Case Study of First Year English Students at Salhi Ahmed
University Centre, Naâma

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirement for a Master's Degree in
Applied Linguistics

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Academic year:

2020 – 2021

Abstract:

This paper aims at investigating language-culture correlations, and how language and culture can influence one's identity. It will first define the notions of language, culture and identity. Next an overview of the work of previous research on the topic will follow. Lastly accumulated data on the influences of language and culture on cultural identity in the field of Foreign Language Learning will be highlighted and analysed. In which, we will examine the influences of culture and identity on the foreign language learning setting in a selected sample of first year English students of Naâma University Centre in Algeria, via the use of both; a questionnaire directed for students and a structured observation of first year students inside the classroom environment. We calculated percentages to analyse the statistical data whereas analysis of the qualitative data is used for the description and interpretation of the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, alongside classroom observation which contains a range of items to be observed during first year classroom observation sessions. The results of the research showed that facing cultural differences influence negatively students' acquisition of knowledge and ability to learn. The findings also revealed that English language university teachers occasionally reference or mention foreign values and ideas as a response to students' ignorance about certain facts.

Key words: language, culture, foreign culture, cultural identity, foreign language learning.

Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to my beloved father, who stood by me during my studies,

To my precious mother, thank you for your love, comforting, prayers and support,

To my lovely sister Fatima and dear brothers: Abdel Karim, Charaf-Eddine & Yacine, who are always there in my hard moments,

To my adorable nieces and nephews,

To all my family and dear friends for their help and advice,

To my dear cousin Imane for her advice and encouragement,

To all my classmates.

Leila.

Dedication

I dedicate this modest work to my precious parents, for their love and support,

To my beloved little sister Khadidja, whom I love so much,

To my dear brothers: Abdel Fattah, Farouk and Nasr-Eddine, who were by my

side during all the years of my studies,

To all those who supported me and encouraged me.

Sarra.

Acknowledgement

This research paper would not have been completed without the support and guidance of our supervisor Miss Benheddi Karima for whom we owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation for her orientation, advice and encouragement.

We acknowledge with thanks the board of examiners including Miss Gouabi Khadem and Miss El Hadj Said Nabila for reading and evaluating this modest work.

We would like to thank all the teachers who were involved in our formation through our five memorable years that we have spent at the university centre.

We are also thankful to the participants for their collaboration and contribution to this research paper.

List of Abbreviations:

- * ELL: English Language Learning.
- * ELLs: English Language Learners.

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General Introduction:

Cultural identity is the sense of belonging to a group of people that share the same standards and values one of which is language, furthermore, Language and culture are associated with one another; a certain culture is not understood without its language, plus, a particular language draws attention to a particular group of people and upon this assumption it can be noted that when we interact with another language, it also means that we are interacting with the culture of the people that speak that language. Therefore, language and culture are interrelated and cannot exist independently besides, it is not a secret that teaching a foreign language is not only about developing linguistic competence but it is also recommended that the culture of that language must be taught as well to enhance students ability in communicating in that language.

English Language is taught in numerous schools and faculties of Universities of Algeria where students are taught under a specific curriculum to attain a number of objectives such as developing the ability to communicate successfully in the English language. Students tend to explore foreign cultures corresponding to the English language to learn more new patterns and be able to communicate effectively considering the fact that English language classroom settings introduce students to foreign cultures or at least pave the way for it. Still this should not accede to the point of ignoring the native culture and identity of students and neglecting it in the curriculum which as assumed can cause in frustration and disorientation from the environment of learning.

The current language learning/teaching system absolutely needs to be reshaped and revised for the sake of meeting foreign language students' needs through giving recognition and appropriate attention to cultural identity. As a case in point, universities could support professional development towards a culture-relevant curriculum that is cautious of foreign language learners' identity and native culture, and enhances students' competencies and increases their level of consciousness of their home culture and cultural values.

1 Statement of the Problem:

Nowadays, possessing cultural competency is very necessary for learning a foreign language; however, one needs to be aware of their cultural identity and be able to recognise the similarities and -most importantly- the differences between his own culture and the other cultures in order to distinguish between the two and value each on its own. In other words, the focus should not be made upon foreign cultures alone in EFL classrooms; nonetheless, a fair amount of attention should be given for the native culture as well. The matter of underestimating students' native culture is a serious issue and it has been the subject matter of many prior research studies abroad, meaning it is a vivid problem that is truly alarming to the Algerian institutions of higher education.

2 Research Question:

Prior research unveiled the plight of foreign language learners, notably ELLs, and the vulnerability of their sense of identity, which dictates the need to consider it as a tangible concern. Insights and perceptions that are earned from tracking Algerian First year English students' attitudes towards the use of foreign cultural aspects are essential and could only be done through the current study. To this end, the central research query is:

What impact has Intercultural Competence had on ELL students' cultural identity in Algerian universities?

2.1 Sub-questions:

This work seeks to answer the following questions:

- ❖ Are there any negative effects of concentrating on foreign cultures more than the native one?
- ❖ How often do these effects occur among ELL students?
- ❖ What are the possible strategies to combat these effects?

3 Research Hypotheses:

In accordance with the previous questions, it may be hypothesized that:

- ❖ There are a number of negative effects that result from focusing on foreign cultures and neglecting the learners' native culture when learning a foreign language.
- ❖ Negative effects of neglecting learners' native culture frequently take place in ELL classrooms.
- ❖ Possible strategies for combating effects of this phenomenon are perhaps giving similar attention to native culture as well as foreign cultures within the curriculum, and Cultural Competence as a skill should be considered in the native culture as well as foreign cultures.

4 Objectives and Aims of the Study:

The general objective of the study is to shed light on the situation of cultural identity along with consideration of native culture in comparison to foreign cultures inside ELL Classrooms. To meet the general aim three (03) specific objectives are considered:

- ❖ Find out the risks and outcomes of disregarding cultural identity in ELL classrooms.
- ❖ Analyse negligence of cultural identity as a phenomenon statically.
- ❖ Inspect potential solutions for negligence of cultural identity.

5 Limitations of the Study:

The major difficulties that we encountered through the course of this study are:

- 1) The problem of lack of time and availability of informants considering that their schedule is very tight and busy due to the emergence of the Corona

virus pandemic, therefore, our chances of interrogating and observing students were narrowed.

2) Attrition: three (03) copies of the questionnaire returned empty, hence, the entire number of the informants dropped to thirty seven (37) out of forty (40) which was the original intended number for our sample of study.

3) Non-response: four (04) questions of the questionnaire were left blank as follows:

- Question number (6): eight (08) times.
- Question number (7): one (01) time.
- Question number (8): fifteen (15) times.
- Question number (9): two (02) times.

CHAPTER

ONE:

Review of Literature

1 Chapter One: Review of Literature

1.1 Introduction:

The scope of sociolinguistics is the area of language and society; and therefore, the field of research of this paper. Sociolinguistics as a whole is meant to explain how our use of language is ruled by social factors. The same matter is tackled within this study, by hinting at the correlation joining language and culture in order to shed light on the issue of neglecting students' culture and identity, especially foreign language learners, such as English since language and culture are duals that go hand in hand precisely in foreign language classrooms that introduce students to foreign cultures during the language learning/acquisition process. Culture has been a very important component in English language learning and teaching given the number of verified and documented evidence supporting this claim. However, it has been the case persistently that students of a foreign language -particularly English- get influenced by foreign cultures in a negative matter, which further results in discouraging and holding back the learner. The primary focus inside foreign language classroom settings is on the language to be taught. Teachers of foreign languages mostly instruct their students in terms of vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and even accent, along with the history and culture of the corresponding language. Little or no attention at all is offered for students' original culture.

1.2 The Relationship between Culture, Language and Identity:

The first interest of this research paper is to define Language, Culture and Identity, and identify the reality of the relationship linking between these essential terms.

1.2.1 Defining Culture, Language and Identity:

It is crucial to uncover the description for all the main terms regarding to the topic of research starting with culture. According to Byram, Culture is all shared beliefs, values and behaviours of a social group (2008:60). Culture at its core is defined as beliefs and values in common of individuals in a social group. It represents social systems and patterns shared by members of a society or community and an environment in which languages prospers and evolves which leads us to the second main term in this investigation; Language.

As claimed by Lyons language is the principal system of communication used by particular groups of human beings within the particular society of which they are members. Language is the system and means of expression and communication that connects individuals and promotes expression of identity which is the next major term to this paper that implies to two leading interpretations: personal and social identity (1981: 2-5).

Personal identity means self-classification to certain groups and divisions in which the individual is a distinctive and unique person with their own special and discrete differences. Identity, as stated by Hogg & Abrams, is people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others (1988:2). Social identity on the other hand is social categories that people fall into or a set of individuals who share one or more quality or property, a good example of social categories is gender; men or women, another is race; black, white, etc. Identity, as described by Jenkins, refers to the ways in which

individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities (1996:4). In the opinion of Crawshaw Identity is a process of identifying or non-identifying with a specific position in life and constantly modifying this position and attitudes toward it (2001:101-109).

1.2.2 The Relationship lying between Culture, Language and Identity:

According to Kramsch:

“Language is used not just as a tool for the exchange of information, but as a symbolic system with the power to create and shape symbolic realities, such as values, perceptions, identities through discourse”. (2009:107-124)

He continues to further explain how different realities or cultures; as seen from a psychological perspective are associated to one another and cannot be separated, since an individual holds both linguistic and cultural experiences within oneself.

Research done by Budd, Chen & Te Ava indicates that Language acts as a cultural tool that foregrounds the significance of shared knowledge, whether that being knowledge of a language or a particular cultural discourse, such as truck driving. The significance of social connections and language practices raises awareness of the fluid nature of group boundaries and creates a complex context for understanding experiences of culture and belonging (2016:5).

1.3 Cultural Identity:

The meaning of Cultural Identity, how it is formed and its main characteristics, is a necessary step for proceeding with the subject of our work.

1.3.1 Understanding Cultural Identity:

Cultural identity or ethnic identity is how individuals or groups of people are defined in terms of cultural characteristics including: religion, language, ethnicity, nationality, etc. As Hawaikirangi-Pere indicates in her research study, Ethnic identity refers to one's sense of belonging to a given ethnic group (2013:10). She then proceeds to mention the views of Phinney in which he implies that ethnic identity

“comprises of a number of different components including self-labelling, a sense of belonging, positive evaluation, preference for the group, ethnic interest and knowledge and involvement in activities associated with the group...ethnic identity can have qualitatively different meanings for ethnic group members”
(Phinney, 1996: 6).

Alongside the notions of Cultural identity theories such as Erikson's, which marks that cultural identity is labelled as a person's social identity, denoting that it is the process of developing traits of a person's culture; as described by Erikson as, an adolescent task outlined in his stages of psychosocial development (1980:94-101). The conduction of this investigation and former research has firmly demonstrated that a secure cultural identity helps enhance a person's overall well-being and furthermore improve their chances of educational success.

1.3.2 The Framing of Cultural Identity:

In a blog released by Algharraz addressing how cultural identity is formed, the author went forward to point out how the human existence is bursting with a diversity of identities and cultures. This rich cultural identity stems from another diversity obtained at the level of the philosophical vision of the world (2018).

Algharraz continues to justify by saying that within each society, culture builds a block of postulates and assumptions that the society chooses for its individuals and groups as sociocultural facts, which generates and establishes a set of ideas and beliefs that form the purposes of that society in order to solve the issue of the relationship between the human being and his social existence; where the individual places himself, consciously and voluntarily, within one of the elements of this social complex.

Therefore, Cultural identity consists of a set of criteria specific to a certain level of culture of individuals and groups within society, by which they are known and defined. (Algharraz, 2018)

1.4 Intercultural Communicative Competence:

In this part of our review, the definition of Intercultural Communicative Competence is underlined, along with the comparison between Cultural Awareness and Cultural Competence, and how is Intercultural Communicative Competence involved in Foreign Language Learning.

1.4.1 Defining Intercultural Communicative Competence:

Research by Aguilar, signals that Noam Chomsky was the first to introduce the concept of linguistic competence as the ideal model for any speaker. Later on, Hymes proposed a new concept, that of communicative competence, which corrected and complemented the first term, given that the ability to detect when and how to use language in specific contexts was included to absolute linguistic ability when speaking. Through focusing on the way in which the ability to use language properly was acquired, Hymes stresses on sociolinguistic competence, considering that it is an essential notion in the development of communicative language teaching when it was applied to foreign language teaching and learning. (Byram, 1997: 7-8)

Not to mention that a very important concern that needs to be taken into account which is the fact that communicative competence is based on speaker's capability in their first language. It was only when the term was appropriated by foreign language teaching and taken as its basis that it became an aim for learners, a prescriptive model based upon native speaker competence. (Byram, 1995:53-69), (Aguilar, 2002:86).

1.4.2 Cultural Awareness and Cultural Competence:

In most cases, Cultural awareness is defined as the ability to stand back from one self and ones' perception and become aware of others' behaviours, cultural values, beliefs and perceptions. Cultural awareness is considered key for interacting with people of cultures different from ones' own, since it helps interpret and consider what is appropriate or inappropriate in one culture and not in another. Cultural competence on the other hand, refers to the ability to interact effectively with people of other cultures.

According to a list of key terms compiled by the Labor Occupational Health Program, Cultural Awareness is recognition of the nuances of one's own and other cultures, whereas, Cultural competence is the ability to use academic, experiential, and interpersonal skills in order to increase the understanding and the appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. Furthermore Cultural competency points to a state of mastery that is achieved when culture is understood. It comprises of individuals' desire, willingness, and ability to improve systems by drawing on diverse values, traditions, and customs, and working closely with knowledgeable persons from the community to develop interventions and services that affirm and reflect the value of different cultures.

In an article by Lonner, Chiu, Ward & Matsumoto, Lonner describes cross-cultural competence as a

“set of attitudes, knowledge and skills that together form a personal attribute that facilitates smooth and effective communication and interaction with people who are culturally and linguistically different”. (2013:844)

Correspondingly research carried by Chen & Starosta suggests that intercultural competence entails three related dimensions: sensitivity, awareness, and skills. Sensitivity signifies an individual's capacity to comprehend and appreciate cultural differences. Awareness refers to the ability to understand how culture affects thinking, behaviour, and interactions. Skills are reflected in effective communication and intercultural interactions (1997:1-16, 1998:27-54, 2000:1-15).

Thus, Cultural competence is about being aware of one's cultural view of nations and of one's attitude towards cultural differences, along with the knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews. Cultural competence is plainly cross-cultural skills that promote the ability to understand, interact, communicate, and effectively with people across cultures. On this account, it is suitable to say that developing cultural competencies does not mean to know everything about every cultural group. It is in fact to be aware of cultural factors that facilitate interacting, coordinate and correlate with people of distinct cultures.

1.4.3 Intercultural Communicative Competence and Foreign Languages Learning:

An article released by Ushchapovska & Celebi for the purpose of defining some important notion for dealing with international students, it is declared that Cross-cultural Competence and Empathy are essential capacities for coping with cross-cultural problems effectively, in which, effective communication is likely enhanced by conveying competence, in addition, the ability of Intercultural

Empathy can be developed by consistently “**trying to put your feet in another’s shoes**”. (2015:1)

She explains from there how Cross-cultural competence can be perceived as the foundation of communication, involving two qualities: one is the awareness of one’s own culture; the other is the awareness of another culture. In other words, it encompasses the ability of standing back from our own point and becoming aware of not only our own cultural values, beliefs and views, but also those of the other cultures.

Cultural Competence becomes necessary for communicating with people from other cultures. Since people view and evaluate things in different ways, what is considered appropriate in a culture has a great chance to be inappropriate in another, and ultimately, misunderstandings stem when people communicate. That being said, culturally empathic language learners retain their separate cultural identity and simultaneously are aware of and accept the cultural values and beliefs of the people with different cultural background and one does not need to agree with those values and beliefs and accept them as truth to understand them, and one does not need for his culture to be like that culture to have empathy with people.

1.5 Cultural Identity and Learning/Teaching Foreign Languages:

In this segment, the description of Cultural Identity from both sides: Learning and Teaching is highlighted being that it is relevant to the content and the theme of the study.

1.5.1 Cultural Identity and ELLs:

A study conducted by Altugan illustrates what Peirce mentioned, saying that: “**social identity is multiple and contradictory**” and it is estimated that learners cannot isolate their cultural identity while learning regarding the fact of constant

dependence on their cultural knowledge (1995:9-31), it is therefore clear that there is a relation between learning and cultural identity (Altugan, 2015:186).

Alred, Byram & Fleming conducted a study of intercultural experience of foreign language university students in which they demonstrate that a great number of students actually want to learn English without learning about foreign cultural aspects linked to the English language considering that students view English as a vehicle for political penetration in their daily lives. A teacher whom was interviewed declared that a lot of their students prefer to learn English without learning the culture (2003:142-163).

The authors proceed to mention that English creates a great conflict for urban university students, after all, a number of students have revealed that there is a tension created over the value of having their culture in contact with other cultures through foreign language study. They are proud of having a flag, a past, a nation, a language and traditions. Whereas others might disagree and appear to be open to other cultures through language study, yet, they acknowledge that a protective shield develops if their home culture is threatened by the new ways of seeing the world that other cultures bring and clearly express concern about losing their national pride while learning a new language and about new cultures that is to say, for most ELLs their culture base should not be invaded by learning a foreign language.

1.5.2 Cultural Identity and Language Teaching:

Research done by Kim indicates that a very important notion in the field of education is Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). It demonstrates that educational settings are not natural settings, nor are educational practices such as groupings based on ability, testing diverse skills, these are all socially constituted creations, and minimise and diminish the learners' aptitude (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's theory plays a vital role since it is required in establishing an awareness of the relationship between sociocultural

and cognitive factors of learning along with the collective and individual factors determining cognitive development. The disparity in the academic performance of minority groups in the United States of America could be a result of the linguistic, social and cultural disparity between the learners' school and home environments. The child's comprehensibility of what he learns is not so much determined by the curriculum or instruction in school but is a result of his ZPD.

Work conducted by Trueba, Trueba & Delgado-Gaitan and scholars such as the Spindlers, Moll and Moll & Diaz, is also referred to in this research, in which it depicts that there is a very close relationship between language, culture and cognition. Data collected from these studies reveal that culture affects the overall process of knowledge acquisition and information processing regardless of the historical backgrounds of the students. (Trueba, 1987, 1988) (Trueba & Delgado-Gaitan, 1988) (Spindlers, 1987a, 1987b) (Moll, 1986) (Moll & Diaz, 1987). (Lee, 2003:3-4)

It is mentioned in an article reported by Dumitrašković that in most cases, the identity and culture of the first language are quite different from the culture of the foreign language. This may cause the students' identity to change or make them feel lonely and isolated. Upon which, some teachers are not aware of this effect which makes the problem even bigger. The curriculum involves cultural components and the teacher transmits this; either wittingly or not (2014:250). Jund estimates that learning a foreign language will theoretically demand the learner to adapt his/her values and behaviour (2010:1-13). This implies that there is a strong connection between the language and culture and that it is represented in the culture of the speakers. It includes aspects such as beliefs, values and needs.

1.6 Negligence of Cultural Identity, Its Main Undesirable Effects:

A very serious and worrying problem is threatening the solidity and security of Cultural identity and that is when the latter is being disregarded, in which many negative consequences affect ELLs and targets their motivation.

1.6.1 Negative Effects on ELLs:

Block discusses methods of data collection on culture, language and identity studies; thus, empirical research was conducted in order to link second language learning and identity. When individuals face new social cultures, they find that their sense of identity is weakened and that they suffer and are somewhat confused until **“a balance is reached”** (2007:863-876). A transformational phase occurs in the identity of the learner. Bhabha states: **“The result is what has come to be known as a third place”** (1994:1). This is what Papastergiadis called a **“negotiation of difference”** during which the past and the present **“encounter and transform each other”** in the **“presence of fissures, gaps and contradictions”** (2000). It is a notion regarding identity and the essential idea that it revolves around is uncertainty.

As stated in a research done by Barber:

“The feeling of uncertainty stems from being a part of something and feeling apart from it. Likewise, it is the synchronised confirmation and nullification of these feelings. This issue is important as it can create an uncomfortable, unconfident learner, or if nurtured in the classroom, may result in a ‘positive’, well balanced identity in a second language learner” (2012:7).

1.6.2 The Overall Outcome on Native Culture and Identity:

Another highly expected negative effect of disregarding ELLs identity is Xenocentrism. Contrary to ethnocentrism which is defined by sociologist William Graham Sumner (1906) as a belief or attitude that one's own culture is better than all others, In its core, the term Xenocentrism is derived from the Greek root word "xeno", which translates to "stranger" or "foreigner". It is when an individual tries to partake in the views and elements of another culture on behalf of their own supposing that it is better, i.e. the assumption that a certain foreign culture is superior to one's own. Thus, to be xenocentric is to prefer ideas from other cultures over one's own culture.

In an article written by Chulu about the influence of the foreign western culture on Africa, the writer puts emphasis on the fact the interaction of various cultural norms and traditions have caused the Africans under a sort of westernization style. He continues to mention the following:

"In contemporary of socio-culture dimension, culture can be learned, followed to say that, it can equally be unlearned. This is true to a certain extent that Africa has a lot to unlearn (those western values that are alien and destructive to the African culture) from the contact with the west". (Chulu, 2015:6)

Meaning that influence by foreign cultures, mostly western culture will position the west as superior, while the developing world as inferior, in other words, looking up to the west which results in dependence on the west for development and this is the reason why there is increasingly western exploitation and domination over the native culture.

1.7 Conclusion:

All in all, Language defines culture in a way that the meanings of a given language represent the culture of a particular social group, therefore, a particular language points strongly to the culture of a particular social group or community. Language and culture are related in a way that they share human values, realities and behaviours of the society. Thus and according to Kramsch, language expresses, embodies and symbolizes the cultural reality. Besides, culture impacts the total process of knowledge acquisition from both spectrums; learning and teaching, and in one way or another, targets students' motivation towards learning. Their native culture is endangered by the external views, ideas and prospects that the outside cultures represent. Foreign cultures provoke social and cultural changes in the life and environment of the youth, which may lead to adopting and preferring foreign cultures over their home culture, if not, leading students to feeling discouraged when encountering major differences between the two cultures. Studying the culture of a foreign language carries along its elements, as well as, its influences. Some of which are principles and ideals that are stranger and may invade the native culture. When coming from the dominant and leading western societies, this type of influence results in seeking inspiration and dependence on the west, which eventually forms anxiety and lack of confidence inside the learner's head making him/her feel excluded and demotivated.

CHAPTER
TWO:
Data Collection,
Analysis and
Discussion of Findings

2 Chapter Two: Data Collection, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

2.1 Introduction:

The aim of any research is to provide answers to the research question in which the researcher uses a particular research approach depending on the type and nature of the research. It is the means through which the researcher finds solutions to great problems that may face humanity, and raise its concern, and through which humans seek to control the environment and discover strange phenomena, then link these phenomena, and determine the relationships between them. the researcher extracts the results of a specific phenomenon to be applied for the aim of solving the problem related to these phenomena. Phenomenological research such as the current, is particularly concerned with understanding behaviours, attitudes and phenomena, it is referred to as subjectivist, humanistic and interpretative. Also, our research is exploratory in nature, as the case study taking place, examines this unique phenomenon providing a collection of theories and hypotheses to unveil its reasons and effects, which is why it requires a deductive approach to it, since it enables us to test the previous theories.

2.2 Data collection Setting and Participants:

The first and foremost step when conducting a social study of any sort is choosing a population and a sample to be the representative of the population. The population in a research is a community or group of human beings and the subject or the element undergoing the study that is taking place to investigate a specific case noticed or identified by the researcher. According to Trudel & Antonius the set of all individuals, objects, statistical imitates make up a population. (1991:545).

2.2.1 Selection of the Study Sample:

As claimed by Kamangar & Islami, Sampling is the process of selecting a statistically representative sample of individuals from the population of interest. A sample is the selected group from the overall population. It is through studying of this sample that something is known and said about the total population and whatever may be revealed about the sample will then be true about the population as a whole, yet, may not be true in all cases as it depends on how the sample is chosen. (2013:295-300). Browner & Newman argue that:

“Sampling is an important tool for research studies because the population of interest usually consists of too many individuals for any research project to include as participants. A good sample is a statistical representation of the population of interest and is large enough to answer the research question”. (1988:51-63)

Savard states that: **“A sample is a relatively small group chosen scientifically to represent a population as faithfully as possible”. (1978:384)**

2.2.2 Size of the Study Sample:

For the purpose of inspecting the phenomenon under study, first year LMD English students at Naâma University Centre will be the population that we will collect data from with an age range of 17- 44. All of the participants are Algerian

and their native tongue is the Algerian dialect, moreover, they are at the beginning of a three (03) year formation to obtain a Licence degree in the English Language. Since the size of the sample is usually less than the total size of the population, in addition to the fact that the group is homogenous and the problem of attrition is not very likely to happen, we have chosen 40 students from a total of 100 at random as the specific category or the sample for our questionnaire, and two groups from a total of four as the sample for our observational study.

2.3 Data Collection Instruments:

Considering the fact that awareness about topics such as negligence of cultural identity is limited, we have chosen the mixed method approach for this research using both: quantitative approach that features a questionnaire designed for first year LMD Students of English in Naâma University Centre, alongside with, qualitative approach featuring classroom observation sessions attended to investigate students' attitudes and reactions towards lack of recognition for their cultural identity during culture-related lessons. The three research sub-questions convey an analytical framework for this study. This will impose inspection on two scales: structural and cultural, and implications of the questionnaire material.

2.3.1 Presentation of Students' Questionnaire:

Our first data collection method is a questionnaire designed for first year English Students encompassing open and close-ended questions in order to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

2.3.1.1 Aim of the Questionnaire:

The students' questionnaire aims at two main purposes: first, to explore and measure students' ideas and attitudes towards adopting culture-related lectures in regards to foreign cultures such as western cultures inside first year English students classrooms at Naâma University Centre, second, to look into students'

thoughts about disregardance of their native culture once inside such classroom sessions. Hence, this questionnaire was designed in an attempt to answer the following questions:

- What is students' perception and view of foreign- English speaking- cultures in general?
- What are students' feelings towards dominance of foreign cultures over their own?
- What is the position of students when featuring foreign and/or native culture inside the classroom?
- Do students carry concerns about the issue of their native culture being absent inside the classroom? And do they seek equality between the two cultures?

2.3.1.2 Description of the Questionnaire:

A questionnaire is an approved research instrument consisting of a written document with a set of questions or statements for the sake of gathering primary data and so, the main purpose of a questionnaire is informing or confirming the offered hypotheses and answering the research questions. Combessie states that:

"The main function of the questionnaire is to give the survey a larger scope and to statistically verify the extent to which the information and hypotheses previously formed are generalizable".
(2007:33)

The questionnaire is an effective tool that provides quantitative or qualitative data from the informants; hence, it allows the researcher to quantify people's attitudes, behaviours and opinions.

A questionnaire includes two main types of questions: open-ended and close ended questions, and also involves statements such as in multiple choice questions where respondents must pick one answer from two, three or four options. The

questionnaire designed for this study contains a total of twelve (12) questions; nine (09) of which are close-ended questions including: one (01) question about age, another about gender, four (04) multi-choice questions addressing students' awareness of foreign and native culture, and three (03) "yes" or "no" questions focusing on students' feelings towards foreign cultures, plus, three (03) open-ended questions sealing the questionnaire where students express their thoughts of integration of culture inside the classroom setting.

The rule applied to calculate the percentages of the students' answers is:

$$X = \frac{Z \times 100}{Y}$$

X symbolises the calculated percentage,

Z symbolises the value of the similar answers,

Y symbolises the entire number of the informants.

2.3.2 Presentation of Classroom Observation:

For the sake of collecting specific information and facts, and gather more qualitative data we chose classroom observation sessions as our second data collection method.

2.3.2.1 Aim of the Observation:

The objective behind the classroom observation is to monitor first year LMD English students at Naâma University Centre during learning sessions where we will be observing students' attitudes and naturally occurring behaviours during culture-related lessons in first year LMD, it will help us:

- Track down how often foreign cultures are mentioned inside the classroom.
- Determine which subjects stimulate students' different reactions.

- Identify the variety of reaction students may have.
- Estimate the most frequent responses among students.
- Review the short-term outcomes linked to these reactions and predict the long-term ones.

2.3.2.2 Description of the Observation:

Observation is a method used for collecting qualitative data, according to Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, observation enables the researcher to examine the people of the studied sample in natural settings or natural situations using their five senses, and translating it to a written image of the situation under study. (1993:94-98). Observation as defined by Marshall & Rossman is: **"the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study"**. (1989:79)

For the intention of making this study more authentic and accurate, we have chosen classroom observation as a second tool for collecting data since it is the most suitable and convenient tool in relation to our work as it provides valid data through directly observing students' reactions and attitudes in response to situations involving culture inside the classroom setting.

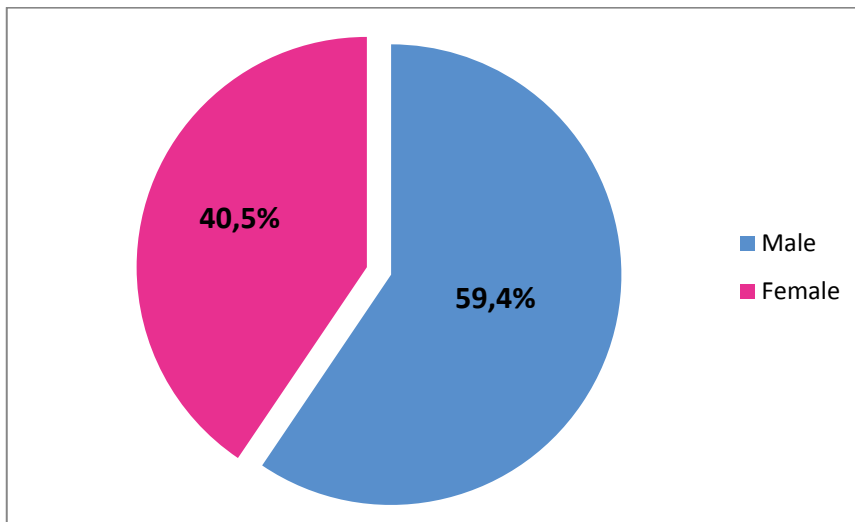
We have followed a structured classroom observation consisting of a (05) item checklist in which attended two (02) sessions of "Grammar" module, one for each group that is; two from a total of four groups on the 25th of April 2021, however, we have missed "Culture and civilisation" Seminar due to the pandemic

2.4 Data Analysis and Discussion of the Findings:

Data analysis of students' questionnaire is done with the process of applying statistical techniques to evaluate and describe students' replies and ensure the integrity of the data collected through appropriate analysis of the findings.

2.4.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation of the Questionnaire:**1. What is your gender?****Table 1: Students' distribution according to gender**

Gender	Male	Female
Number out of 37	22	15
Percentage	59,4%	40,5%

**Figure 1: Students' distribution according to gender**

Gender helps recognize which category of the population is examined during this study as far as males and females. As it is shown in the diagram above, 59,4% of students who answered the questionnaire are males and 40,5% are females, showing close ratios between the two genders.

2. What is your age?**Table 2: Students' distribution according to age**

Age	17	18	19	20	21	22	25	28	44
Number	1	11	8	7	4	2	2	1	1

Chapter Two: [Data Collection, Analysis and Discussion of Findings]

out of 37									
Percentage	2,7%	29,7%	21,6%	18,9%	10,8%	5,4%	5,4%	2,7%	2,7%

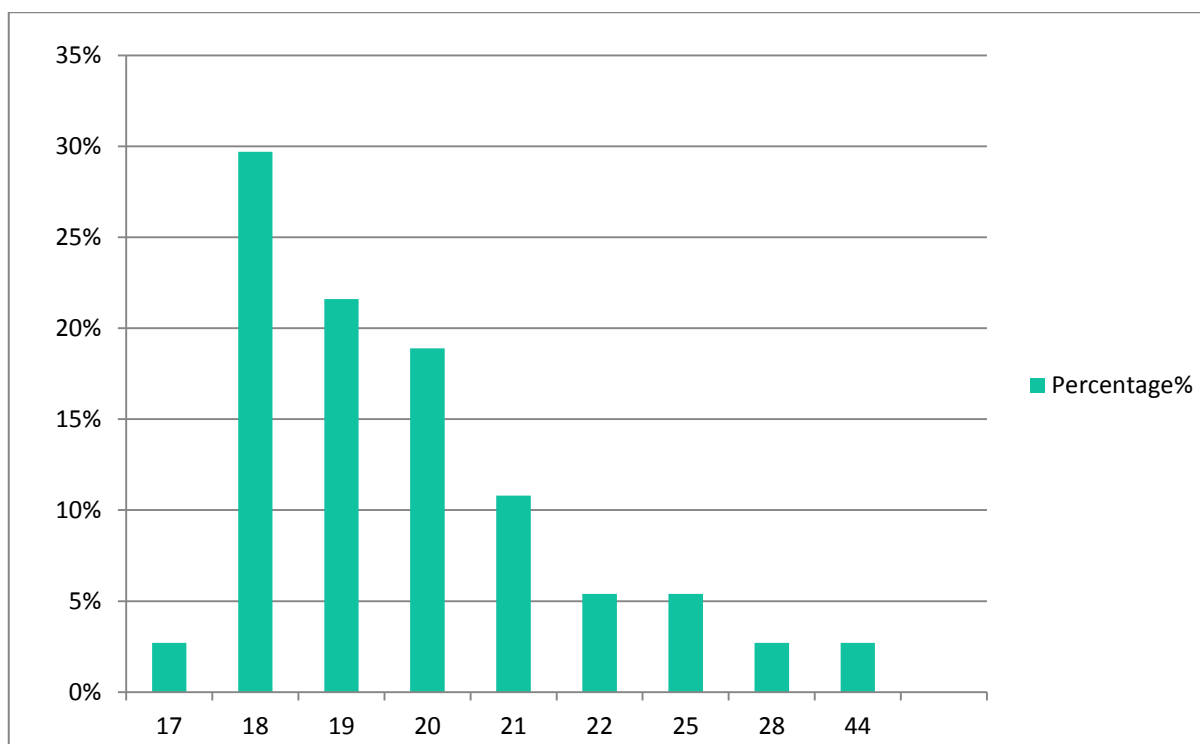


Figure 2: Students' distribution according to age

Age is a very important factor since it defines which portion of the population we are targeting in this study. As the results show, the participants' age range varies from 17 to 44 with the majority of students ranking between 18 and 21 years old which is natural since the studied sample is made of students; hence young adults.

3. How much do you know about your own culture?

Table 3: Students' level of cultural knowledge (native culture)

Option	Very much	Medium knowledge	Not Much
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Chapter Two: [Data Collection, Analysis and Discussion of Findings]

Number out of 37	2	30	5
Percentage	5,4%	81%	13,5%

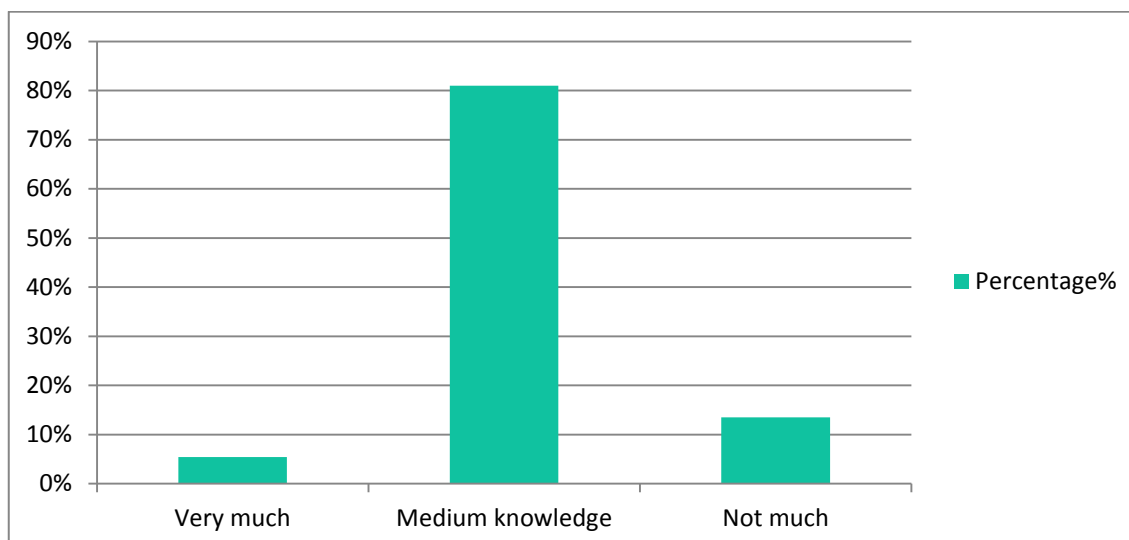


Figure 3: Students' level of cultural knowledge (native culture)

Cultural awareness is an essential element that had to be highlighted during this study, thus, our informants were first questioned about their native culture and how much do they know about it. The responses to this question as shown in the diagram are concentrated in the medium knowledge zone with a percentage of 81% of students' responses, and second most chosen option is "not much" with the small percentage of 13,5% of the responses, leaving the option "very much" the least chosen one with only 5,4% of students' responses.

4. How much do you know about foreign cultures that correspond to your field of studies; in your case English speaking cultures?

Table 4: Students' level of cultural knowledge (foreign culture)

Option	Very much	Medium knowledge	Not Much
Number out of 37	3	23	11

Chapter Two: [Data Collection, Analysis and Discussion of Findings]

Percentage	8,1%	62,1%	29,7%
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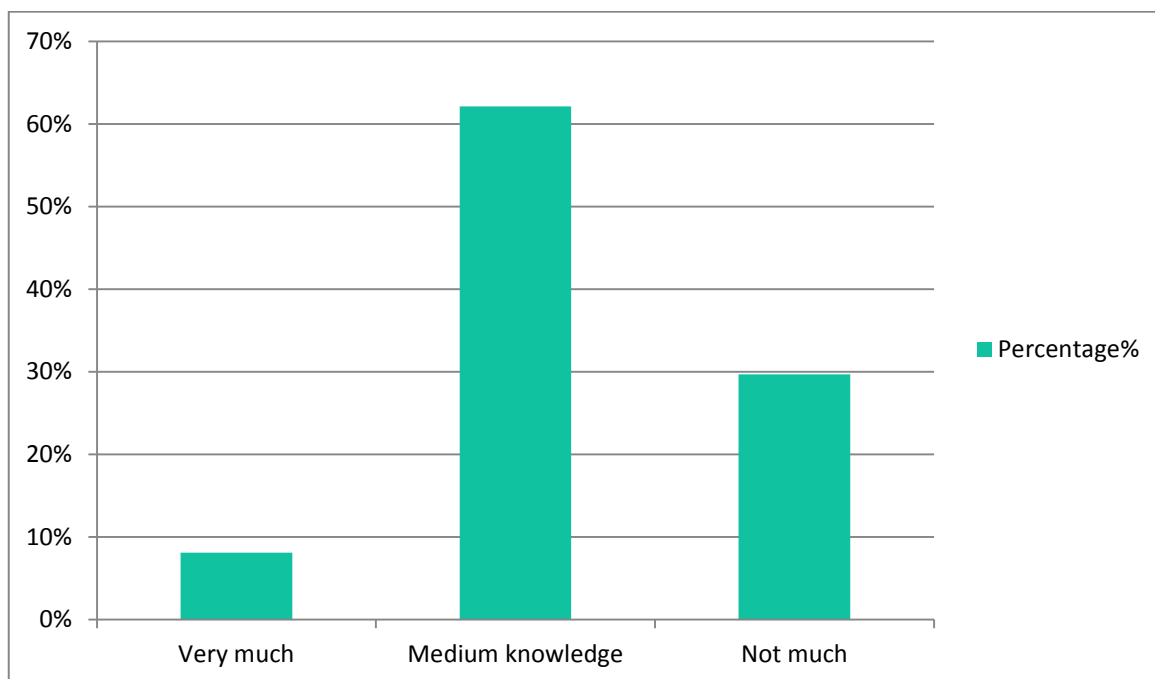


Figure 4: Students' level of cultural knowledge (foreign culture)

Students were asked a second time if they are familiar with culture yet this time regarding foreign cultures and again the majority of students with a percentage of 62,1% stayed neutral picking out the medium knowledge option. 29,7% of students answered “not much” and a small portion of 8,1% said “very much”.

5. Which one do you find more interesting?

Table 5: Cultural preferences

Option	Your native culture	Foreign cultures
Number out of 37	17	20
Percentage	45,9%	54%

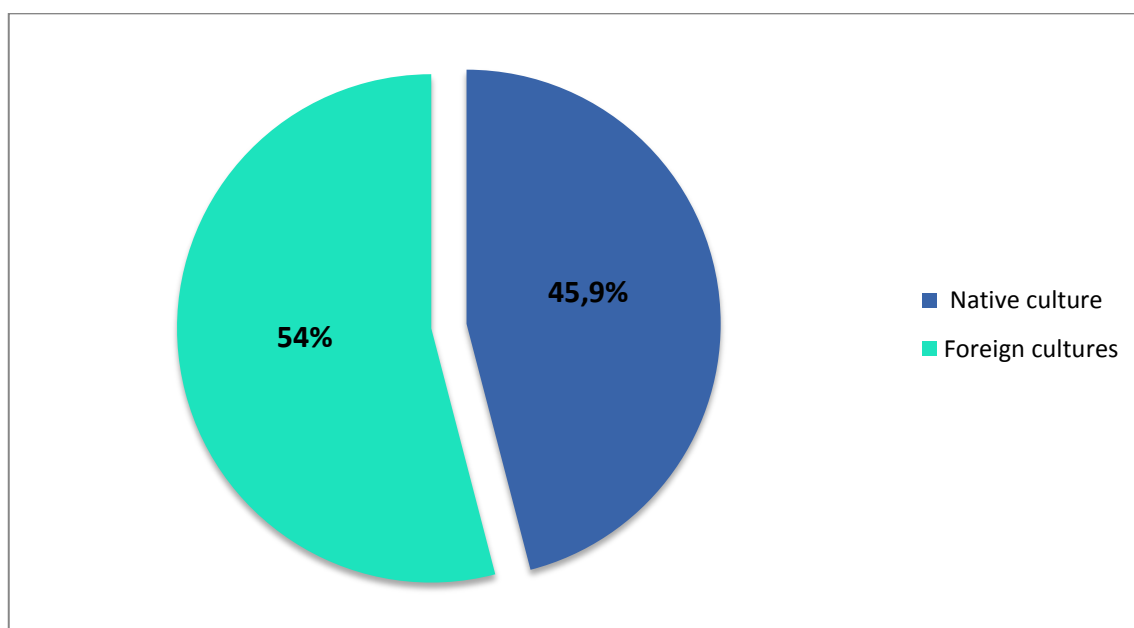


Figure 5: Cultural preferences

Next we asked students about their position when choosing between their native culture and foreign cultures in terms of interest and value. 45,9% of the respondents said their native culture was more interesting and 54% chose foreign cultures, showing a difference of 8% in comparison to students who chose their native culture yet, we notice that these rates are near each other indicating that both options are chosen almost equally among the students.

6. If you chose foreign cultures, it is due to:

Table 6: Students' argument for choosing foreign cultures

Option	Emphasis on foreign cultures by teachers and the curriculum	Personal preference	Non-response
Number out of 37	8	21	8
Percentage	21,6%	56,7%	21,6%

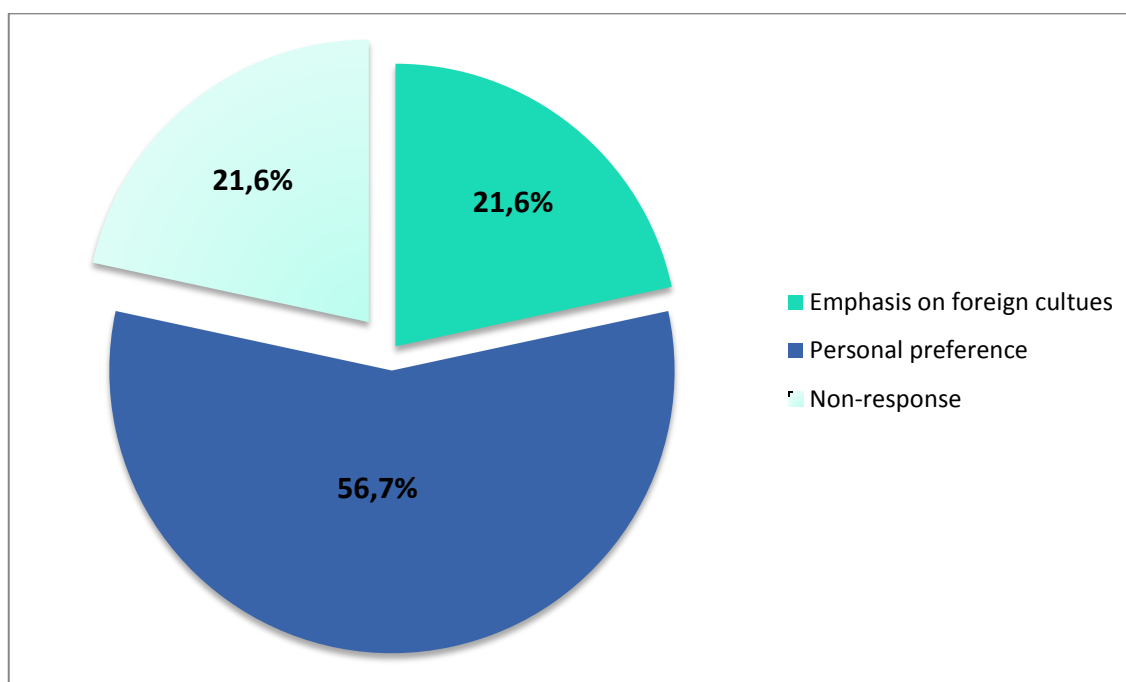


Figure 6 : Students' argument for choosing foreign cultures

This question was directed to the 54% of students in the previous question whom in their opinion the foreign cultures are more interesting, in which they are questioned about the reason behind that choice. The results demonstrate that the vast majority of responses with a percentage of 56,7% have decided that the reason for their choice was because of their personal preference. In second place comes “Emphasis on foreign cultures by teachers and the curriculum” as the main reason for choosing foreign cultures by 21,6% of students’ answers and an equal rate for non-response, i.e. 21,6% have not answered the question, this section of students can be linked to those who picked native culture previously.

7. Have you ever experienced culture shock; when a person experiences a cultural environment different from one's own?

Table 7: Culture shock

Option	Yes	No	Non-response
Number out of 37	14	22	1
Percentage	37,8%	59,4%	2,7%

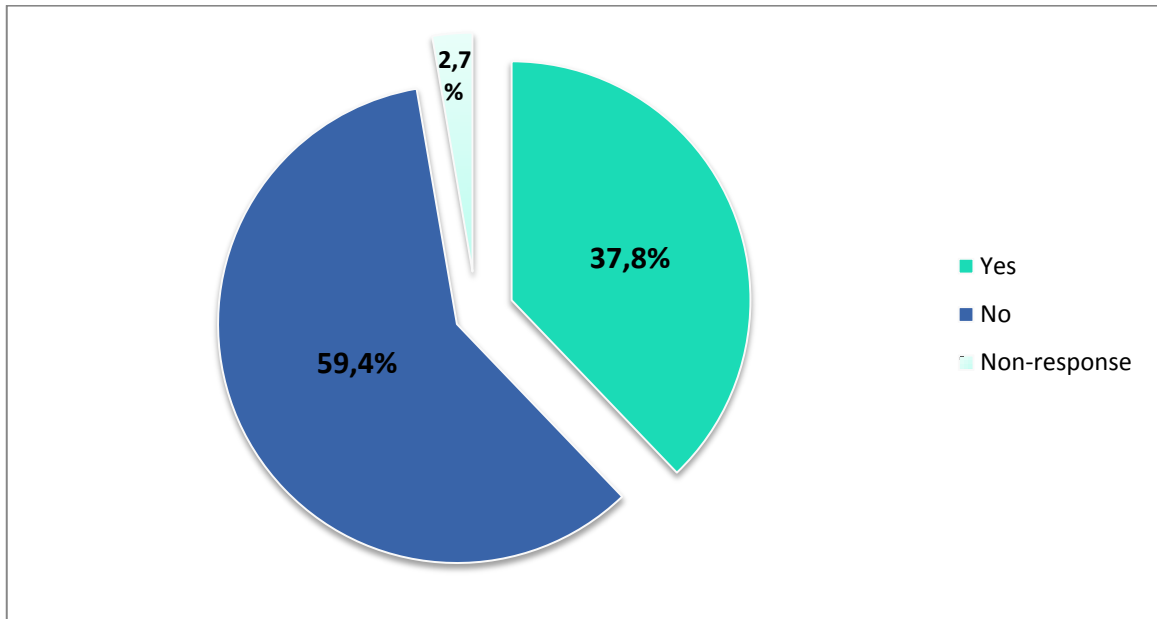


Figure 7: Culture shock

Cultural differences cannot be denied especially when meeting an unusual environment or situation. Therefore, we asked students if they have encountered different circumstances in which they were surprised and found the situation they were in strange or shocking. Over half of students said “yes” they have experience a culture shock at some point by a percentage of 59,4%, and 37,8% disagreed saying that they have not. Only 2,7% did not respond.

8. If yes, did it make you feel discouraged?

Table 8: Discouragement of students

Option	Yes	No	Non-response
Number out of 37	6	16	15
Percentage	16,2%	43,2%	40,5%

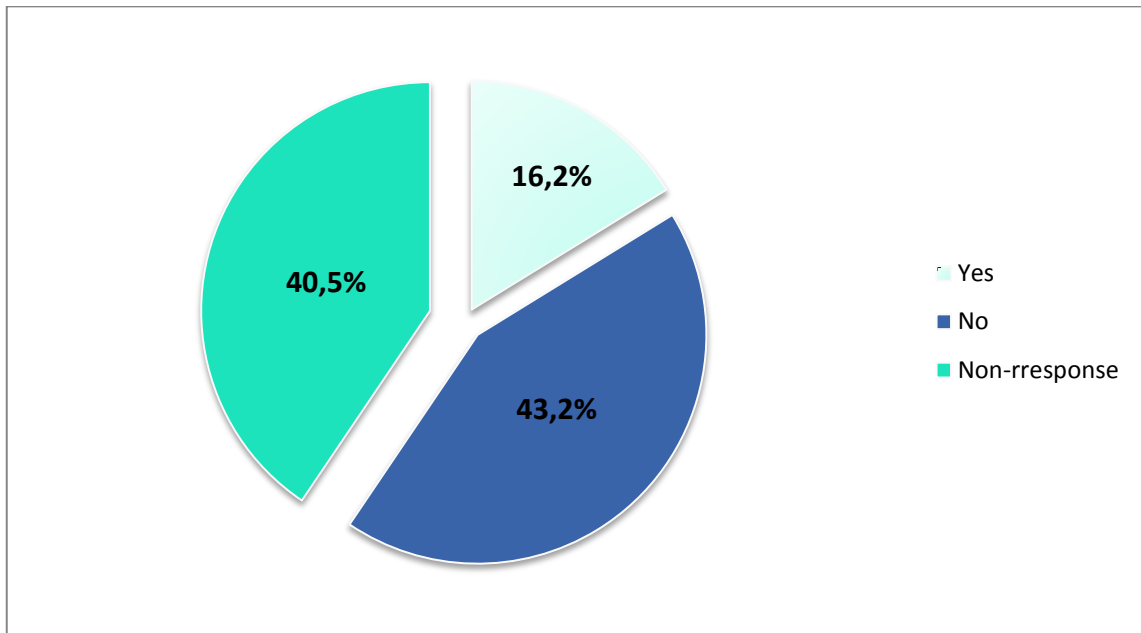


Figure 8: Discouragement of students

The following question subsequently questions the respondents who said “yes” in question number (07) about the consequences of facing culture shock; it inquires if it has lowered their desire to learn. Students responses were as follows: 43,2% of the students agreed with the statement while 16,2% had a different opinion expressing that such a narrative have not discouraged them. And a wide percentage of 40,5% have not answered the question.

9. Do you believe foreign cultures such as western culture are superior to your own?

Table 9: Superiority of foreign cultures

Option	Yes	No	Non-response
Number out of 37	15	20	2
Percentage	40,5%	54%	5,4%

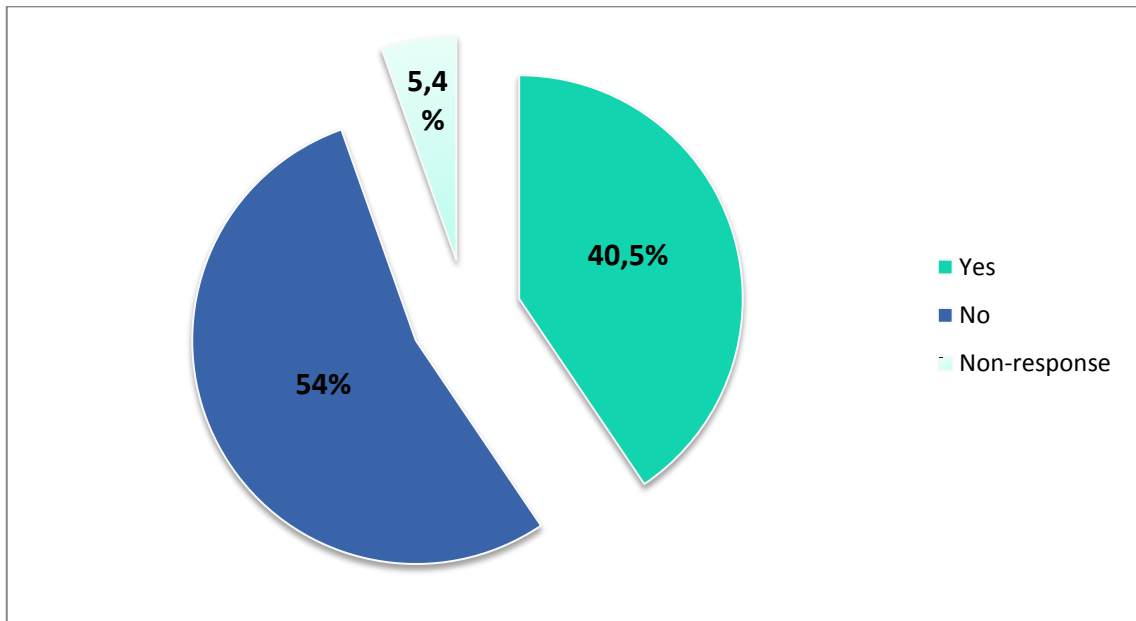
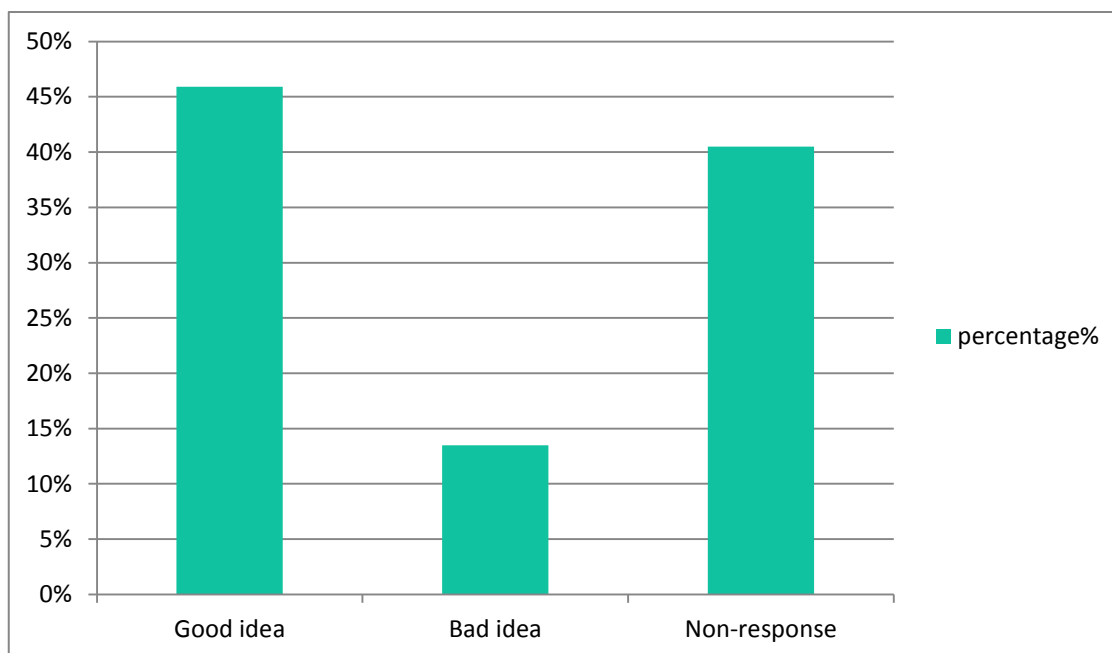


Figure 9: Superiority of foreign cultures

The final close-ended question in this questionnaire aims at the issue of dominance of foreign cultures over the native one. The result came quite surprisingly as we expected. Indeed, 54% and the majority of students said yes they believe foreign cultures are superior to their own culture. 40,5% said “No”; disagreeing with the idea, leaving only 5,4% who did not state their opinion.

10. What would you think if your native culture was featured more in class? And why?**Figure 10: Featuring of native culture in class**

This question is first of three (03) open-ended questions through which we seek to perceive students view of the suggestion of including or returning to their native culture during classes. Most of our informants with a rate of 45,9% explain how they think it is a good idea and support it, in which and as they claimed; it is necessary to know more about their native culture since they honestly do not know much about it and it is a natural thing because in their opinion they should know their native culture more than the foreign ones. Some even stated that they will be proud and honored if their native culture was featured more in class thus, will be more encouraged. Second most ranking is in fact students who have not stated their opinion by 40,5%, followed by those who oppose to this suggestion at last by 13,5%; explaining how they do not believe it is necessary since they are taking a foreign language and that they actually need to just study foreign cultures because they already know their native culture.

11. How do you feel about integration of culture inside the classroom whether foreign or native?

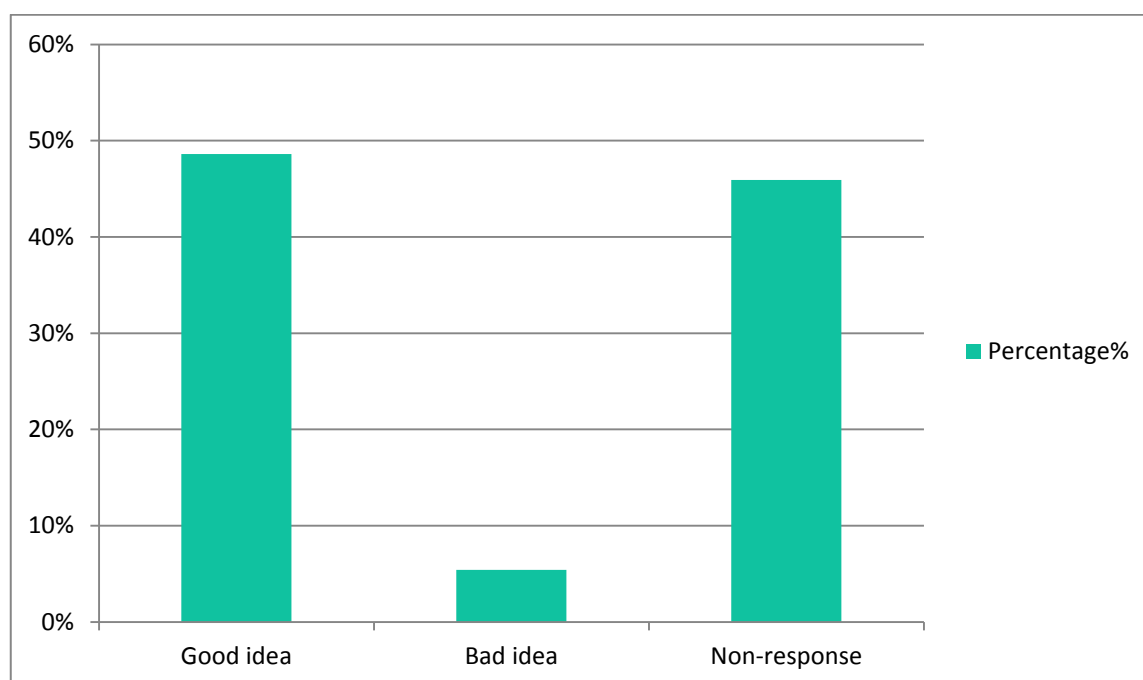


Figure 11: Featuring of culture generally in class

Students' attitudes towards culture inside the classroom are crucial for evaluating the studied case. The data gathered shows that nearly half of the respondents with a percentage of 48,6 % denote that culture should be included when learning a foreign language regardless of whether foreign or not backing their claim by clarifying how they will gain more knowledge about one or both of them in which a group of them stated that foreign cultures are more important to them than the native one during classes. Some strongly support the including cultures because according to them it will make learning more enjoyable, others see it as a great opportunity for them to explore and compare their native culture with foreign cultures in case they were both embraced fairly. A very large percentage of 45,9% of students have abandoned the question, and only 5,4% of them do not support culture being addressed or mentioned inside the classroom what so ever making it the low-ranking option.

12. Do you agree on the idea that both; foreign cultures and your native culture should be embraced equally in the classroom? Explain further.

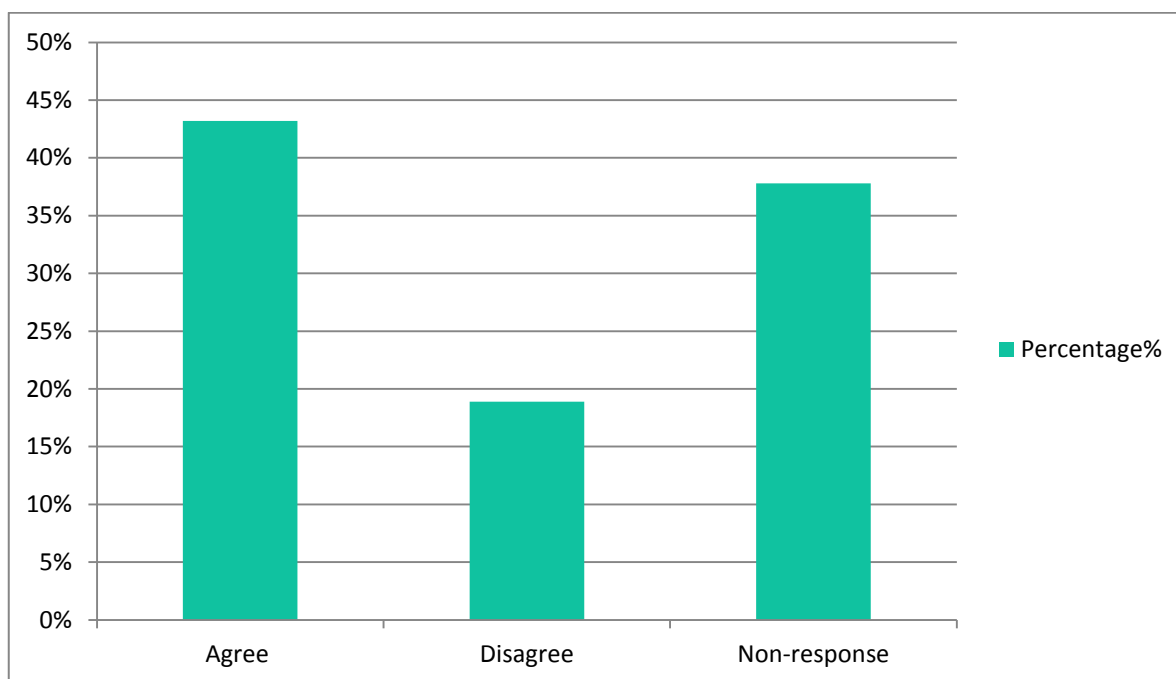


Figure 12: Featuring of both cultures equally in class

It is quite interesting to see that students widely agree with the perception of both native and foreign cultures being introduced equivalently to them within their studies. 43,2% of the respondents agree with the idea, being it was the most selected by students, in which a number of them went with including foreign cultures only, expressing how it is important to have a clean and deep idea about foreign cultures and understand the English speaking communities even more in order to be aware and respect any cultural differences such as religion and so, develop cultural awareness. Others think that it is best to be fifty- fifty, i.e. both native and foreign cultures should be brought in an equal manner during lectures. However, those who disagree represent a smaller variation among the respondents by 18,9% . They accompanied their point of view by clarifying how culture is not something that should be discussed inside the class unless it is truly needed. In addition to 37,8% of students who have quit answering the question.

2.4.2 Discussion of the Results of the Students' Questionnaire:

Students Attitudes towards culture are fundamental for evaluating the learning environment inside the Algerian academic institutions especially foreign language programs, given that languages represents the corresponding communities to those languages, students will most likely react in some way or other when introduced to foreign cultures during lectures. In the case we are treating, that is the case of ELL, the English language exists with its culture perpetually; hence, it is vital to process students' reactions and positions statistically in such situations. It is even more important when we consider that cultural awareness and cultural identity are associated as found in the results.

2.4.2.1 Cultural Awareness:

Cultural awareness was surely present among first year students. In which most students acknowledge culture but on an average level, they do not know much about neither; native nor foreign cultures, yet, those who classified themselves as knowing a lot about foreign cultures are more than respondents who went with the option "very much" on how much they know about their native culture, which means that at this stage a great number of students are aware of their native culture more than they are of foreign cultures. Altogether, native culture is favoured, recognised and more familiar among first year university students of English which is normal and reasonable.

2.4.2.2 Students' Culture identity:

The results of the students' questionnaire demonstrate a minor difference in opinions among first year students in terms of choosing between their native culture and the foreign cultures since the numbers those who favour foreign cultures are slightly higher than students who picked native culture, which was not quite what we were expecting since we feared that the rates would be much higher we were rather very relieved by these results. This can be translated to the

strong sense of pride and belonging to the native culture that students still possess, meaning, almost half students are strongly connected to their cultural identity. However, when we interrogated students later on about their thought of dominance of the western foreign cultures over theirs, a very large number of students are convinced that their cultural values and principles are inferior to the ones of the west, which is understandable being that the latter is considered the most powerful and controlling force worldwide and naturally the most influential.

2.4.2.3 Encountering Cultural Differences:

During a year full of programmed lessons that are prepared and presented to the first year university students of English, there are times where during lectures students come across new ideas that they never heard or witnessed before, these ideas carry morals different from their own, and are applied in different situations from the ones they are familiar with in their daily life. Students' answers revealed that more than half of them have already faced numerous situations where they were surprised by a certain fact or mind-set that descends from western cultures and is not compatible with their native values and morals that they live by, in their case Arab, Muslim and Algerian norms. Culture shock is most likely capable to result in a decrease in levels of enthusiasm for students; they may feel attacked or offended in a way and that their beliefs are being violated since the sample that we interrogated have confirmed this idea even further by saying that similar encounters have indeed discouraged them in the past.

2.4.2.4 Integration of Culture inside the Classroom:

The majority of students who chose foreign cultures had that choice by preference. Still a good number disagreed saying it was because of the curriculum and the lessons that are programmed for each year and because of teachers as well. We estimate that throughout certain modules such as

civilisation courses where it is compulsory to teach about western societies, history and culture, teachers perform their best to explain foreign nations and debunk any ambiguity that students may have, exposing different ways for students to perceive these outsider concepts. Therefore and as a result, students react differently, some are impressed each time they learn new information, which keeps them curious and want to learn more , others are a bit uncomfortable being faced with this amount of new alien information regularly.

2.4.2.5 Students' Perceptions and Views:

Students made a very clear statement of their thoughts about culture during the periods of lectures. When looking at things from their perspective, culture in general should be considered when learning a foreign language, and for that matter they believe that their own cultural elements and values should be present within the syllabus in forms of lessons dedicated entirely for discussing and expressing their identity and cultural characteristics, obviously using the English language. Few others do not share the same opinion of the situation, rather they think that associating their culture of origin with the curriculum program is not necessary what so ever, showing very little interest and value towards their native culture. This group of students can be directly linked to those who consider foreign cultures more interesting and appealing. Another narrow percentage of students do not support culture being addressed or mentioned during periods of class in all its aspects. A surprisingly wide division left the question with no answer, we link this behaviour to the potential sensitivity of this subject, or perhaps, students avoid such positions where they find themselves unable to express their ideas properly because they do not have enough experience with such occurrences. Lastly, a venerable category have expressed how they believe that both native and foreign cultures should share the same amount of attention by the curriculum and teachers, which is very impressive to see, students not only are aware and at a notable level of understanding and

evaluation, but have figured out and described the ideal learning environment that is suitable for them.

2.4.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation of Classroom Observation:

Through the observation of first year university English students we seek to gain an image of what occurs inside ELL classrooms; what is introduced during class and the way students react to it in the case of culture-based classroom discussions. We looked for signs of inconvenience and confusion and uncertainty that students may show we also try to inspect how often these signs take place, and how do they affect First year English students.

2.4.3.1 Incorporating Culture-related Courses Regarding the Foreign Cultures:

Across our observation sessions of courses of Grammar, we noticed a mentioning or referencing of foreign western cultures by some and not all teachers during multiple occasions. It was mainly raised for discussion as additional information with the intention of enriching students' knowledge base, and far from deliberately cultivating, or in other terms, westernising students. To them it was an innocent act to enlighten students about values, attitudes, and preferences they do not yet make sense of.

2.4.3.2 Students' Reactions and Behaviours:

During situations where foreign cultural values and ideas have been introduced, students were mostly interested, with some being even amazed, especially when disclosing raw information that they were not familiar with, while quite a few others were astonished, confused and unable to engage in discussion, for instance, there was a time where the teacher gave examples of western life style within sentences to explain certain rules during a grammar lesson. Some students were a bit perturbed because they could not fully

comprehend the context that these sentences were conveying, teachers were then obliged to clarify the meaning for students and provide a clearer image. The remaining students did not suffer from the same condition as them, perhaps they have previously encountered the terms used in the making of those examples that the other students found strange and unusual.

2.4.3.3 Short Term Outcomes:

As we noticed, students are most definitely affected by the kind of situation that we mentioned earlier. It was obvious that, students who did not identify the new terms and the meanings carried by these terms were frustrated and somewhat blocked, as if some sort of barrier formed midway through the lesson which broke the learning cycle, causing students to have trembled thoughts and feel a sense of disorientation from the lesson setting and potentially even anxious.

2.4.4 Discussion of the Results of Classroom Observation:

We aspired through this classroom observation to gather more qualitative data about the impact of integration of foreign cultures on students' learning, and the way they react to them. Thus, we will be able to find out whether the curriculum or teachers insert any culture-related ideas, values, elements, etc. concerning foreign cultures which in this context are the English speaking cultures such as western culture and what are the possible consequences that can be noticed from students' side.

2.4.4.1 Mentioning of Foreign Values and Ideas during Lessons:

Throughout lessons, there are some conversations between a teacher and his/her students that take place in some occasions, which revolve around multiple subjects, such as: western lifestyle, history, news, etc. they are mostly a righteous act by the teachers; an innocent initiative to simply educate and guide students.

However, teachers may have expressed their admiration to specific foreign ideas, but they did not by any mean attempt to neither glorify the western culture over students' culture nor draw students to believe western cultures are more favourable.

2.4.4.2 What happens afterwards regarding Students' Perspectives:

We found that some students definitely get affected in a way that they are perplexed and disoriented from the learning environment, and unable to think clearly or understand. Therefore, we estimate that they will be absolutely distanced, discouraged and demotivated to learn inside the learning setting; suffering a lack of enthusiasm and willingness to continue their educational journey.

2.4.4.3 The Risks of Accompanying Foreign Cultures in Class:

These situations form obstacles ahead of students, block and obstruct their path of learning on the long-term. All these negative consequences affect the safety of the classroom setting and threaten the future of students' education. Thus, what we observed certainly complies with what many researchers alleged (some of which we suggested in our review of literature and previous studies) concerning students' cultural identity and foreign language learning settings, in which it resembles to what Block maintained. Since, it is the most relevant claim to the present study, forasmuch as it points to how confronting new cultures makes individuals fall into distress, after realising that their sense of identity is being weakened, and will be confused and puzzled unless an equilibrium is initiated.

2.5 Conclusion:

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design and methodology used for our study, through introducing the instruments used for collecting data, as well as, the explanation of the procedures adopted for analysing them. This chapter also provides information about the setting and participants involved in the study, and it promotes exploring the reasons behind the manifestation of the phenomenon we are fixating, and detect: situations, behaviours, attitudes and reactions occurring as a result, which impacts the students in the course of learning. Love, pride, and willingness to preserve their culture and origins are definitely marked outcomes, students are clearly proud of who they are, where they belong and what they represent and are surely happy to represent. Another point to be concluded from this study is that a healthy, safe and supportive classroom environment without a doubt stimulates learning.

General Conclusion:

The research topic plays a significant role in education and instruction in Algerian universities at many levels. It aims at expanding knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, and by pursuing in its lines it can potentially impact the operation of higher education and bring attention to more serious issues that could generate notable institutional changes.

A very important segment of our paper is how teachers could avoid identity conflict by assisting students' assimilation of the target culture without limitation of their cultural identity. Lessons that are programmed to carry cultural content can influence and transform students' experiences, social relations and possibly everyday life, and ELL curriculums are a good example. A good curriculum must surely allow teachers creativity and independence, however, it must also support students' skills and knowledge levels and to no degree disregard students' culture and identity. Otherwise, there will be several negative effects that arise as a result of neglecting students' cultural side that frequently take place in ELL classrooms which further validates our hypotheses. Students show signs of frustration and confusion when faced with unusual ideas, yet are at the same time aware of both foreign and native cultures, still not to a degree to equalise between the two.

As previous research has revealed, a secure cultural identity can improve a person's overall well-being; and as a result, boost their chances of educational success. Therefore, these reactions must be considered as an intense threat that needs to be treated as quickly as possible, and so, considerable methods are suggested to target the imbalance and reinforce students' self-esteem and cultural value, for instance, dedicating separate courses among course outline for students' home culture and heritage. Also another recommendation is encouraging students to express and discuss their traditions and local habits inside the class, thus, reassure the worth of values and beliefs which they portray and fulfil an equilibrium in cultural knowledge and value.

Time Frames:

Timeline of events to proceed with the research study will go as follows:

1. Selection of thesis advisor on February 2021.
2. Submission of the research proposal to the Department of Foreign Language for approval on April 2021.
3. Distribution of questionnaire copies to First year LMD English Students on May 2021.
4. Attendance of classroom observation of First year LMD English Students on May 2021.
5. Data collection process will begin on May 2021.
6. Final report writing on June 2021.
7. Final thesis project submission on end of June 2021.

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Appendices:

1 Appendix 1: Questionnaire provided for ELL Students

Questionnaire for Students

Dear informants;

You are kindly invited to participate in the following questionnaire concerning negligence of students cultural identity inside ELL classrooms simply by putting a tick (✓) on the appropriate answers or expressing your comments where necessary, and it takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your collaboration

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ female

2. What is your age?

3. How much do you know about your own culture?

- ☐ Very much
- ☐ Medium knowledge
- ☐ Not much

4. How much do you know about foreign cultures that correspond to your field of studies; in your case English speaking cultures?

- ☐ Very much
- ☐ Medium knowledge
- ☐ Not much

5. Which one do you find more interesting?

- ☐ Your native culture
- ☐ Foreign cultures such as western culture

6. If you chose foreign cultures, it is due to:

- ☐ Emphasis on the foreign cultures by your teachers and your class curriculum.
- ☐ Personal preference

7. Have you ever experienced culture shock; when a person experiences a cultural environment different from one's own?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. If yes, did it make you feel discouraged?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. Do you believe foreign cultures such as western culture are superior to your own?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. What would you think if your native culture was featured more in class? And why?

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11. How do you feel about integration of culture inside classroom
whether foreign or native?

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12. Do you agree on the idea that both foreign cultures and your native
culture should be embraced equally in the classroom? Explain further.

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