

The Intercultural Competence in EFL Teaching: Teachers' Current Perceptions and Practices Case of Secondary School Teachers in Bousaada, Algeria

**الكفاءة بين الثقافات في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية:
الوضعية الحالية لتوقعات المعلمين وممارساتهم
دراسة حالة المعلمين ببوسعادة، الجزائر**

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Abstract

The effects of globalization have been felt in various fields for over a decade and the foreign language teaching is of no exclusion. In this regard, many countries have learned the English language either as a second or a foreign language. This study was conducted to explore EFL teachers' perceptions concerning the importance of integrating the intercultural dimension in their classroom practices and the strategies they employ to raise students' intercultural awareness. It involved forty five (45) Algerian EFL secondary school teachers who were asked to answer a Likert-type questionnaire. The results showed that teachers were not favourably disposed to integrate the intercultural dimension and mainly focused on the linguistic aspect of language and their teaching practices reflected their reluctance, as they tackled cultural aspects not recurrently.

Key Words: EFL teachers; intercultural awareness; intercultural dimension; perceptions; practices.

المخلص

كانت آثار العولمة محسوسة في مختلف المجالات لأكثر من عقد من الزمن، و من ناحية أخرى، أثارت الطبيعة اللغوية للغة الإنجليزية مسألة "الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات" والتي أثرت أيضاً على أساليب تدريس اللغات الأجنبية، والمقاربات، والمنظورات. أجريت هذه الدراسة لاستكشاف اعتقادات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية فيما يتعلق بأهمية دمج البعد الثقافي في ممارساتهم الدراسية والاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمونها في ذلك. شارك في الدراسة خمسة وأربعون (45) من مدرسي المرحلة الثانوية من اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية الذين طلب منهم الإجابة على استبيان. أوضحت النتائج أن المعلمين لم يكونوا ميالين إلى دمج البعد المشترك بين الثقافات وركزوا بشكل أساسي على الجانب اللغوي للغة وهذا ينعكس على ممارساتهم التعليمية حيث تعاملوا مع الجوانب الثقافية للغة بشكل نادر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البعد المشترك بين الثقافات؛ وجهات نظر؛ اعتقادات؛ البعد الثقافي؛ ممارسات.

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1. Introduction

The concern in promoting the integration of the intercultural competence (IC) in foreign language education has grown to a global scale. The aspiration comes from different slants, such as the consequences of increasing world dynamics in the progress of globalisation and a call for mutual respect, understanding, and tolerance in multicultural societies' education. Globalisation refers to "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson, 1992, p. 8). In the middle of this connectedness, English imposed itself as the *lingua franca*. The status of English as *lingua franca* poses new challenges for foreign language education in terms of cultural teaching. There is an increasing association between nations in the globalising world at all levels. Individuals have more contact with people from different cultural background. The significance of intercultural understanding and awareness has to be reflected and accentuated in foreign language education to achieve successful intercultural communication.

Teaching intercultural competence in EFL classrooms is pertinent and valuable for this purpose. Corbett (2003) pointed out that intercultural teaching is different from former cultural teaching since it does not only incorporate the tangible or visible aspects of culture, but also calls for the implicit and subjective dimension underneath for instance, the symbols, values, perspectives, and interpretations that distinguish people from one country to another. Some European countries contain a diverse cultural population that requests the need for intercultural understanding and communication. Those multicultural societies encourage mutual respect and understanding by imposing exigent demands on curriculum planners and language teachers to convey tolerance and understanding through language teaching. Teaching intercultural competence is much valued in this respect. Researchers (Byram, 1997; Crozet, Liddicoat & Lo Bianco, 1999; Fantini, 2007) insist on expanding foreign language teaching practices from the traditional communicative approach to include the acquisition of an intercultural competence.

2. Research Problem

The 2005 reform has been made in the Algerian education to meet the demands of an intercultural education and a number of changes occurred in the curriculum. It extended the teaching objectives further to methodological and socio-cultural objectives. The newly reformed curriculum proposes that the purpose of teaching English is to help our society integrate harmoniously in modernity by fully participating in the linguistic community that uses this language for all types of interaction. This participation is based on the sharing and exchange of ideas and cultural experiences which will allow a better knowledge of the self and of others. In spite of the call for integrating an intercultural dimension by official texts elaborated by the ministry and made available for teachers, it seems that the promotion of the IC in schools still represents an unfamiliar ground for a number of teachers which is mainly due to the ambiguities and vagueness in the documents assigned to teachers.

English teachers might find themselves incapable to achieve intercultural outcomes if no actual guidelines are presented from the documents provided by the ministry of education. As a consequence, it leads to the lack of a specific framework; teachers' integration of intercultural competence is subjective, unstructured, or even absent.

Research Questions

- What are the perceptions of Algerian EFL teachers regarding foreign language teaching objectives?
- What are the perceptions of Algerian EFL teachers regarding culture teaching objectives?
- What are the perceptions of Algerian EFL teachers regarding the integration of (inter)cultural content?
- To what extent teachers integrate the intercultural competence in their teaching?

3. Theoretical Background

Nowadays, there is compliance on the importance of integrating cultural knowledge into foreign language teaching (Staatsen, 2012). Language teaching is not limited to the linguistic skills; it usually involves knowledge of the culture of that language. The relationship between language and culture is made meaningful in language learning since “the person who learns a language without learning culture risks becoming a fluent fool” (Bennett, Bennett & Allen, 2003, p. 237). The objective of language learning is to become a competent communicator. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) define the ability to communicate in terms of four competences: (a) linguistic competence (mastery of the four skill and familiarity with language forms), (b) sociolinguistic competence (the appropriate use of language in social context) , (c) discourse competence (coherence and cohesion in a particular communication situation) (d) strategic competence (ability to overcome breakdowns in speech). However according to Byram and Fleming (1998), learner's communicative competence should include a fifth element which is cultural awareness or ‘intercultural competence’.

3.1. The Intercultural Competence: Conceptualization and Components

The intercultural approach, which has become transversal and interdisciplinary, has been adopted and established as an essential and indisputable component in the teaching of foreign languages since the 1970 s. However, a critical analysis of the dedicated bibliography and the different uses, all fields combined, brings out misunderstandings, diverse and even contradictory epistemological and methodological positions, henceforth leading some authors to draw criticism and suggest ways of reorientation. In educational field, the term ‘intercultural’ is defined

The Intercultural Competence in EFL Teaching: Teachers' Current Perceptions and Practices Case of Secondary School Teachers in Bousaada, Algeria

as the ability to mediate between someone's own culture/language and a foreign language/culture by mobilizing skills, attitudes, behaviours and values to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretations (Byram,1997). Deardorff (2016, p. 243) referred to intercultural competence as "the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions".

Researchers presented a range of theories and models to provide an explanation of the skills, abilities, and attitudes needed to develop IC. Even though, the multiplicity of frameworks supplies the language educators with a variety of approaches to understand and investigate the IC, it also complicates the task of systematic and consistent interpretation of the concept.

In intercultural foreign language education, the process of foreign language learning engages the learner in the function of a 'comparative ethnographer' (Buttjes & Byram, 1991, p. 19). Learning a foreign language entails a cognitive alteration that has repercussions on the learner's identity as a social and cultural being, and advocates the need for materials which consider the identity of the learner as an integral agent in developing the ability to function adequately in a cultural 'third place' (Kramersch, 1993, p. 233-259).

The intercultural competence enfolds five components that cannot be considered in isolation as separate components, but as connected elements with the diverse dimensions of communicative competence (Sercu & Bandura, 2005). *Savoir comprendre* and *savoir apprendre* can be put under the skills/attitudes dimension of intercultural competence. The former is associated with what has been described as the skills of interpreting and relating. It is the ability to interpret a document or event linked to another culture, to explain them and bring them closer to documents or events related to his own culture. The latter can be defined as the ability to produce and operate an interpretative system with which to gain insight into unknown cultural meanings, beliefs and practices either in a familiar or in a new language and culture (Byram, 1997). *Savoirs* represent the knowledge of aspects of a culture, beliefs and reference points likely to be familiar to natives (Kelly, Elliott, & Fant, 2001), i.e. the cognitive dimension. These *Savoirs* (knowledge) constitute "words and gestures which people use, the behaviours they display, the values they believe in, the symbols they cherish, etc. are always culture-bound and carry meaning within a particular cultural frame of reference." (Sercu & Bandura, 2005, p.4) The affective dimension is represented in *savoir être* or what Neuner described as "an affective ability to give up ethnocentric attitudes and opinions when faced with otherness and a cognitive ability to bring about and to maintain a relation between one's own and a foreign culture" (2000, p.43). Furthermore, what Byram (1997) described as attitudes play a role in *savoir s'engager*, i.e. a critical engagement with the foreign culture in consideration to one's own culture.

3.2. Approaching the Intercultural Competence in EFL Classroom

Nowadays, the purpose of teaching / learning a foreign language is the communication between interlocutors of different cultures; it is therefore essential for a learner to acquire intercultural competence to successfully communicate. Unfortunately, in practice, language teaching / learning remains largely focused on the development of linguistic competence. The linguistic competence is sometimes sufficient to pass simple information, it is not to communicate. Communicating does not only mean understanding and knowing how to use lexical and grammatical structures. The acquisition of a rich vocabulary or a few acts of words is not enough to a non-native speaker of a language to communicate appropriately with people from this culture. It is also vital to understand the whole cultural context of your interlocutor: attitudes, value systems, and behaviours. Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet (1992) claimed that the principal focus of teaching when complying to the intercultural approach is on the target cultures, however, it also consists of comparisons between the learner's own culture and the target culture, thus encouraging learners to acquire a reflective vision to the culture and civilization of their own country. Therefore, educating students to utilize a second/foreign language entails to accustom them to being interculturally sensitive, by assisting them to build the aptitude to act as a cultural mediator, to perceive the world through the other's eyes, and to use culture learning skills consciously (Alfred, Byram & Fleming, 2003).

The foreign language learner is viewed as an "intercultural speaker" (Byram & Zarate 1997, p. 11). Within this framework, he is regarded as someone who "crosses frontiers, and who is to some extent a specialist in the transit of cultural property and symbolic values" (ibid). This shift in conceptualization and focus of the foreign language learners demands a change in the expectations of foreign language teachers. Expectations from teachers expand to not only to teach the foreign linguistic aspect but also to "contextualize that code against the socio-cultural background associated with the foreign language and to promote the acquisitions of intercultural communicative competence" (Castro, 1999, p.92).

3.3. Teachers' Perception

A body of research in the field of education demonstrated that the perception of teachers, their beliefs, and their preferences determine the choice and success of their pedagogical practices (Prosser & Trigwell 1999; Williams & Burden 1997). In other words, teachers' conceptions shape teachers' instructional behavior to a considerable degree. Borg, as a forerunner in this research area, disclosed that "teachers are active thinking decision makers who build instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (2003, p.23).

The Intercultural Competence in EFL Teaching: Teachers' Current Perceptions and Practices Case of Secondary School Teachers in Bousaada, Algeria

Thus, an insight on teachers' perceptions is essential for understanding teachers' current thoughts about integrating the intercultural competence into their teaching and the rationale behind their actual practices.

4. Research Methodology

Through an explorative method, the present study aims to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of Algerian EFL teachers in secondary schools on intercultural competence teaching and to ponder to what extent these perceptions and attitudes are reflected in their classroom applications, as reported by them.

4.1. Participants and Setting

A total of 45 Algerian secondary school English teachers participated in the study. They are teachers of English from the 8 secondary schools in Bousaada. Participating in the study was made voluntary. According to the demographic part of the questionnaire more than half of the respondents were female (60%). 33.33% of the teachers held the BA degree, 66.66% of them reported they have completed the BA studies, and none held a PhD degree. Teaching experience of teachers was as follow: most of them had less than 5 years of teaching experience, (33.33%) of them had been teaching for 5 to 10 years, while only (20%) had over 10 years of teaching experience.

4.2. Data Collection and Analysis

For the present study an explorative method was followed. Data were collected between the 2018-2019 academic years by means of a questionnaire. Questionnaires have the potential of obtaining data from a large sample. Furthermore, they are suitable for gathering demographic data that illustrate the components of the sample (Gillham, 2008). Questionnaires may encompass different types and numerous variables in one study, it requires slightest investment to be developed and administered, and can be generalized (ibid). Finally, questionnaires are a tool that can elicit information about perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs that are difficult to obtain through other research instruments. The questionnaire was drawn from Sercu & Bandura's (2005) international study which has been simplified to meet the Algerian context. It consisted of five (5) sections: a demographic section; teachers' views on general foreign language teaching objectives; culture teaching objectives; teachers' perception of the integration of intercultural components; and teachers' culture practices. It aimed at collecting the views of teachers on the importance of integrating culture in language classroom and the extent to which their teaching can be characterized as directed towards the integration of IC. For reliability purpose, the questionnaire was first piloted with 12 randomly selected teachers and one of the three trainers responsible for Bousaada's secondary schools. Using SPSS software the Chronbach's alpha was founded through counting the frequency counts for each questions and it was found to be 0.8, which according to Bonett and Wright (2015) an acceptable coefficient.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Teachers’ Perception of FL Teaching Objectives

Teachers’ perception of FL teaching objectives has been addressed with a set of 7 statements describing the different FL teaching objectives in secondary school. Teachers were asked to rank the statements on a Likert type scale from 1-3(1= not important, 2= I can’t decide, 3= important).The FL teaching objectives can be categorized to three groups: language teaching objectives (1, 3, and 4), culture teaching objectives (2, 5, and 7), and general skills objectives (6).The frequency of the responses to each objective is presented in Table 1.

Table (1): Teachers’ Perception of FL Teaching Objectives

Statements	Teachers’ responses						
	1		2		3		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Motivate students to learn English language	-	-	3	6.66	42	93.33	2.93
Help students learn about English culture	3	6.66	18	41	24	53.33	2.45
Help students be proficient in reading and writing	-	-	3	6.66	42	93.33	2.93
Help students gain knowledge to use English for practical reasons	-	-	-	-	45	100	3
Help students be open and positive to foreign cultures	3	6.66	3	6.66	39	86.66	2.80
Help students gain learning skills necessary to learn different foreign Languages	-	-	6	13.33	39	86.66	2.86
Help students understand their own culture and identity better	3	6.66	6	13.33	36	80	2.73

1= not important, 2= I can’t decide, 3= important

The comparison of mean values (M), which represents the average ranks, demonstrates that the most important aim is ‘help students gain knowledge to use English for practical reasons’ (M= 3) succeeded by ‘help students be proficient in reading and writing’ (M=2.93) and ‘motivate students to learn English language’ (M=2.93).This results shows a clear preference towards the language teaching objectives. Teachers are prioritizing the linguistic competence by promoting the acquisition of knowledge to use English for practical aims and motivating them to learn the language. Teachers are also interested in helping students gain learning

The Intercultural Competence in EFL Teaching: Teachers' Current Perceptions and Practices Case of Secondary School Teachers in Bousaada, Algeria

skills that are necessary to learn different foreign languages. All the culture teaching objectives ‘Help students be open and positive to foreign cultures’, ‘Help students learn about English culture’ and ‘Help students understand their own culture and identity better’ were ranked last. The results show that teachers neglect the cultural aspect in their teaching and are exclusively interested in promoting the linguistic competence. We might conclude that teachers do not comply with the educational reform that calls for the introduction of both the linguistic and socio-cultural aspect in language teaching.

5.2. Teachers' Perception of Culture Teaching Objectives

To enquire into teachers' belief towards the purpose of culture teaching, respondents were given eight (8) assertions to rank on a 3 point Likert scale (1= not important, 2= I can't decide, 3= important).The assertions pertain to the three dimension which define culture teaching. “The cognitive dimension” (1, 2, and 3), “the affective dimension” (4), and “the skills dimension” (5, 6, 7and8) (Castro, Sercu, & Garcia, 2004, p. 98).

Table (2): Teachers' Perception of Culture Teaching Objectives

Statements	Teachers' responses						
	1		2		3		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Give information about foreign cultures i.e. their history, politics , geography etc..	3	6.66	6	13.33	36	80	2.73
Give information about the daily lives and routine of English speaking people	-	-	18	40	27	60	2.60
Familiarize students with beliefs and values that people belonging to other cultures hold	3	6.66	12	26.66	30	66.66	2.60
Help students raise a positive view regarding the foreign cultures	3	6.66	6	13.33	36	80	2.73
Raise students awareness about cultural differences	-	-	-	-	45	100	3
Develop attitudes of openness and readiness to engage with people from different cultures	-	-	6	13.33	39	86.66	2.86
Develop the ability to interpret documents from another culture	-	-	12	26.66	33	73.33	2.73
Develop skills to interact in a cross-cultural setting	-	-	3	6.66	42	93.33	2.93

1= not important, 2= I can't decide, 3= important

As can be seen from the average rank (M) in Table 2, teachers attach a high importance to the skill dimension by raising awareness about cultural differences (M=3) , developing skill to interact in a cross-cultural setting (M=2.93), and

developing attitudes of openness and readiness to engage with people from another culture (M=2.86). They perceive knowledge of the target culture as least relevant in their teaching, particularly information about daily lives and routines of foreigners i.e. small ‘c’ culture. An inconsistency between the perception of the importance to raise students’ awareness about cultural differences and providing students with necessary cultural information to compare, unlocks a question of whether teachers have only in mind the comparison of facts rather than deeper cultural representations.

5.3. Teachers’ Perception of the Integration of Intercultural Components

As for the teachers’ perception of which intercultural components to be integrated in language classroom as shown in table 3, they prioritize critical cultural awareness (referred to by statement 6) which further support the claim of teachers done in section 4.2 that culture teaching is primary done by ‘raising students awareness about cultural differences’. Furthermore, teachers give importance to the other components namely attitudes (referred to by statement 2) and skills of interaction (referred to by statement 4). It can be deduced that commonly teachers perceive developing students’ attitudes and promoting students’ cultural skills are necessary and essential in order to help them interact effectively and appropriately with other people from different cultures i.e. develop communicative competence. However, knowledge (referred to by statement 1), skills of interpreting and relating (referred to by statement 5) and skills of discovery (referred to by statement 3) are somehow considered not important to be included in the language class.

Table (3): Teachers’ Perception of the Integration of Intercultural Components

Statements	Teachers’ responses						
	1		2		3		M
	f	%	f	%	F	%	
It is important to provide information about daily life (e.g. social/political conditions) in English speaking countries.	5	11.1	4	8.9	36	80	2.68
Language classes should promote understanding of different process of individual and social interactions in English and Algerian culture	-	-	11	24.5	34	75.5	2.75
Language classes should develop a tolerant, respectful and open attitude towards other cultures and cultural difference.	6	13.33	6	13.33	33	73.33	2.60
Language classes should promote the ability to acquire new cultural knowledge from documents/events from English cultures.	-	-	12	26.66	33	73.33	2.73

The Intercultural Competence in EFL Teaching: Teachers' Current Perceptions and Practices Case of Secondary School Teachers in Bousaada, Algeria

Language classes should promote the ability to understand and critically interpret documents/events from English speaking culture.	6	13.33	9	20	30	66.66	2.53
Language classes should promote awareness and understanding of different values, beliefs, and ideologies of both Algerian and English speaking people.	-	-	8	17.77	37	82.22	2.89

1= not important, 2= I can't decide, 3= important

5.4 Teachers' Culture Teaching Practices

Teachers' practices concerning cultural activities is inquired into by how often teachers used a specific activity. On a 4 point Likert scale (4=always, 3=sometimes, 2=rarely, 1= never), teachers rated 9 activities.

Table (4): Teachers' Perception of the Integration of Intercultural Components

Statements	Teachers' responses								
	1		2		3		4		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
I tell my students what I heard or read about the foreign country or culture.	3	6.66	6	13.33	30	66.66	6	13.33	2.6
I encourage learners to do research of different aspects of other cultures and their own.	-	-	6	13.33	27	60	12	26.66	3.13
We do role-plays based on intercultural encounters and conflicts with the aim of solving the problems involved.	18	40	9	20	9	20	9	20	2.22
I introduce and give attention to some culture-loaded new words teaching.	3	6.66	6	13.33	21	46.66	12	16.66	2.8
I introduce some English songs poems to let them familiarize with the different cultures.	6	13.33	24	53.33	6	13.33	9	20	2.4
I ask my students to describe cultural phenomena which appear in texts/newspapers/ magazines.	15	33.33	18	40	9	20	3	6.66	2
I introduce videos and discuss with my students their content.	3	6.66	12	26.66	24	53.33	6	13.33	2.73
I bring some pictures or cartoons having cultural images and discuss them.	3	6.66	18	40	15	33.33	9	20	2.66
I ask my students to compare their aspects of their own cultures with foreign cultures.	-	-	9	20	24	53.33	12	26.66	3.06
I ask my students to act out what they learn in terms of culture learning.	6	13.33	15	33.33	15	33.33	9	20	2.6

4=always, 3=sometimes, 2=rarely, 1= never

The results revealed that the overall mean score is M= 2.618. That would imply that the cultural activities are reasonably introduced. Teachers very often 'encourage learners to do research of different aspects of other cultures and their own' (M=3.13) and to compare their own culture with the foreign ones (M=3.06). This might prove

that the teachers encourage and promote autonomy and are adopting a learner-centered approach to deal with cultural aspects. The other activities include the introduction of culture-loaded words (M=2.8). It can be assumed that teachers initiate such activity for linguistic purposes rather than to develop intercultural competence. Ranked last is doing role plays for the purpose of solving intercultural conflicts (M=2.2). It may be explained by the lack of teachers' competence in dealing with stereotypes, prejudices and aspects of misunderstanding. This issue has been mentioned in teachers' perception of cultural objectives as they neglected the introduction of small 'c' culture. Realias like songs, poems, pictures, newspapers etc..., that are considered as prolific sources for authentic material are rarely included in culture teaching. It might be because of their unavailability or that teachers are incapable to deal with such materials.

6. Conclusion

English language teaching theory and methodology has advanced over the past two decades including changes in the nature of learners' proficiency needed as well as the emergence of various theories of linguistic and cultural nature. Different advances in our society had an impact on language teaching strategies and attitudes towards foreign language teaching. As a reaction to the acknowledgement of social and cultural value in language teaching, the concept of intercultural competence (IC) emerged.

A number of researchers (e.g. Byram 1997, Kramsch, 1993, Sercu & Bandura, 2005) investigated and participated in the emergence of the IC concept, contributed to the emergence and evolution of a theoretical and practical framework for IC. The aim of developing IC in all fields and FL education in particular is to increase international and cross-cultural tolerance and acceptance among learners/ people of the world. Teaching in an intercultural approach does not only involve acquainting learners with knowledge about different cultures, but also with a set of skills and attitudes, which teachers should incorporate in their classroom side by side with linguistic aspects.

Even though findings were obtained through a plain descriptive analysis by comparison of mean values, yet the study provides valuable insights into how secondary school teachers perceive the integration of (inter)cultural competence and their classroom practices. The linguistic competence is considered to be the prior objective for EFL teachers, whereas culture teaching is exclusively defined in terms of comparing facts between cultures. Minor significance is given to the intercultural skills especially those pertaining to important IC issues such as beliefs, values, stereotypes, and prejudices that generate situations of misunderstanding. Moreover, authentic materials are not advantaged. Regarding the objectives of culture teaching, the findings match Sercu & Bandura's (2005) study which favored the development of attitudes of openness and readiness to engage with people from another culture.

The Intercultural Competence in EFL Teaching: Teachers' Current Perceptions and Practices Case of Secondary School Teachers in Bousaada, Algeria

Furthermore, teachers present mainly activities that have a learner-centered orientation.

To answer the research questions, we can conclude from the findings of the study that teachers perceive the inter(cultural) competence integration less important in FL learning than the linguistic aspect. Additionally, teachers appeared not to be integrating practices that develop intercultural competence frequently. This finding asserted that teachers' beliefs and perceptions shape their instructional practices (Alptekin, 2002; Buttjes & Byram, 1991; Fang, 1996; Hall and Ramirez, 1993; Kitao, 2000). Since teachers privileged the linguistic competence it is mirrored in their instructional practices. Nevertheless, their inclination towards teaching language stripped from its culture may be due to some reasons among which lack of authentic resources, lack of appropriate intercultural training, and lack of time allotted in each session.

7. Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications

These preliminary findings are hoped to first, contribute to a better understanding of the place of culture in EFL teachers' practices and second to start a reflection on an Algerian curriculum that matches the new demands of the changing world of today. Furthermore, training programs should include cultural aspects to equip teachers with better eventual examples of how culture should be integrated in a non-traditional way.

Since the current study reflects the perceptions of the teachers' perceptions of culture teaching and their practices, a more in-depth qualitative study might be conducted through observations and structured interviews. Alternatively, a mixed method design encapsulating the questionnaire and observations and/or interviews with both teachers and students might be applied to reveal the actual teaching culture practice in classroom for future studies.

8. Limitations of the Study

The principal limitation of the present study is the size of the sample which only comprised 45 participants. Hence, the number of participants could have been increased. A further limitation is that EFL teachers' perceptions may not reflect their actual classroom practices or their own (inter)cultural competence. Therefore, the findings of this study are limited to their self-perceptions and reported practices and might not be generalized to a greater population.

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The Intercultural Competence in EFL Teaching: Teachers' Current Perceptions and Practices Case of Secondary School Teachers in Bousaada, Algeria

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