

Developing Cultural Awareness through the Use of Authentic Materials in the EFL Classroom at the Department of Letters and English, University of Frères Mentouri Constantine1

Date de réception : 31/05/2022 ; Date d'acceptation : 13/09/2022

Abstract

Language and culture are two intricately linked concepts in foreign language pedagogy, and dealing with one of the two without taking into account the other has been proven to be impossible without facing a multiplicity of communicative problems. On this ground, countless study works are dedicated to the issue of developing students' cultural awareness and investigating the most efficient tools that contribute to the reaching of the desired objectives. Thus, this resulted in a call for casting light on the use of authentic materials in the EFL classrooms. Authentic materials constitute a convenient teaching tool which serves the aims of equipping students with necessary cultural knowledge and skills, boosting students' motivation and interest towards cultural diversity, and making the teaching/learning process enjoyable and easier. Therefore, the present paper endeavours to investigate students' view on promoting their cultural awareness through the use of authentic materials in the EFL classroom. In order to collect data about the validity of authentic materials in developing students' cultural awareness, a questionnaire is used as a research tool. The latter is administered to a sample of 98 master two students extracted from a population of 327 master two students at the department of Letters and English, University of Frères Mentouri Constantine1. The obtained results revealed that authentic materials are worth integration in the EFL classrooms for motivating students and developing their cultural awareness.

Keywords: Cultural awareness, Language, Culture, EFL classroom, authentic materials.

**Amina Benhamlaoui(1)
Riad Belouahem(2)**

(1) Department of Letters and English, University of Larbi Ben Mhidi, Oum El Bouaghi

(2) Department of Letters and English, University of Frères Mentouri Constantine 1
Riad.belouahem@hotmail.fr

Résumé

La langue et la culture sont deux concepts qui sont étroitement liés dans le domaine de la pédagogie des langues étrangères, et le fait de traiter l'un sans prendre en considération l'autre, s'avère être impossible sans faire face à une multitude de problèmes de communication. Sur cette base, d'innombrables études de recherche sont consacrées à la question du développement de la conscience culturelle chez les étudiants, ainsi qu'à la recherche des outils les plus efficaces qui servent à atteindre les objectifs souhaités. Alors, Cela a abouti à un appel à mettre la lumière sur l'utilisation des matériaux authentiques dans les classes ou l'Anglais est enseigné comme langue étrangère. Les matériaux authentiques constituent un outil pédagogique pratique qui sert à doter les étudiants de connaissances et de compétences culturelles nécessaires, de stimuler leur motivations et intérêt envers la diversité culturelle, et aussi de rendre le processus d'enseignement/apprentissage plus facile et agréable. Ainsi, le présent article tente d'enquêter sur le point de vue des étudiants sur la promotion de leur conscience culturelle via l'utilisation des matériaux authentiques dans les classes de l'EFL (Anglais comme Langue Etrangère). Afin de collecter des données sur la validité du matériel authentique sur le développement de la conscience culturelle des étudiants, un questionnaire est utilisé comme outils de recherche. Ce dernier est administré à un échantillon de 98 étudiants de master deux, extrait d'une population de 327 étudiants de master deux du Département de Lettre et d'Anglais, Université des Frères Mentouri Constantine1. Les résultats obtenus ont révélés que le matériel authentique vaut la peine d'être intégré aux classes de l' 'EFL', afin d'augmenter le niveau de motivation des étudiants et de développer leur conscience culturelle.

Mots clés : Sensibilisation culturelle, langue, culture, classe EFL, matériaux authentiques

ملخص

اللغة والثقافة مفهومان مترابطان بشكل معقد في علم أصول تدريس اللغة الأجنبية، والتعامل مع أحدهما دون الأخذ بعين الاعتبار الآخر ثبت أنه أمر مستحيل دون مواجهة العديد من مشاكل التواصل. على هذا الأساس، تم تخصيص عدد لا يحصى من الأعمال الدراسية لمسألة تنمية الوعي الثقافي لدى الطلاب والتحقيق في أكثر الأدوات فعالية التي تساهم في الوصول إلى الأهداف المرجوة. وبالتالي، أدى ذلك لدعوة لتبسيط الضوء على استخدام وسائل التدريس الموثوقة في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تشكل الوسائل الموثوقة أداة تعليمية ملائمة تخدم أهداف تزويد الطلبة بالمعارف والمهارات الثقافية الضرورية، تعزيز تحفيز الطلاب واهتمامهم بالتنوع الثقافي، وكذلك جعل عملية التدريس/التعلم ممتعة وسهلة. وبالتالي، تسعى الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقق من وجهة نظر الطلاب حول تعزيز وعيهم الثقافي من خلال استخدام الوسائل الموثوقة في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. من أجل جمع البيانات حول صحة الوسائل الموثوقة في تنمية وعيهم الثقافي يتم استخدام الاستبيان كأداة بحث. يدار هذا الأخير على عينة مكونة من 98 طالب ماستر 2 تم انقضاءهم من 327 طالب ماستر 2 في قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية، جامعة الأخوة منتوري قسنطينة 1. أظهرت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن الوسائل الموثوقة تستحق الإدماج في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وذلك لتحفيز الطلاب وتنمية وعيهم الثقافي

الكلمات المفتاحية: وعي ثقافي، لغة، ثقافة، فصول تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، مواد أصلية

* Corresponding author, e-mail: Minabenhmlaoui@gmail.com

I- Introduction :

Traditionally, language teaching put emphasis on developing learners' basic linguistic skills ; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. EFL classes tended to highly focus on grammar and vocabulary and considered their mastery the key to learning a foreign language. With this in mind, culture was ignored and no approaches or activities were included to the classroom with the purpose of developing learners' cultural awareness. Nevertheless, due to the world globalisation and the call for a lingua franca, light had been casted on communication generating a multiplicity of research studies that deal with successful communication as no more simply relating to linguistic exchange but also to meaning transmission. To put it differently, for communication to be successful, learners should obey to the equation of successful communication equals a combination of both linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge in any message transmission or decryption. Therefore, teaching a foreign language should be accompanied with the teaching of the culture of that language; language use has to be combined with culturally appropriate behaviour, otherwise; it will lead to inefficient and inappropriate communication.

In our present time, efforts are directed to most efficient ways to include culture into the EFL classrooms. One of these ways is the use of authentic materials for bringing natural contexts to the classroom and providing learners with the opportunity to emerge into the foreign cultures and to develop necessary knowledge and skills to be capable of dealing with them appropriately. In this regards, the present study aims at investigating the possibility of promoting learners cultural awareness through including authentic materials into the EFL classrooms, as well as, to what extent and how the learning process is affected. Thus, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1- Is it pivotal to use authentic materials in EFL classrooms in order to develop learners' cultural awareness?

2- To what extent is learners' level of learning affected? Is it restricted only to culture learning or to language learning, in general?

In the light of these questions, it is hypothesised that the EFL learners' level of cultural awareness would be promoted if authentic materials were used in the classroom as a tool of culture teaching.

1. Cultural Awareness and English as a Foreign Language Teaching/Learning

In current research studies, the concept of cultural awareness is gaining an increasingly interesting position, and a huge number of works are dedicated to investigating its significance in the field of EFL. This huge interest is partly due to the fact that it is a recently-introduced concept (Savignon, 2000). It was first introduced in 1993 by Tomalin and Stempleski, and since then it has been referred to with a multiplicity of definitions and characteristics that cast light on it as a pivotal objective to reach in current foreign language teaching. Among the definitions attributed to Cultural awareness is the one stated by Corratzi & Jinn (1999: 217) in which they explain it as the fact of being "aware of members of another cultural group: their expedition, their perspectives and values. It also means attempting to understand their reasons for their actions and beliefs". In other words, being culturally aware implements knowledge about other cultural communities' members and the features that define the culture they belong to, as well as, having the willingness to understand the rules that govern their beliefs and behaviours. This understanding of cultural otherness' aspects and guiding systems requires three major elements; knowledge of one's native culture, knowledge of the target culture and a comparison process which aims at detecting the similarities and dissimilarities between the two. To put it differently, "cultural awareness is based on knowledge of the foreign culture, but also on the knowledge of one's own culture. Any process of comparison or contrasting has its starting point in the learner's pre-knowledge" (Fenner, 2000). Accordingly, one can notice that in order for students to develop cultural awareness, they should have the precursory cultural knowledge as a foundation, and to be used for a process of comparison with the target culture knowledge.

Therefore, students who develop cultural awareness as a skill in FLT are believed to switch from monocultural to multicultural students. This is what is explained by Byram (1991) who pens that “developing learners’ cultural awareness is considered as modification of monocultural awareness”. In addition, it promotes students’ sense of tolerance and curiosity towards what is unfamiliar to them. That is, they become able to deal with foreign culture features and situations without developing judgmental opinions, and they become eager to learn more about cultural diversity. In plain words, cultural awareness enables students to develop knowledge about cultural otherness, as well as equips them with a number of qualities and skills that makes it possible for them to overcome the difficulties they may encounter in real-life communication; avoiding breakdowns, and bringing it to a level of proficiency. Moreover, the development of cultural awareness boosts students’ level of motivation (Tsou, 2005), and stimulates them by the process of cultural discovery and juxtaposition.

All the aforementioned reasons have made the development of cultural awareness a central issue in nowadays foreign language teaching, and have led to the conduction of a large number of works that are dedicated to the investigation of the most efficient tools that can be used in the classroom in order to meet the desired objectives.

2. Authentic Materials & their role in English as a Foreign Language Classes

There exists a plethora of definitions of the concept of authentic materials, and it has become a central concern in EFL classes and pedagogy. The definitions of authentic materials present slight differences in literature but they agree on the fact that the objective of their use in the EFL classroom remains in learners’ exposure to real-life language and how this language is used for communication in its cultural community. According to Harmer (1991) authentic texts are “materials which are designed for native speakers; they are real texts; designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language”. That is, authentic materials are well-thought-out for native speakers, rather than for learners of that language. Yet, they are included into foreign language classes for the purpose of maximising foreign language learning (Harmer, 1991). Jordan (1997) joined Harmer’s definition of AM in the sense that he stresses out the idea that they are not designed for FL teaching purposes and do not target language learners, but rather language speakers. He also adds (1997) that an authentic material refers to any text that is produced or used in order to deliver real content. Therefore, AM are tools that are originally produced by and for intrinsic speakers of language and are included to EFL classes in order to meet the main objective of the communication of meaning and information. Thus, it is believed that the texts that teachers include in the language classroom and which have a direct link with the texts produced in real contexts by (and to be delivered for) native speakers of the language, one can call them authentic texts (McDonald, Badger and Dasli, 2006). The word authentic refers to realness of the content, and in order to add more clarity to the concept of authentic texts, Gilmore (2007) provides a number of different uses of the term authentic in the field of FLT. He suggests eight different definitions that can be stated as follows :

1. The language produced by native speakers for native speakers in a particular language community
2. The language produced by a real speaker/ writer for a real audience conveying a real message
3. The qualities bestowed on a text by a receiver, in that it is not seen as something inherent in a text itself, but it is imparted on it by the reader/listener
4. The interaction between students and teachers and is a personal process of engagement
5. The type of task chosen
6. The social situation of the classroom
7. Assessment

8. Culture and the ability to behave or think like a target language group in order to be recognized and validated by them.

Authentic materials are of different kinds. Nunan (1989), refers to them as including two main forms ; spoken materials such as public announcement and print materials such as newspapers and timetables. To further illustrate, spoken materials include videos, movies, news segments, TV shows, songs, podcasts, and online commercials, etc. Print materials, on the other hand, include brochures, letters, emails, social media posts, menus, product manuals, etc. These materials constitute a tool that has been proved to hold a significant role in the success and development of EFL pedagogy. Their use in the classrooms results in a multiplicity of advantages. These advantages are the central concern of many research works were they are described as a powerful tool to use in EFL classes. For instance, it is argued that authentic materials are significantly beneficial for EFL learners and that one of these benefits is seen in the fact that it increases their level of motivation and produces positive responses in regards to the language learning process (Hylan, 2003). In addition, the continuous use of authentic materials prompts learners' awareness in the field of language learning (Nunan, 1989), helps in constructing learners interest and inspiration for learning via exposing them to real-life language (Guariento & Morley, 2001), and provides learners with opportunities "to experience language in use" (Tomlison & Masuhara, 2010) rather than providing mere declarative knowledge. Moreover, they facilitate the transmission of information and make the teaching process more creative. These advantages of authentic materials are discussed by a number of researchers and are summarized by Richards (2001) in the following points :

- 1- They have a positive effect on learner motivation.
- 2- They provide authentic cultural information.
- 3- They provide exposure to real language.
- 4- They relate more closely to learners ' needs.
- 5- They support a more creative approach to teaching.

From these points, one can notice that the advantages of using authentic materials in EFL classrooms are translated in learners' exposure to real-life language, suiting their different needs and promoting their level of motivation and interest. In addition to that, the second point brings attention to the fact that the use of authentic materials plays a significant role in providing learners with cultural knowledge and developing their cultural sensitivity. It engages learners in authentic cultural experiences ; it makes them emerge into the target culture and predict the difficulties that can face them in natural contexts. As a result, it equips them with the necessary preparation to overcome these cultural obstacles and develop their level of anticipation and tolerance. Moreover, it develops their sense of curiosity towards new and unfamiliar cultural elements, which results in an increase of their level of motivation and a refinement of the language teaching/learning process.

3. Methodology

As explained previously, the present study aims at investigating the role of using authentic materials in EFL classrooms on the development of learners' cultural awareness. On this ground, a students' questionnaire has been devised in the framework of this study. The questionnaire encompasses twenty (20) questions divided into four (04) main sections. These sections' titles are as follows :

- Section one : "Background Information". This section deals with collecting information about the informants (students) ; their age, gender, and study specialities.
- Section two : "Authentic Materials". This section aims at collecting information about two main points. Firstly, students' level of knowledge in regards to authentic materials ; students are asked about their meaning, types they know and which ones they had been exposed to during the past four years of studying English at the university. Secondly, students' opinion about the impact of using authentic materials in the EFL classroom is investigated.
- Section three : "Cultural Awareness". This section deals with the concept of cultural awareness. Participants' degree of awareness about the concept is

investigated ; its meaning, and its importance in the foreign language learning process. In addition, they are asked to give their point of view in regards to the extent to which it is taken into account at the university.

- Section Four : “Authentic materials and Cultural awareness”. This section investigates students’ opinion about the impact of authentic materials’ use on the development of cultural awareness in the EFL classroom. It seeks information about the manner and the extent to which it impacts their cultural awareness, in particular and their learning, in general.

The items of the questionnaire include a number of open-ended questions where participants are free to give their viewpoint about the subjects. In order to collect more precise information, informants are also provided with a number of closed questions where they are restricted to short number of options to be selected. In addition, a five-point likert scale question is included in order to detect and evaluate students’ points of polarisation and convergence (Pallant, 2005 ; and Coolican, 1994). To conclude, participants are given the opportunity to add further information in form of comments, suggestions, and ideas that they might find worthwhile mentioning at the closure of the questionnaire.

3.1. Population and sampling

The experiment was conducted during the academic year 2021-2022 on a sample that was randomly selected and which consists of ninety-eight (98) master two students. That is, from a total of 327 master two students at the department of English at the University of Frères Mentouri Constantine 1, thirty percent (30%) of them represent the sample of the present study. The reason behind the selection of master two students is the fact that students at this level are believed to have enough experience of the English language learning which facilitates the administration and data collection process and adds more validity to the experiment. They have also a certain level of linguistic competence to detect whether they are benefiting from the use of authentic materials in the development of their cultural awareness, and the past four years of studying English at the University’s department makes them in a better position to give their feedback on types of materials used from year one and the consequences of that use on the culture learning process.

3.2. Data Analysis

The return rate of the questionnaire was of 100%. That is, the total and final number of the completed questionnaire was 98 questionnaires. These questionnaires were completed by participants from different specialities, in a period of three (03) days ; administration and reception of the questionnaire.

In regards to the content of the questionnaire, it was divided into four sections. First, comes the ‘background Information’ section. This section presents a number of questions in order to determine the participants’ profiles. Findings displayed that the sample includes 72.59% of participants aged between 23 and 24, and 27.41% aged between 25 and 27. The age range of the sample demonstrates the fact that they have certain knowledge about (or at least have an idea about) the different variables of the investigation, which assures more clarity of the tasks, facility to complete them, and; thus, more validity to the study. In addition to that, the gender question reveals that the majority of informants are females ; 63 females and 35 males. That is, a percentage of 64.29% and 35.71% respectively. Last, the study specialities question demonstrates that the highest number of answers is held by students of linguistics, followed by didactics and then literature and civilization. The following table provides a detailed description :

Speciality	Number of questionnaires	Percentage
Linguistics	39	39.80%
Didactics	30	30.61%
Literature & Civilization	29	29.59%

Table 01 : Answers' rate of students' specialities

Thus, from the information collected from the first section, one can say that the answers enabled a clear depiction of the sample being worked with.

Second, the "Authentic Materials" section encompasses four questions. The first question relates to the definition of authentic materials (the independent variable) with the aim of collecting information about how the students perceive 'authentic materials'; what they refer to for them. The questionnaire data indicated that 73.47% (72 participants) define authentic materials as "teaching tools used in order to bring reality to the classroom by providing information about vocabulary, grammar, and cultural features of other cultures". 19.39% (19 participants) refer to it as "materials that are used in the classroom in order to make it joyful and to motivate learners". 4.08% stated that authentic materials are "materials containing information about real life of foreigners, or people living in other countries" without any mentioning of their relationship with EFL teaching/learning in the classrooms. 3.06% (3 participants) did not answer the question. The second question deals with types of authentic materials. The students were asked to mention some authentic materials that are familiar with. The answers revealed that there is equilibrium of rates between the participants that provided three examples and those who provided four examples. That is, 47.96% (47 participants) and 47.96% (47 participants), whereas the remaining 4.08% (04 participants) did not provide correct answers. The third question investigates the students' opinion about the way in which the authentic materials is beneficial in EFL. Most of the participants; 70.41% (69 participants), chose option 'e'. This means that they consider the use of authentic materials' benefits as being a way of developing learners' knowledge about the language's both linguistic and cultural features, as a way of promoting learners' motivation and interest, and as being helpful in refining learners' skills of comprehending and transmitting messages. The last question of section two relates to the participants' view in regards to the incorporation of authentic materials in the FL classrooms. The results showed that the answers are divided between two options 'rather necessary' and 'very necessary'; 45.92% (45 participants) and 54.08% (53 participants) respectively. This demonstrates that, despite divergence in the degrees, the students agree on the fact that the use of authentic materials in classrooms is beneficial and important in EFL teaching/learning. Therefore, the second section of the questionnaire reveals that most of the students are familiar with authentic materials, they have knowledge about their meaning and their different types, they have been exposed to a number of them during the four previous years of studying EFL at the University, as well as, they are aware of the importance of their inclusion in the EFL classes.

Third, the "Cultural Awareness" section includes four questions. Through the first question, the students' familiarity with the concept of cultural awareness is investigated. This is an open-ended question where answers are not restricted by a number of options. 81.63% (80 participants) attributed a definition as 'cultural awareness is the fact of being aware of what defines foreign cultures and differentiate them from native culture', and as "the ability to understand and accept what is different from the native culture and to seek at understanding it". 18.37% (18 participants) define it as "the ability to communicate with people from other cultures". Then, students were asked to rate the importance of developing cultural awareness in regards to EFL learning. Most answers were between 03 and 05. More details are provided in the following table :

Option	01	02	03	04	05
Answers	//	//	20.41% (20)	47.96% (47)	31.63% (31)

Table 02 : The Students’ opinion about the importance of developing cultural awareness

In the third question of this section, the participants were asked whether they think that cultural awareness is given due importance at the university. 67.35% of the answers were positive, and 30.61% of the answers were negative. 2.04% of the participants did not provide any answer.

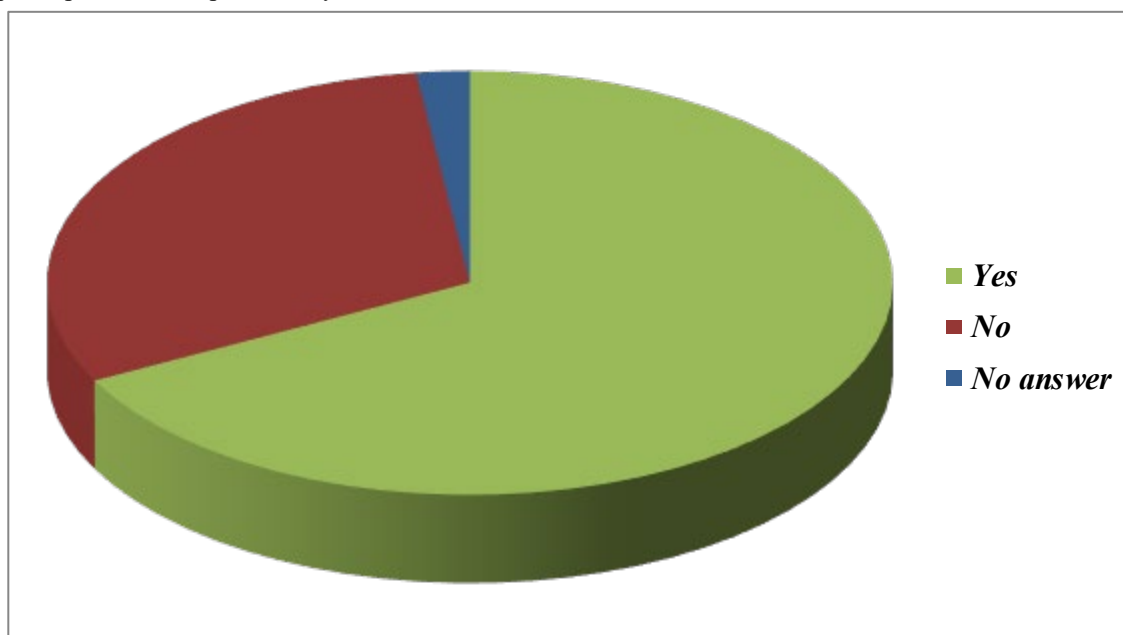


Figure 01 : The Students’ Opinion about whether Cultural Awareness is given due importance at the University

The last question of this section investigates what tools and ways that help in promoting students’ cultural awareness in EFL classrooms. The participants are required to give some examples, and the answers demonstrate that most of them agree on four major points :

- The use of songs as a means of teaching culture.
- The organization of out-door study days using role plays and scenarios
- The presentation of films and TV shows (such as Friends, and doctor house for 17.35% of the participants).
- The provision with books and magazine of other cultures.

These points are a summary of 86.73% of the answers, whereas 13.27% of the answers were statements such as ‘travelling, speaking with foreigners on social media, and watching TV at home’, i.e. they relate to activities to do outside the classroom.

The last section of the questionnaire is entitled “Authentic Materials and Cultural Awareness” includes a likert-scale question which aims at investigating the students’ opinions about the relationship that exists between the use of authentic materials and the development of cultural awareness. The measurement process can be described as follows :

- Assigning a number to each option ; 5 for strongly agree, 4 for rather agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for rather disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree

- Measuring the median value
- Measuring the interquartile range

Then, two possibilities are to be taken into account. Firstly, if the interquartile range has a value of 0, 1 or 2, then in this case one can say that there is a consensus of viewpoints. However, if the interquartile range has a value of 3, 4 or 5, then one can say that the participants' opinions diverge and are dispatched through the five possible responses of the scale. This is what is meant by polarisation of opinions (either agreement or disagreement) described by Miller (1984), Singh (2006) and Bonne H & Bonne D (2012). The students' opinions about the importance of authentic materials in developing cultural awareness are described in the following table and figure:

	<i>Statement One</i>	<i>Statement Two</i>	<i>Statement Three</i>	<i>Statement Four</i>	<i>Statement Five</i>	<i>Statement Six</i>	<i>Statement Seven</i>
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	23	0	57	70	01	0	01
<i>Rather Disagree</i>	63	03	29	11	03	01	01
<i>Neutral</i>	0	10	09	06	06	04	08
<i>Rather Agree</i>	01	27	0	11	07	07	03
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	11	58	03	0	81	86	85

Table 03 : Likert-scale measurement- Participants' Responses—

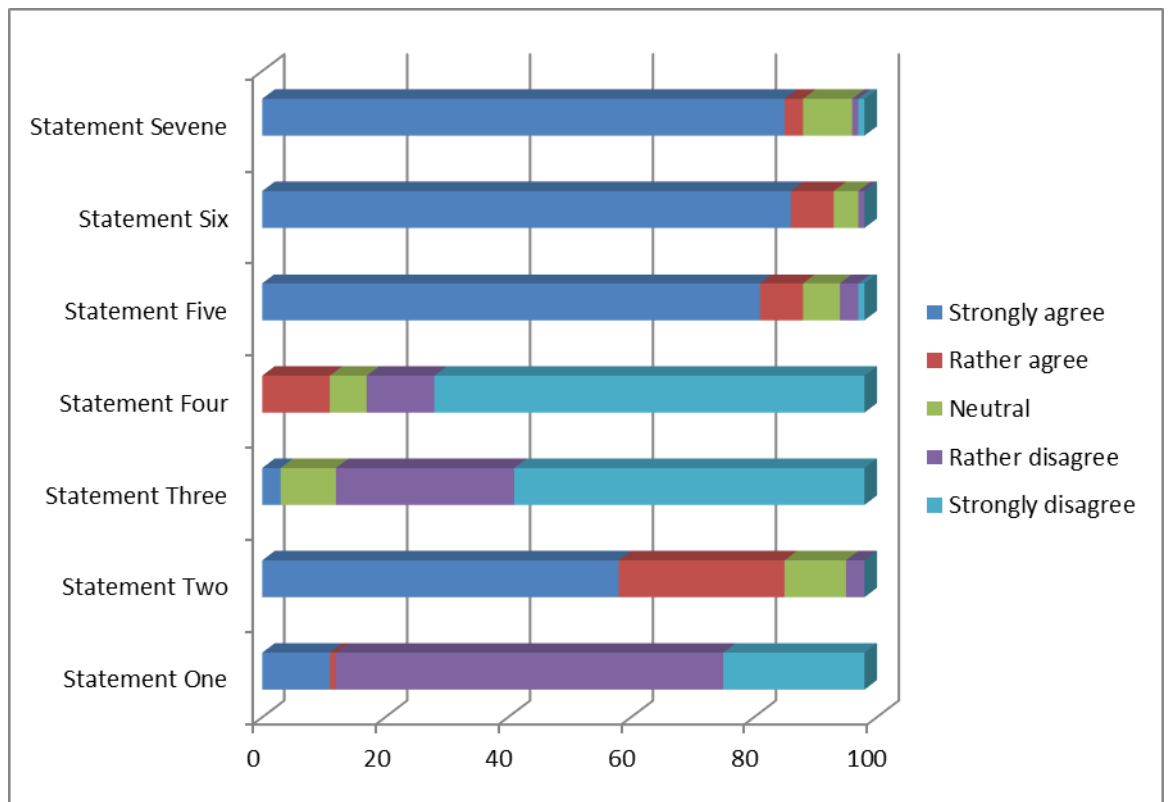


Figure 02 : Likert-scale measurement-Participants' Responses-

Statement	Median	Interquartile Range
a. The use of authentic materials is a loss of time in the classroom	2	2.5
b. I better understand foreign cultural features through authentic materials.	5	1
c. It is not necessary to include authentic materials in FL learning, I am more likely to skip classes where they are used.	2	2
d. Authentic materials have a negative impact on learners' level of cultural awareness; they provide wrong and/or unnecessary data.	1	2
e. I enjoy learning when it is via materials that include real-life content	5	1
f. Authentic materials enable learners to emerge into foreign cultures and accelerates the process of culture learning	5	1
g. Using authentic materials helps me in learning and memorising new cultural features	4	2

Table 04 : Likert Scale Measurement –median and interquartile-

The table above demonstrates that the values of the Interquartile ranges were between 0 and 3 (small), and as explained previously. This leads to the conclusion that there was a concordance in participants' responses. In regards to the first statement, the participants' answers were mainly focused on 'rather disagreement' (64.29% of the answers), which shows that the students do not consider the use of authentic materials as a loss of time. The students' opinions were mostly located in the 'agreement' polar in the second statement (59.18% for strongly agree, and 27.55% for rather agree), which shows that most students are aware of positive impact authentic materials have on the understanding of cultural otherness and diversity. In the third statement, the participants did not consider authentic materials inclusion as unnecessary; their responses were clustered in the disagreement polar with 58.16% for strongly disagree and 29.59% for rather disagree. In the fourth statement, the participants strongly disagreed with the fact that authentic materials have a negative impact on learners' cultural awareness; most of them gave a 'strongly disagree' response (71.43%), while an equilibrium of answers was shown in 'rather agree' (11.22%) and 'rather disagree' (11.22%). In the fifth statement, 82.65% of the participants expressed their agreement ('Strongly agree'); which means that the authentic materials make EFL classes enjoyable. Similarly, in the sixth statement the participants answers show that 87.76% strongly agree with the idea that the use of authentic materials faster the process of culture learning by making students' emerge in the target cultures. Last, in the seventh statement, answers were clustered around 'strongly agree' with a rate of 86.73%, which shows that the students regard authentic materials as a helpful tool in the culture learning process.

In the last question of the fourth section, the participants are given the opportunity to add information that they find important to mention in order to closure the questionnaire. This question had a response rate of 34.69%, i.e. 34 participants out of 98 provided an answer. Among the 34 students, 27 (79.41%) gave suggestions that centre around two main points :

1- Students' need to be introduced to a variety of authentic materials from day one of their foreign language learning.

2- Due to the benefits they offer, more focus should be put on developing a module that is fully devoted to culture learning via the use of authentic materials

The seven remaining participants (20.59%) expressed their opinion about introducing new types of authentic materials. To put it differently, teachers should use new and up-to-date materials. This will make it more enjoyable to learn and practice and keeps increasing students' level of curiosity and motivation'.

4. Results & Discussion

The key concept of the present investigation is the use of authentic materials in EFL classrooms. It aims at investigating the role of authentic materials in promoting EFL students' cultural awareness. The obtained results of this research paper demonstrate that there exist a strong link between cultural awareness (dependent variable) and the use of authentic materials (independent variable). In fact, most participants' were able to define correctly the two main concepts of the study. They referred to cultural awareness as an objective to reach in FLT, and define it as knowledge about foreign cultural features and what differentiates them from native culture. Further, they viewed it as the ability to understand and accept unfamiliar cultural elements, and the willingness to learn more about them. Authentic materials, in their turn, are considered as materials which content relates to real-life language and information of members of the target language and culture community, and are used as a tool in order to picture reality in the classroom, and provide students with knowledge and skills about grammar, vocabulary and culture. In addition, their answers showed that they consider authentic materials as a foreign culture teaching tool that occupies a significant position in EFL teaching/learning. The majority also reported that classes that integrate authentic materials tend to be more enjoyable and motivational, and that foreign cultures are better explored and learned through them. Therefore, the participants approved of the utility of using them in order to develop EFL learners' cultural awareness, since they provide both knowledge (cultural facts) and practise (cultural contexts) of the target cultures. Henceforth, it is worth mentioning that the previously stated hypothesis, which is that EFL learners' level of cultural awareness would be promoted if authentic materials were used in the classroom as a tool of culture teaching, is confirmed. Accordingly, taking into consideration the findings of the present investigation would be valuable for the sake of promoting EFL learners' cultural awareness.

5. Conclusion

The results of the present article denote the pivotal roles authentic material play in the promotion of cultural awareness, as well as the importance that both have in EFL teaching. The theoretical review of this study concurs with the findings; that is, the idea that authentic materials are an important tool that enables for foreign culture learning and comprehension, as well as for preparing students' for real-life communication, meets the data collected from the participants' answers of the questionnaire. Therefore, in the light of the obtained results, the questions formulated previously were answered. To sum it up, it is worth mentioning that this research calls for the inclusion of authentic materials as a teaching tool for including culture in EFL classrooms in particular, and also as a motivational tool for making students' involved and enthusiastic about foreign language teaching, in general and catering for their needs, in particular.

4. According to you, what are the ways and tools to employ in order to develop learners' cultural awareness in EFL classrooms ?

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d. Section Four :

1. What do you think of the following statements ? Please stick the appropriate column.

Statements	Strongly agree	Rather agree	Neutral	Rather disagree	Strongly disagree
a. The use of authentic materials is a loss of time in the classroom					
b. I better understand foreign cultural features through authentic materials					
c. It is not necessary to include authentic materials in foreign language learning, I am more likely to skip classes where they are used					
d. Authentic materials have a negative impact on learners' level of cultural awareness; they provide wrong and/or unnecessary data					
e. I enjoy learning when it is via materials that include real-life content					
f. Authentic materials enable learners to emerge into foreign cultures and accelerates the process of culture learning					
g. Using authentic materials helps me in learning and memorising new cultural features					

2. Do you have any additional information, comments, or suggestions ?

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