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تلمسان الجزائر

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*The Need for Professional Development in the
Teaching of American Civilisation:*

Case of 2nd Year EFL Students at the University of ORAN

*Dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in candidacy for the
degree of "Magister" in Didactics of Literary and Civilisation Texts*

Presented by:

ZAGHAR El Alia Wafaâ

Supervised by:

Prof. BENMOUSSAT Smail

Board of Examiners

Dr. BENYELLES Radia	(MCA) President	(University of Tlemcen)
Pr. BENMOUSSAT Smail	Supervisor	(University of Tlemcen)
Pr. BEDJAOUI Fewzia	External Examiner	(University of Sidi Bel-Abbes)
Dr. BAICHE Ali	(MCA) Internal Examiner	(University of Tlemcen)
Dr. HADJOUI Ghouti	(MCA) Internal Examiner	(University of Tlemcen)

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ABSTRACT

It is stated that learning English helps learners have greater insight into the target culture. The purpose of research reported in this dissertation is to provide a systematic account of the main emphases about American culture teaching. Being aware of the crucial role of culture as a fundamental element of English language education, this study will show that a lack of proficiency in Teaching American Civilisation at the Department of Anglo-Saxon Languages at the University of Oran is a main causative factor in the low academic achievement of Algerian students. It tends to explore the way American civilisation is taught at this institution to 2nd year EFL students, to recommend some useful procedures for developing cultural competencies in teachers, and to suggest applications of cultural information to classroom practices, and to curriculum development.

In order for teachers to be able of raising their students' intercultural awareness and educational achievement they need to have professional knowledge about the ways that language and culture shape university performance and stimulate student learning. This professional development is believed to give teachers a framework for organising classroom learning environment and attention for preparing suitable programs, taking into account the relationship between language, culture, and learning.

A case study was conducted to collect information through students' and teachers' questionnaires, an interview designed for the teachers, and classroom observations.

The obtained results revealed that teachers were found to have little acquaintance with American culture and to lack pedagogical training in well covering their courses.

This study will be of some help for teachers to make possible changes, additions and deletions to the current syllabus. Furthermore, the revealed findings will be used as a framework for curriculum improvements at the University of Oran.

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List of Abbreviations

AM: Année Moyenne (with reference to the Middle School).

AS: Année Secondaire (with reference to the Secondary School).

CBA: Competency-Based Approach.

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ELT: English Language Teaching.

LMD: Licence/ Master/ Doctorat (Bachelor's degree/ Master/ Doctorate).

USA: United States of America.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, teaching has been as a process with huge potential to transform lives and build positive futures. It is an enterprise that is affected by views of the nature of language and learning in general. Real teaching has never been about just passing on parcels of knowledge from one generation to the next. It is about producing effective learners equipped with skills of interpretation, criticism, and argument.

Today, it is certain that foreign languages constitute a crucial part of the set of skills that students need to thrive in an increasingly global world and the ability to communicate in foreign languages is clearly key. Thus, foreign language instruction has become a top priority alongside hard sciences. It is also viewed as a sign of respect and has the potential to open doors in the future.

According to many studies, it has been shown that acquiring a foreign language results in learners achieving greater divergent creativity, understanding, patience and tolerance compared to monolingual students.

In a highly connected and globalised world, English has become the dominant foreign language of business, technology, and academics all over the world, with a large amount of research conducted, written, and presented in English.

In the information technology age, and in an ever- changing world of education, the role of teachers has grown immensely. Today, teachers are expected to be tech-savvy, computer literate and at the cutting edge of education. In this regard, this work is concerned with the importance of teaching cultural aspects within the EFL classroom in an LMD environment, taking as a reference American civilisation classes addressed to second

year¹LMD² students at the University of Oran, where the cultural component is inadequately taken into account and this prevents learners from building up their linguistic skills.

An attempt is made to investigate the teachers' role and the way they handle the foreign culture in class. Additionally, the learners' viewpoints about and attitudes towards learning the English culture are examined.

In order to try to solve the problems raised in this study, one can put forward the following research questions:

- 1) Is foreign culture learning an effective factor in helping the learners' developing their language and intellectual skills?
- 2) Is the teacher's role vital in enhancing foreign culture learning?

As tentative answers to the former questions, the following hypotheses are suggested:

- 1) Foreign culture learning is an enhancing factor that leads to successful achievement and enables learners to be more linguistically and intellectually competent.
- 2) As a possible remedy, a focus will be put on the teacher's role to show its importance in encouraging efficient foreign culture learning and raising the learners' cultural awareness.

The present work is led through an action research based on three methods. First, observation: the researcher has observed 2nd year EFL students learning American civilisation by attending their classes. Second, a questionnaire is administered to teachers and another one is organised with students, in addition to some informal discussions launched with them. Third, an interview is conducted with teachers covering the module of American civilisation.

To limit the scope of this dissertation, it is crucial to note that the concept of culture will be used throughout this research study in its inclusive sense.

The present investigation will be divided into four chapters. The first chapter is devoted to a detailed theoretical framework of ELT in Algeria.

The main objective of the second chapter is to discuss the main foundations of the teaching of American civilisation. It will give an overview on the teaching of American studies including its main trends. This section is also concerned with the discussion of distinguishing features of culture, civilisation, language and the type of relationships that exists between these concepts.

The third chapter explores the reality of teaching American civilisation in an LMD context taking as a case study the University of Oran.

In the fourth chapter, the concern will be on the suggestions proposed as a remedy for the observed deficiencies.

Notes to General Introduction

1- The choice of second year is based on the fact that this targeted population is supposed to have already been introduced to the notions of culture and American culture.

2- The choice of LMD system depends on the fact that the classical system is approaching its end at the University of Oran.

CHAPTER ONE

English Language Teaching in Algeria

- 1.1. Introduction
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Chapter One

English Language Teaching in Algeria

1.1. Introduction

This chapter will mention the worldwide position that the English language enjoys for the time being. It will also shed light on the methodology used in Teaching English in Algerian schools and universities.

1.2. English as a Global Language

There exist certain characteristics which determine the importance of one language over the others. There are several reasons for learning a foreign language, for instance, to facilitate international communication or for study purposes. Nevertheless, the need for humans to communicate and facilitate international contact urged them to speak and learn all one single language which is known as the 'global language'. This language is English.

It is worth mentioning that people do not choose English because they like it or for any other reason, but because it has a unique status in the world and it is increasingly important in a category of its own. As expressed by Crystal (2003): "*A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognised in every country*".

Certainly, there are logical reasons and different factors that make English arrive at the status it has in the world. In fact, English is the world's language not because of the number of its speakers but one of the reasons is that it is widely spoken outside the native countries either as a second or a foreign language, as stressed by Kitao:

"English is the major language of news and information in the world. It is the language of business and government even in some countries where it is

a minority language. It is the language of maritime communication and international air traffic control, and it is used even for internal air traffic control in countries where it is not a native language."

(Kitao, 1996:1)

Clearly, a language can get a global status, as in this case English, when another country recognises the importance of that language in its daily life. Thus, a country can give a language the status of being global by making it the official language which is used in the government, law, media and education. In addition to that, it has to be acquired as early in life as possible. This is generally the case where English is a second language in a country and it complements the first language.

English enjoys a great importance in the world. It is not just a language spoken by different nations but it is the world language. Speaking English is seen as an aspect of globalisation, Burshfield believes that: *"Any literate, educated person on the face of the globe is deprived, if he does not know English"* (quoted in Louznadji, 2003:78)

It is often suggested that there must be something inherently beautiful or logical about the structure of English. On the one hand, some say that "it has less grammar than other languages". On the other hand, others consider the fact that English has neither a lot of endings on its words, nor has a learner to remember the difference between masculine, feminine and neuter gender, as being the reason why it is easy learnt and wide spread. Crystal (2003) argued: *"One reason often given for the spread of international English is that it is easier to learn"* (Cited in Cook, 2003:22). Another reason is that a large number of English vocabularies are 'familiar' to the learners. More precisely, it is known that English borrowed from several languages it came in contact with and so, there are several vocabularies which are not originally English.

The fact why a language becomes global has nothing to do with the number of its speakers or its easiness to be learnt. Furthermore, the structural properties, the size/ kind of vocabulary of a language, as well as its great literature or culture do not make a language global. These factors may encourage the learning process and motivate learners but they are not the only contributors in making English a global language.

It is clear then, that there is something more influential for why English became global as well as international. It is generally agreed that due to the political and military power in addition to the economical, technological and cultural influence of its people that the English language had spread all over the globe. In this respect, Crystal (2003) states: "*it needs military power to establish a language, but economical power to maintain and expand it*". At the beginning of the 19th century, Great Britain became a leading industrial power and so the English language was the language of inventions, and other countries recognised the need for learning it in order to be able to manage British products. Nevertheless, due to the economical supremacy of the United States of America in the last century; the English language became worldwide spread and it got the status of a global and international language.

Furthermore, the spread of commerce and the emergence of the USA as a world economic power have led to the spread of English all over the planet. Thus, many researchers argued that the expansion of that language has been accelerated by the need for and the speed of international communication.

The rise of international exchange between different countries and mainly USA has led to the increasing importance of English in business and in everyday life. As Voltaire says: "*The first language among languages is that which possesses the largest number of excellent works*". This means that he does not only refer to products but also to works in several fields.

Another factor which was affected by the English language is tourism; several hotels, restaurants and tourism agencies use this language as a means to communicate with different

persons from all over the globe. In this regard, an important invention that is associated with the spread of English is the computer and thereby the internet. Moreover, in the academic field almost all conferences, studies and researches are done in the English language in different countries.

Though the undeniable importance that English plays in almost everyone's life, each one has different motivations to learn it (either for educational or occupational purposes). Yet, no matter which motivation one may have, but the fact that English is a means of survival in present days cannot be neglected.

1.3. The Importance of ELT

English, being a global language, enhances the economic competitiveness of a country, improves its global reach and enables it to better maintain its political security and interests. Teaching English as a foreign language then is vital to people's success, as it will deepen their global understanding and competitiveness in an increasingly interdependent and competitive world.

a. Globally

The learning of foreign languages is aimed at the growth of body, mind and intellect. Being relevant in today's society is a good reason to make them higher on the list of educational goals.

More and more people all over the globe, nowadays, are learning foreign languages for utilitarian reasons and for wider communication.

It is widely known that today English is hugely important as an international and global language. Moreover, the English language is described as a link language with global significance and also the most spread language in the world, third to Mandarin Chinese and

Spanish. Because English is used over 60 countries, many linguists and educationalists thought of it as the language of the century.

Language	Native Speakers	Secondary Speakers
Mandarin	1047 million	unknown
Spanish	382 million	120 million
English	361 million	over 251 million
Arabic	322 million	unknown
Hindu-Urdu/Hindustani	261 million	185 million
Portuguese	241 million	unknown
Bengali	221 million	132 million
Russian	150 million	124 million
Japanese	128 million	unknown
French	116 million	150 million
German	100 million	80 million
Punjabi	88 million	20 million
Turkish	80 million	unknown
Telugu	76 million	unknown
Korean	74 million	2 million
Vietnamese	71 million	unknown
Italian	60 million	20 million
Cebuano (bisaya)	33 million	unknown
Bahasa Indonesia	27 million	150 million
Filipino (tagalog)	24 million	73 million
Dutch	20 million	11 million
Greek	13.5 million	unknown
Bahasa Melayu	12 million	unknown

Table 1.1: Top Most Spoken Languages in the World

(Source: www.jonsay.co.uk/2013)

In India, it is now an official language in addition to Hindi. To survive in modern society, English language learning helps bringing the confidence in the learners and urges them to improve their skills in communicating with various people and encourages them to handle complex concepts with ease. In the area of globalisation and modernisation, English language learning enables to transfer the individuality of a learner into a personality. Thus, unemployed graduates are urged to polish up their knowledge in English and communication skills to better equip themselves. This can be better achieved only if students begin to learn this foreign language with keen interest at the university paying equal efforts along with learning other key subjects.

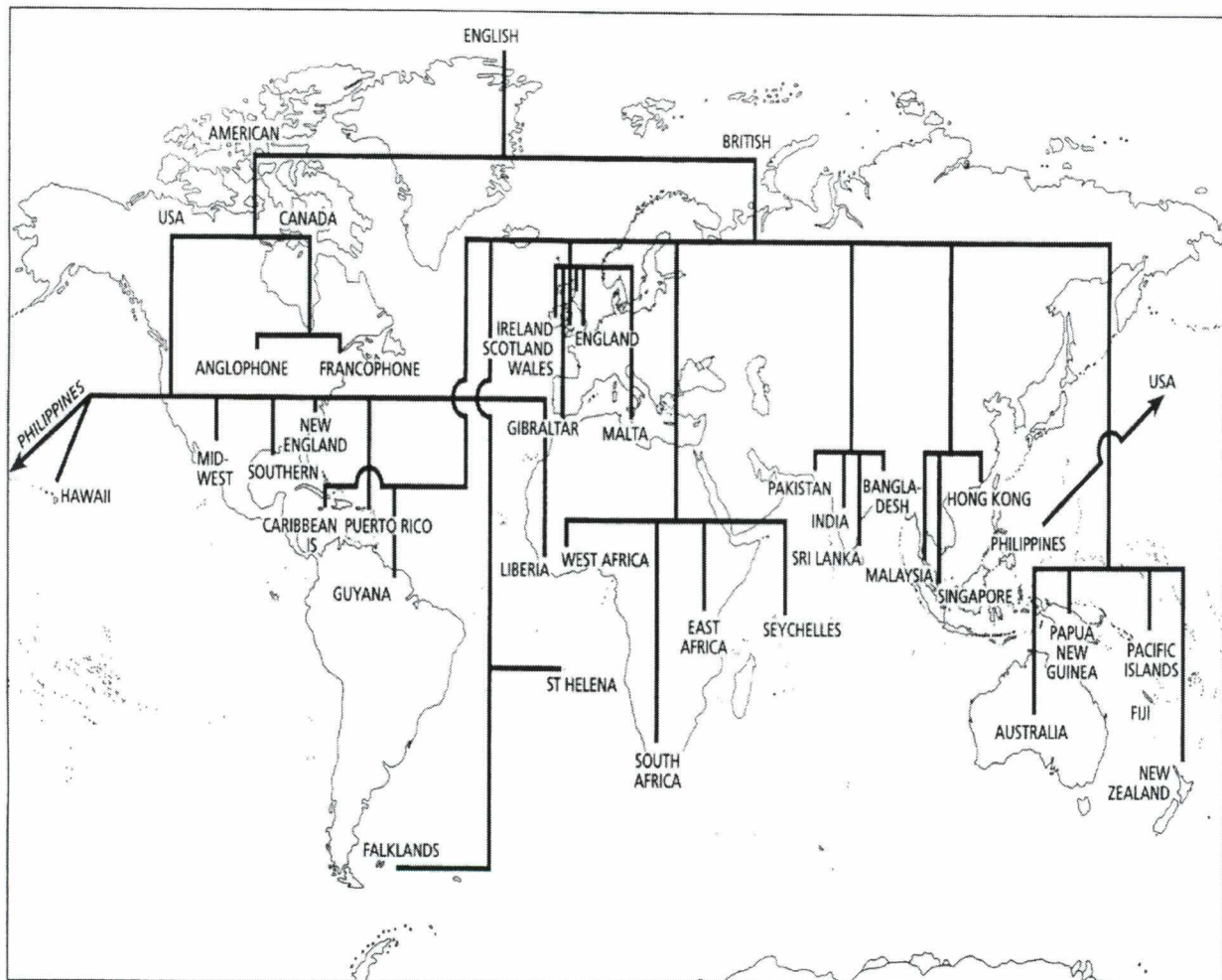


Figure 1.1: A family tree representation of the way English has spread around the world

(Crystal, 1997: 62)

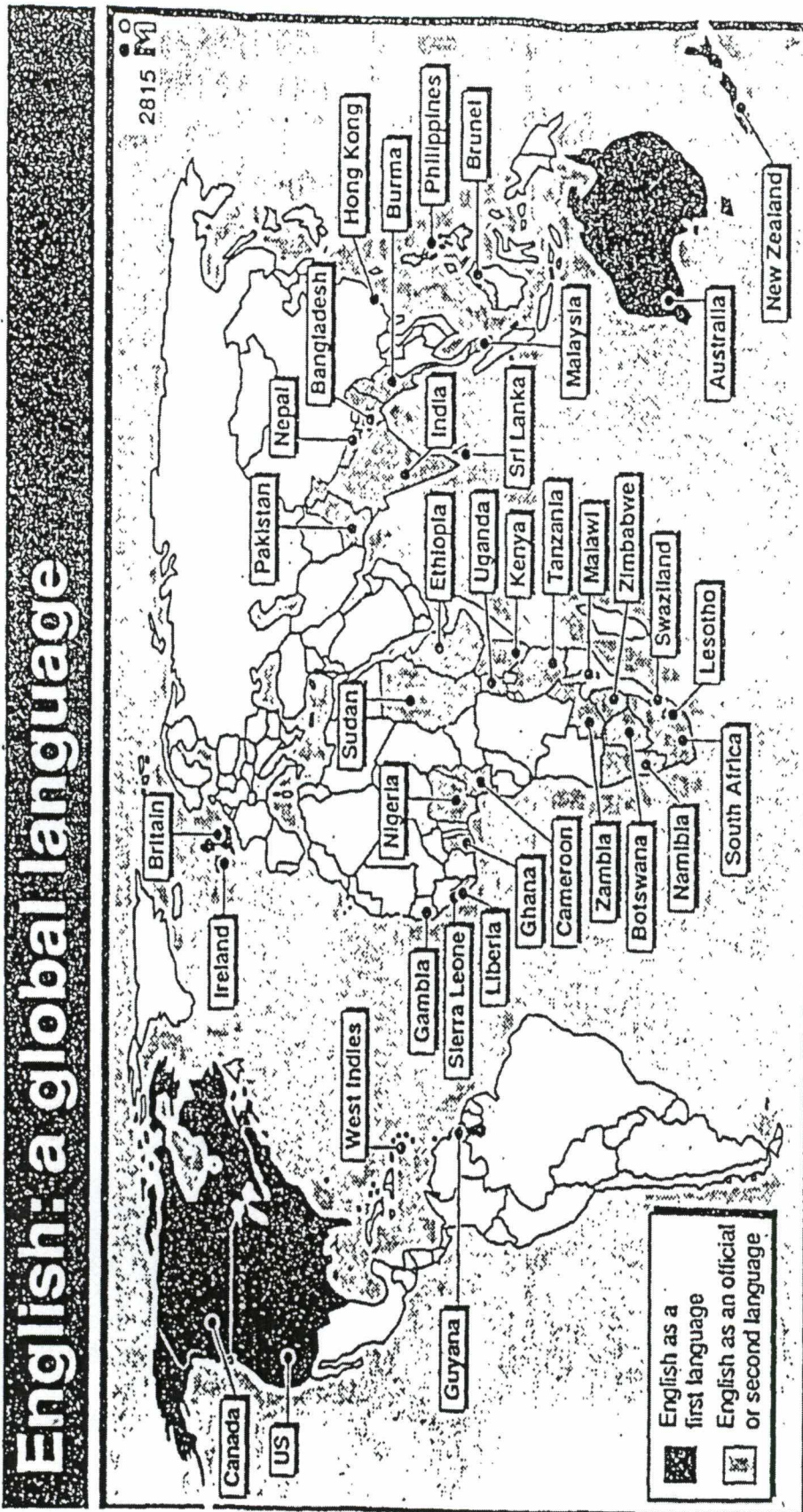


Figure 1.2: English as a Global Language

Accordingly, the reasons behind this spread of the English language are raised by

Kachru:

“During the last fifty years, the spread of English has been characterised by several political and sociolinguistic factors which deserve mention. At present, English is fast gaining ground in the non-Western countries, and the mechanism of its diffusion, by and large, is being initiated and controlled by the non-native users.... English is used as an additional language- often an alternative language in multilingual and multilingual context. In a socio-economic sense, a large number of English using countries fall in the category of “developing” nations, their needs for the use of English are determined, on the one hand, by considerations of modernisation and technology, and on the other hand, by linguistic, political and social “fissiparous” tendencies”

(Kachru, 1985:14)

b. In Algeria

During the French colonisation in Algeria, English was taught as a first foreign language in the first class of the intermediate cycle. Nevertheless, during the first years of independence it was still the first foreign language but it was introduced in the third class of the intermediate cycle. English had a much bigger importance in Algeria than Spanish, German and Italian. These languages were less important till stopped being taught. This shows the prestigious status that the English language has had in Algeria. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the English curriculum¹ was set by the French Ministry of Education (1969) which decided about the methods of teaching, the content and the materials to be used. In fact, emphasis during the first two years was put on the acquisition of phonetics and the ministry highlighted the importance of providing pupils with cultural objectives in the teaching of English. These ones were reached by the exposure to the British life and thoughts, and more precisely were taught in the secondary cycle. Nevertheless, because the curriculum was neither appropriate to the students' level nor to their background, the authorities decided to design an Algerian textbook.

In the 1970s, the textbook designers' objective was to produce a textbook that improves students' level in the English language and at the same time meets their objectives. To achieve this aim, they opted for a structural approach. The fact of introducing this approach and designing an Algerian textbook had several benefits. First, get rid of the French language as an in-between language in the teaching of English. Second, English teaching would no longer be in the sphere of French or French-speaking collaboration. Third, the structural approach would permit Algerian teachers to be trained swiftly and to be aware of their learners' needs. Last, this approach favours the oral skills², that is, intensive drills³, memorisation and reading aloud. It gives the learners the opportunity to practice the language and then to progress.

In 1975, the first really Algerian textbook was published "*Andy in Algeria*". Before, its publication, a survey was conducted and both teachers and learners were asked to fill a questionnaire in order to check their opinions about what the textbook should include and find out their suggestions. In 1996, Algerian authorities intended to make new reforms in the content and a commission was selected to work on the revision of that content. After few years, the results were that teaching of English was based on the Competency-Based Approach and the method followed was a learner-centred one.

At present, English is taught from class one of the intermediate cycle (1st A.M) till the third class of the secondary cycle (3rd A.S). Generally, secondary school curricula and teaching methodologies are formally developed by the Ministry of Education. The implementation of the curriculum is managed by a group of inspectors and the textbooks are elaborated by the National Pedagogic Institute (N.P.I).

Today, the Algerian school system is composed of twelve years categorised in three main cycles:

- The primary cycle lasts five years. Pupils pass from one class to another on the basis of their yearly evaluation. At the end of the fifth year, they have to sit for a national exam.
- The intermediate cycle comprises four years (from 1st A.M to 4th A.M). The pupils pass from one class to another. At the end, they take a national exam (B.E.M⁴).
- The secondary cycle endures three years (from 1st A.S to 3rd A.S), at the end of which a national exam (the Baccalaureate⁵) is held. This exam gives access to university.

The fact that Algeria is interested in teaching English is considered by some as a way to diminish the French influence and interference as confirmed by Miliani:

“In a situation where the French language has lost much of its grounds in the socio-cultural and educational environments of the country; the introduction of English is being heralded as a magic solution to all possible ills-including economic, technological and educational ones”

(Miliani, 2000:13)

1.4. Approaches and Methods to ELT Applied in Algeria

The teaching is always an absolutely necessary condition for learning. In order to understand these basic notions, one should notice that there is a significant difference between them, and that the terms approach, method and technique are hierarchical concepts.

a. Approach

An approach to language teaching is a general view of how language teaching should ideally be conducted. It includes the syllabus to be followed, the text to be used, the topics to be covered, and the classroom activities. In short, an approach embodies the theoretical principles governing language learning and language teaching. More precisely, teaching any language should include the understanding of this language and the way it should be taught. This is what is referred to as the approach:

“A sum of assumptions course designers make about language and language learning. This term gives a description of the ways psychologists and linguists look at language...it is a combined theory involving both language and learning process”

(Miliani, 2003:20)

b. Method

A method is the sum of teaching techniques utilised in a certain situation, i.e. a method is a constitution of a set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives. It is an overall plan for presenting the language material to be learned and should be based upon a selected approach. Methods tend to be primarily concerned with teacher and student's roles and behaviours and secondarily with such features as linguistic and subject matter objectives, sequencing, and materials. In other words, a method is procedural.

In this respect, Richards and Rodgers point out that:

“A method is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented...”

(Richards and Rodgers, 1986:15)

c. Technique

A technique is very specific, concrete stratagem; trick or contrivance used as how to present the rules and make learners apply them, it is designed to accomplish an immediate objective. It is the activity or the task that the teachers design to achieve their aims in the classroom. As Anthony puts it: “*A technique is implementation that which actually takes place in a classroom*” (Anthony, 1963:63-67).

So, approach is the first criterion upon which methods are defined, from these latter derive the techniques to be used.

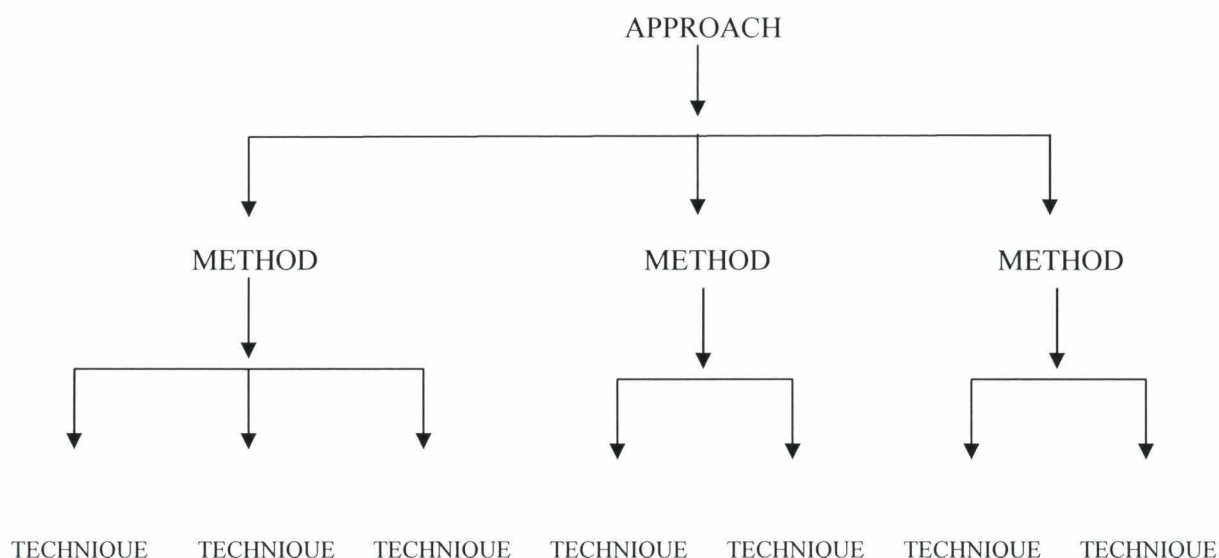


Figure 1.3: Approaches, Methods and Techniques to Foreign Language Teaching

(Miliani, 2003: 25)

1.4.1. The Grammar-Translation Method (1962-1971)

The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) also called the Classical Method was basically used in the teaching of the classical languages, such as Latin and Greek. But gradually, it was generalised to teach foreign languages, and it placed emphasis on the memorisation of grammar rules and vocabulary. Its practitioners advocate translation from the

target language into the native language. Students study grammar deductively; that is, they are given the grammar rules and examples, are told to memorise them, and then are asked to apply the rules to other examples. The translated passages may offer a rich semantic framework for language learning, and learners also acquire a good reading knowledge of the target language. It is a teacher-centred method because the learning process is based on the constant interaction between the teacher and the learner. This method is unsuitable for groups of mixed nationality or mother tongue since translation itself is a specialised skill. Moreover, it was introduced in the English language teaching field in Algeria in the 1960s.

During this period, four books were used: **L'Anglais par la Littérature, L'Anglais-Langue Seconde** (English through Literature, English as a Second Language – authored by Richard and Hall) (4th and 3rd, 2nd and 1st secondary school classes, 1960-1961-1962-1963).

The use of Grammar-Translation Method, according to Harding, is a real obstacle that prevents the learner from effective foreign language learning. He asserts that:

“Any method of teaching which gives pupils the notion that word-for-word equivalent in one language can convey the meaning of sentences in another, is failing to reach an understanding of language in its widest sense”

(Harding, 1967:23)

1.4.2. The Direct Method (1971-1981)

The Direct Method also called the Natural Method came as a reaction to Grammar Translation Method. It gives a great importance to oral skills over the written ones and proposes that the learners should be exposed to the learning of writing and spelling just after

having grasped the speech. Richards and Rodgers claim that: *"A foreign language could be taught without translation or the use of the learners' native tongue if meaning is conveyed directly through demonstration and action"* (Richards and Rodgers, 1995:9).

In this method, all material to be learnt is presented orally in the target language, grammar being taught not through rules but by situation, it is taught inductively; that is, the students are presented with examples and they figure out the rule from the examples. Learners are required to engage in much repetition of what the teacher says until they have acquired a certain grammatical pattern.

In Algeria, the books used in that period in secondary schools were entitled:

Practice and Progress (1967, 2nd and 1st classes in secondary cycle – 2 A.S. /1 A.S.) and

Developing Skills (1967, 3rd class in secondary cycle – 3 A.S.)

In his former book, Alexander asserted:

"In order to become a skilled performer, the student must become proficient at using the units of a language. And the units of a language is not as was commonly supposed the word, but the sentence... learning how to use a language has become more important than reunderstanding how a language works"

(Alexander, 1967: VII)

The grammatical structure exercises, the intensive drills and reading aloud gave the pupils the opportunity to 'practice' the English language and therefore to 'progress'.

In sum, as opposed to the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method means a total refusal of translation and use of the mother tongue. It implies a direct contact with the foreign language.

1.4.3. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT / 1981-2003)

The developments in theories of language acquisition in the classroom context led to changes in methods. The emergence of the communicative approach to language teaching stresses the need for using a language for communicative purposes. This approach focuses then on achieving the communicative competence⁶, which aims at learning how to act adequately with language. As emphasised by Hymes: "*Being able to communicate required more than linguistic competence, it required communicative competence*" (Hymes, 1971). It is based on the assumption that language is better learned when using it rather than when knowing how to use it; students do not simply learn the linguistic structures and grammar rules, they have to learn how to use the language appropriately. In its simple significance, the emphasis is on the meaning conveyed rather than on the forms used. As a result, learners become actively involved with the language and will be more motivated to study a foreign language.

The textbooks that were provided for the secondary cycles are:

New Lines 1 (intended for 1st secondary cycle / 1981), **New Lines 2** (designed to the second classes / 1985) and in 1988, a new one was published **Midlines**. The **New Midlines** addressed to (2A.S. - 2nd class in secondary cycle / 1997), **Comet** (3A.S. - 3rd class in secondary cycle / 1997), and **My New Book of English** (1A.S. - 1st class in secondary cycle).

In short, adherents of CLT argue for the use of language materials authentic to native speakers of the target language⁷, in addition to role play, picture strip story, scrambled sentences and language games.

1.4.4. The Competency-Based Approach (CBA / 2003)

This teaching approach emphasises the language learning outcomes, and applied the principles of Competency Based Education (CBE). Richards and Rodgers define the CBE as follows: “*Defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours students should possess at the end of a course of study*” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:141).

Competency refers to the combination of skills and knowledge so that they will be used for problem solving situations. The CBA stresses the need for developing the learners’ thinking process, that is, they should be aware while acquiring knowledge. Its main focus is to develop the students’ linguistic and intellectual capacities that will enable them to handle most of the challenging situations both within and outside school. It also helps learners in learning how to use the acquired knowledge appropriately, i.e. it allows the learner how to control and perform his competencies, which are known as both “a know how to do” and “a know how to act”. In addition to that, it shows to the students the usefulness of the acquired knowledge, and prepares them to be adequately qualified in the real life tasks. Moreover, the competency-based approach encourages the learners’ autonomy, in this approach, the teacher is just a facilitator, the learner is responsible of his own learning, and can construct his knowledge using various resources. Docking (1994) summarised what Competency-Based Approach is:

“It is designed not around the notion of subject knowledge but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it. The focus on competencies or learning outcomes underpins the curriculum framework and syllabus specification, teaching strategies, assessment and reporting. Instead of norm-referencing assessment, criterion-based assessment procedures are used in which learners are assessed according to how well they can perform on specific learning tasks”

(Docking, 1994:16)

During that period, new textbooks were planned for both the intermediate and secondary cycle. Among those textbooks, one can cite the following:

1- Textbooks used in the Middle school: (**Spot-light on English 1**: 2004 /class 7), (**Spot-light on English 2**: 2004 /class 8), (**Spot-light on English 3**: 2005 /class 9), and (**On the Move**: 2006 /class 10).

2- Textbooks used in the Secondary school: (**At the Crossroads**: 2005 /class 1) and (**Getting Through**: 2006 /class 2).

1.5. English at University in LMD Contexts

Since 2004, higher education in Algeria in the area of foreign languages and more precisely English is organised around three degrees (LMD): the Bachelor's degree (Licence), the Master's degree (Master) and the Doctorate (Doctorat).

The new university system LMD is supposed to ensure quality education that is recognised throughout the world. In the case of the University of Oran, the Section of English which belongs to the Department of Anglo-Saxon languages has launched LMD in 2010, where three types of degrees are implemented. Learning English in an academic frame is a three year course leading to a bachelor's degree with an exploration of foreign cultures and their contributions to the world civilisations.

1.5.1. Types of Degrees

The LMD system comprises different types of diplomas as follows:

a. The Bachelor's degree (Licence)

This is the first higher education degree after the baccalaureate. It has the equivalent level of the baccalaureate + three years of studies (six semesters corresponding to 180 ECTS⁸).

b. The Master's degree (Master)

The Master's degree completes the bachelor's education. This diploma is a two year course and corresponds to a baccalaureate level + five years of studies (four semesters corresponding to 300 -180+120- ECTS).

c. The Doctorate (Doctorat)

After a Master's degree, the doctorate terminates the university curriculum. It is awarded after the completion of research, approximately three years (six semesters), and defending a thesis. It corresponds to a baccalaureate level + eight years of studies.

LMD System		Former System	
Name of the degree	Number of years	Name of the degree	Number of years
Doctorate	≥ 3	Doctorate	≥ 5
Master	2	Magister	≥ 2
Bachelor(Licence)	3	Bachelor	4

Table 1.2: Comparison of the Systems

Furthermore, the course programme is made up of sets of subjects:

- For the first year, the following modules are taught:

a. Core (language) modules:

Morphosyntax, phonetics, oral expression, and written expression.

b. Content modules:

Language evolution, computing, ESP, introduction to culture, introduction to literature, typology, linguistic currents and contexts, methodology, and human and social sciences.

Hours per Week	Modules
1H 30	Computing- ESP- German- Human and social sciences- Introduction to culture- Introduction to literature- Language evolution- Linguistic currents and contexts- Methodology- Phonetics- Typology.
3H	Morphosyntax- Oral expression- Written expression.

Table 1.3: Official Schedule of the First Year LMD System

(Department of Anglo-Saxon Languages, Section of English- University of Oran)

- Concerning the second year, the covered courses are:

a. Language modules:

Morphosyntax, phonology, oral expression, written expression, and lexico-semantics.

b. Content modules:

Theories and themes, civilisation (Am/Brit Civ), linguistics, literature, introduction to science, methodology, and social and human sciences.

Hours per Week	Modules
1H 30	Civilisation (Am Civ / Brit Civ)- Foreign language- Human and social sciences- Introduction to science- Linguistics- Literature- Methodology- Phonology- Theories and themes.
3H	Morphosyntax- Oral expression- Lexico-semantics - Written expression.

Table 1.4: Official Schedule of the Second Year LMD System

(Department of Anglo-Saxon Languages, Section of English- University of Oran)

- Third year students are supposed to learn the following subjects:

American civilisation, American literature, British civilisation, British literature, discourse analysis, methodology, and TEFL (only the **content modules**).

Hours per Week	Modules
1H 30	Am Civ- Am Lit- Brit Civ- Brit Lit- Discourse analysis- French- Language and society- Methodology.

Table 1.5: Official Schedule of the Third Year LMD System

(Department of Anglo-Saxon Languages, Section of English- University of Oran)

1.5.2. Organisation of the University Year:

Each university year is divided into two semesters and the examinations are held at the end of each semester. The system comprised the presumed ‘Teaching Units’ that the students should accumulate at the end of each semester. In addition to that, another element can be considered which is the system of ‘Credits’, i.e. if students do not obtain the required credits, they may pass to the next semester with the credits gained before, yet they remain indebted till they attain the demanded credits.

1.6. Teaching Objectives and Learners’ Needs

In the area of teaching, objectives and aims refer to the underlying reasons for or purposes of a course of instruction. In some countries, the aims of the teaching of a language, be it second or foreign, are determined at the governmental level on politico-economic grounds and “*this is the case of Algeria where ELT textbooks and curriculum guidelines are government-prescribed*” (Benmoussat, 2003).

The worldwide growing interest in English stresses the need to teach it to the Algerian learners who are affected by the process of globalisation, in order to respond to their needs and to enable them to open new ways for research. In the same vein, the Ministry of National Education (2005) asserts:

“Teaching English aims at constructing and developing communicative, linguistic, cultural, and methodological competences that would allow the learner to confront situations of oral and/or written communication that have to take into consideration his or her future wants and those of society in which he or she evolves. Thus, teaching/learning English enables the learner to pass on, exchange, and soak up the culture conveyed by this language and use the latter as a cultural, scientific and technical tool”⁹

(MNE, 2005:4)

When dealing with the main objectives of ELT in Algeria, one may say, that after the independence and despite the privileged status given to the French language, Algeria favoured the promotion of ELT. Today, English is taught in Algerian middle schools (4 years), secondary schools (3 years) as well as universities, in order to provide language students and other learners with a good command of English.

It is worth mentioning that specialists advise the faculties of foreign languages in Algeria to cover their learners' needs and provide other faculties with competent English teachers since English is supposed to be a compulsory foreign language to be taught in plenty of areas of speciality.

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to a detailed theoretical section on the many ELT methods as well as the special status English has gained, being considered as a universal symbol of globalisation. It has also discussed the main teaching approaches that were introduced and applied in Algeria.

Notes to Chapter One

1- *“The curriculum includes the goals, objectives, content process, resources, and means of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for pupils both in and out of the school and community through classroom instruction and related programs”* (Robertson, 1971).

2- The abilities acquired or learned through teaching.

✓ The four primary skills are: listening, writing, speaking and reading.

3- Intensive language practice exercises to set up habits through repetition.

✓ The main types of drills are: chain drill, repetition drill, pronunciation drill, replacement drill, and transformation.

4- A French abbreviation which stands for: Brevet d’Enseignement Moyen.

5- In French: Baccalauréat.

6- The ability to achieve successful communication in English in any given situation. It includes not only linguistic competence, i.e. the mastery of the abstract system of rules, but also the attitudes, values, and social rules concerning a given language.

7- What is authentic and natural to native speakers of the target language is not so to learners in the classroom. What is important is that the materials should be used in a way that is real for learners (Widdowson, 1998).

8- English abbreviation for European system of transfer and accumulation of credits (European Credit Transfer System).

9-The translation is mine. This is the original version: “L’enseignement de la langue anglaise se propose d’asseoir et de développer des compétences d’ordre communicatif, linguistique, culturel et méthodologique qui permettront à l’apprenant de faire face à des situations de communication orale et/ou écrite compte tenu de ses besoins futurs et de ceux de la société dans laquelle il évolue. Ainsi l’enseignement/apprentissage de la langue anglaise permettra à l’apprenant de communiquer, d’échanger, de s’imprégner de la culture véhiculée par cette langue et d’utiliser celle-ci comme un outil culturel, scientifique et technique” (Ministère de l’Education Nationale, 2005:4).

CHAPTER TWO

Main Foundations of the Teaching of American Civilisation

- 2.1. Introduction
- 2.2. A Review of Literature
 - 2.2.1. Origins of American Studies
 - 2.2.2. Major Trends in American Studies
 - a. The Myth-Symbol School
 - b. The Social Scientific School
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- 2.3. Definition of Civilisation
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2.9. The Interrelationship between Language and Culture

2.10. Culture and Language Teaching

2.11. The Main Objectives of American Civilisation Teaching

2.11.1. The Linguistic Objectives

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2.12. Conclusion

Notes to Chapter Two

Chapter Two

Main Foundations of the Teaching of American Civilisation

2.1. Introduction

This section will discuss insights into culture and civilisation, and deal with the methodology of teaching American civilisation and its main interests. It will mention the major trends that have directed the research in American culture.

2.2. A Review of Literature

Throughout this research work, one has noticed that the teaching of ‘American civilisation’ as an academic subject taught at the University of Oran applies the methods of ‘American studies’. Therefore, an explicit understanding of the main concerns and methodology of ‘American studies’ is useful.

In the previous century, a revolt against the rigidity of the traditional academic disciplines of history and literature gave birth to the American studies movement in the 1930s. A basic principle of the interdisciplinary field that emerged in the succeeding decades is that ‘America’ is too richly complex to be analysed with the tools of a single discipline. Drawing a wide variety of intellectual traditions in the humanities and social sciences, American studies scholars have developed new methods and theories that help learners understand the relationships between politics, economics, literature, values, and racial, ethnic and gender identity in America.

‘American studies’ is then a discipline which examines the core values and ideas that define American culture and society as well as their transnational exchanges and impact. Due

to its interdisciplinary nature, 'American studies' includes a wide variety of sub-areas such as: history, culture, economics, politics, etc.

It is worth noting that this complex enterprise should not be seen as an amalgam of disciplines that are utilised to look at cultural facts from various perspectives to have different viewpoints on the same issue, but this branch of knowledge includes many disciplines where each one emphasises one aspect of American culture that cannot be analysed by another discipline. Hindle raises this issue and writes: "*We still proceed...in the illusion that American studies can remain a compound of literature, conventional history, government, and a few sprinkles of economics, sociology, philosophy, and fine arts*" (Hindle, 1969:117).

Hence, teachers are warned not to stress only American history which is considered as one single area among others in this field.

2.2.1. Origins of 'American studies'

The origins of the field of 'American studies' are traced back to four outstanding scholars; Louis Parrington, F.O. Matthiessen, Robert Spiller, and Perry Miller, who were the first to introduce the concept of a holistic approach¹ to studying American life in the 1920s and 1930s.

In early 1940s, Harvard University claimed to be the birthplace of 'American studies' when scholar Henry Nash Smith developed his own doctoral program there in "History and American Civilization". The pioneering scholars in this field explored concepts that defined important American character traits including the idea of American exceptionalism excluding any real criticisms of American culture or politics.

Later, 'American Studies' Programs started to adopt a less ethnocentric view², and began to bring more international viewpoints in their instruction, and the teaching of this discipline began to appear in other nations, mainly in Europe during the cold war where

communism was menacing. In this respect, Charles Seymour, President of Yale University in the 1950s revealed: “*The best safeguard against totalitarian developments in our society is an understanding of our own cultural heritage and affirmative belief in the validity of our institutions of freedom enterprise and individual liberty*”³ (quoted in Davis, 1989:355-56).

Today, ‘American studies’ is one of the most commonly available interdisciplinary academic areas in higher education, and is a subject taught through the concentration on the critical study of race⁴, gender⁵, mass culture⁶, as well as the examination of America as part of an increasingly globalised world.

To sum up, ‘American studies’ allows learners to acquire an understanding of the American history, and learn to think analytically and systematically about the American spirit, society and the representation of various cultural groups.

2.2.2. Major Trends in ‘American Studies’

For a thorough understanding of ‘American studies’ teaching, it is crucial to have an overview about the field and its methodology. The methods that should be applied to explore the American culture have been subjected to hot debates, which has led to the birth of several movements in the field, each one offering a specific methodology and different techniques in their research.

a. The Myth-Symbol School

Since its conception, ‘American studies’ as a scholarly endeavour began in the 1930s with the signature methodology of the Myth and Symbol school.

In such works as Henry Nash Smith’s *Virgin Land* and Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden*, Myth and Symbol scholars claimed that there were identifiable and recurrent themes that marked the United States as unique and virtuous with a special mission to spread its very “Americanness” across the globe.

Moreover, the Myth-Symbol school (also called the humanist school) was the leading trend in the area of American studies. Defenders of this movement believe that symbols and myths -products of the individual's consciousness- could give more information about culture than facts would. Accordingly, Kuklick claims that for 'American studies' humanists, the primary interest is "*the landscape of the psyche, the inner, not the outer world; actual objects and events are secondary. The location of an image is not out there but in consciousness*" (Kuklick, 1972:436).

b. The Social Scientific School

As a reaction against the humanist approach to American culture and its methodology, the field of American studies sees the emergence of a new movement called the social scientific school. This movement examines the American culture through the observation of real behaviours of people with objectivity. The social scientist Americans view ideas as existing through behaviour and experience and not separately. This has led to get information about the American culture in its pluralistic expression. In this regard, Kuklick asserts:

"Ideas could only be inferred from behaviour and thus, culture can best be inferred from the behaviours of people and not only from the mental production of great minds"

(Kuklick, 1972:438-39)

Furthermore, supporters of this trend saw the importance of discovering minority groups within the American studies which has led later to the emergence of ethnic studies, and new programs became the focus in American studies such as Hyphenated Americans (African-Americans, Chinese-Americans and others).

c. Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism came as a reaction to criticise the values that prevent those who were outside mainstream America from expressing their opinions. This view is well echoed in Fox-Genovese's statement:

“Today we know Americans to be female as well as male, black as well as white, poor as well as affluent, ..., and of diverse national and ethnic backgrounds”

(Fox-Genovese, 1990:1)

Thus, multiculturalist theorists defend the recognition of minority groups and claim that diversity and group difference are the distinguishing features of American society. Additionally, proponents of multiculturalism see that American studies should focus on the plural, multi-group character of the composition of the United States, a nation formed by diverse ethnic, racial, and religious groups from all over the world. They state that ‘American studies’ should be committed to the study of the American identity with various facets.

2.3. Definition of Civilisation

The word civilisation is derived from the Latin “civis”, which means ‘inhabitant of a city’. Thus, civilisation in its most essential sense, is the ability of people to live together harmoniously in cities, in social groupings. It means also a way of thinking, and a set of beliefs.

Sometimes, civilisation is used in the meaning of culture, that is, a people’s way of life (Cazeneuve, 1969). Other scholars see civilisation as the recipient of a host of cultures, referring to the whole society’s collective life as civilisation and to its constituent groups’ lifestyles as cultures (Sowell, 1991).

From an ideological viewpoint, civilisation is seen as the western way of life outside of which all other forms of society were ‘barbaric’ and ‘primitive’. In this sense, Cazeneuve states:

“The history of the word ‘civilisation’ shows that, at first, and according to etymology, it referred to what could distinguish between the

most advanced peoples and others.... It was thus naturally used in a colonialist, and indeed imperialist, context to refer to the European, western culture as being absolutely superior to others”

(Cazeneuve, 1990:944-45)

2.4. Definition of Culture

Defining culture is not an easy task owing to the fact that it can be interpreted in a variety of angles. Some anthropologists and linguists maintain that it is a communication system, while others see it as a system of symbols and meanings. It is also viewed as a social phenomenon and as a learned behaviour.

In the last half of the nineteenth century, E.B.Tylor, one of the founders of the field of cultural anthropology defined culture as *“that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”* (Tylor, 1871).

This broad definition explains that culture means almost everything about a people’s overall way of life, from their knowledge to their habits. It also reveals that culture is something that individuals acquire and obtain as members of a given society who grow up and live together.

Accordingly, the term culture originated from the Latin word “cultura” which means ‘cultivate’. One may cultivate a garden; and one may also cultivate one’s mind, and abilities. But most of its definitions refer to all the positive aspects and achievements of humanity that make mankind different from the rest of the animal world. Culture has grown out of creativity: a characteristic that seems to be unique to human beings.

Moreover, culture is a concept that necessitates delicate delimitation for it means different things for different people; therefore it is not easy to define. Goodenough argued that:

“Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviours, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them”

(Goodenough, 1957:74)

Thus, it can be considered as a ‘filter’ through which reality is perceived. It reflects what people think about themselves and about others. Scholars of different fields define the term culture differently, according to their field of interest. For example, Yule (2006) defined it: *“as a social knowledge that members of a particular group acquire unconsciously. These people share the same ideas and assumptions”*.

Nieto (2002) confirmed that each one has his understanding of the term culture; some limit it to food, clothing, and lifestyle. Nevertheless, it cannot be defined only in terms of the above mentioned aspects since it includes so much more. It has to do with beliefs, values, customs, language, religion, etc. that a particular group of people share. In this regard, culture is related to all the aspects that are shared between members of a society. Another definition that can be given to culture is that it is *“a historically transmitted pattern of meanings, embodied in symbolic forms by which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life”* (Geertz, in Kachru and Smith, 2008:31).

Since culture is transmitted from one generation to another partly through language; and language is known as to be dynamic, so culture too is constantly changing. Moreover, it refers to widely shared ideas, beliefs, values and assumptions about life that become unconsciously or sub-consciously accepted by people who see themselves as members of a society.

Furthermore, since culture is said to be related to different aspects of life, scholars; among them Chastain (1976) and Kramsch (1991) made a distinction between two levels of culture namely “little c” culture and “Big C” culture. The former refers to customs, family

institutions, and daily life routines of a given society, i.e. the culture of the four Fs; foods, fairs, folklore, and statistical facts. The latter alludes to civilisation and the various achievements in different domains of that society, i.e. the culture of literary classics and works of art. In reference to small “c” and big “C” culture, some argue that culture has two major components. The first is mainly anthropological and refers to values, customs and the way of life of a given community and their understanding of and reference to the world. Such understanding can only be achieved if there is a shared knowledge about the language of that community. This is why having knowledge about a language helps in understanding its culture. The second component is historical and denotes the history, the geography, arts, the literature and the achievements of a society. In the same vein, Chlopek explains:

“It seems useful to make a distinction between the so-called big-C culture and small-c culture. The big-C part of a given culture is usually easy to study, as it constitutes factual knowledge about the fine arts such as literature, music, dance, painting, sculpture, theatre, and film. Small-c culture, on the other hand, comprises a wide variety of aspects, many of which are inter-connected, including attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, perceptions, norms and values, social relationships, customs, celebrations, rituals, politeness conventions, patterns of interaction and discourse organization, the use of time in communication, and the use of physical space and body language. Needless to say, language is also part of what we call culture, and it also reflects and interprets culture”

(Chlopek, 2008:11)

It is evident then that one cannot easily say what culture is, what can be done is to say what culture does. As claimed by Street:

“...what culture does is precisely the work of defining words, ideas, things and groups. We all live our lives in terms of definition, names and categories that culture creates. The job of studying culture is not of finding and then accepting its definitions but of discovering how and what definitions are made, under what circumstances and for what reasons...Culture is an active process of meaning making and contest over definition, including its own definition”

(Street 1993b:25, quoted in Hall 2002)

Nonetheless, the best definition of culture is one that embodies all functions: social, historical and all other perspectives. Kramersch's definition seems to include all these aspects and thus it can be considered as definition that is worth to the status of culture. According to her, culture sets its people free from nature's generalities. This happens by providing a frame that limits and restricts them to this particular frame. In other words, culture brings order and predictability into people's lives. It liberates and at the same time constraints. Kramersch (1998) stated that: "*Etiquette, expressions of politeness, social does and don'ts shape people's behaviour through child rearing, behavioural upbringing, schooling and professional training*" (Kramersch, 1998:6).

According to her, cultural effects are observed at three levels. First; at a social level, culture shapes, guides and educates its people in the way they behave and think. This fact is reflected in the use of language, i.e. what to say and what not, how and when to say it according to the shared norms of that society. Next; the historical level, what is cultural is reinforced through time and transmitted from one generation to another till it becomes unquestionable and considered as natural. Kramersch (1998) stated: "*The culture of everyday practices draws on the culture of shared history and traditions*". This dimension entails the achievements and products of a society such as literary works or scientific achievements. Accordingly, preserving these achievements means preserving one's culture. Last, culture has an imaginative aspect. In Kramersch's opinion: "*Discourse communities are characterised not only by facts and artefacts, but also by common dreams, fulfilled and unfulfilled imaginings*" (ibid.:8). Hence, these imaginings are mediated through language which serves as a means to express and externalise people's (metaphorical) thinking.

Significantly, the distinction between civilisation and culture has been subjected to various hot debates for more than two centuries. For this reason, it is important to note that

there has been a strong tendency to use these terms interchangeably as though they mean the same thing, but they are not the same.

2.5. The Relationship between Culture and Civilisation

A sound understanding of the link between civilisation and culture requires a knowledge of their similarities and contradictions.

To emphasise the relationship between culture and civilisation, Soustelle states that "*Civilisation is the organic progression of culture whose transformation into civilisation is marked by the emergence of the city*" (quoted in Beneton, 1992:141).

a. Similarities

Both civilisation and culture are fairly modern words, which came into being during the 19th century by historians and anthropologists. Many scholars believe that the terms civilisation and culture are synonymous and can therefore be used interchangeably.

Culture is seen as a sign of excellence of a human being in education, letters, arts, good manners, etc. In turn, civilisation means an advanced state of human society, in which a high level of science, technology, culture, successful political ruling, and highly developed social planning has been reached.

In raising the similarities between the two concepts 'culture' and 'civilisation', scholars confirm that civilisation means the country's collective life-style and culture refers to its constituent groups' ways of life. Wald shares this agreement and affirms that:

"The members of congregation may share regular social interaction, a common status, and a distinctive way of life, out of these experiences, a common culture may emerge"

(Wald, 1992:28)

b. Differences

When establishing a distinction between culture and civilisation, one may understand that civilisation is larger than culture because of its complexity since it is seen as a whole whose one of its basic components is culture.

Moreover, culture can be tangible or intangible mainly if it is a product of the customs and practices of a certain people but civilisation is something more tangible because of its magnitude.

Furthermore, culture can be learned, transmitted across generations, and inherited by other groups of people through the use of symbols in the form of language and other means of communication, whereas an entire civilisation cannot be transferred by mere language alone due to its great size.

In addition to that, unlike culture which can exist and enlarge residing in a civilisation, civilisation can decline and may eventually end if its subunits (such as culture) collapse, that is civilisation can never grow and exist without the element of culture. In highlighting the difference between culture and civilisation, Andrew Bosworth asserts:

“Civilisation is fundamentally a cultural infrastructure of information and knowledge that serves survival and continuity. What distinguishes a civilisation from a culture is that this infrastructure, having reached a critical level of complexity, becomes autonomous from constituent cities, nations and empires. In ordinary cultures, the passing of information and knowledge may depend upon imitation or oral communication; in civilisations, this cultural memory, etched into clay or down into papyrus, takes on a life of its own”

(Bosworth, 2003:49-9)

This shows, therefore, that civilisation was a concept used to criticise unfairly non-European peoples and nations and treat them as uncivilised which justified the colonial occupation of Europe on the African and Asian territories.

Today, in modern anthropology, this view proved to be wrong and civilisations are classified on the grounds of their functioning.

To conclude, scholars argue that civilisation is the most sophisticated form of culture. They state that culture gives more importance to spiritual wealth including morality and ethics, whereas civilisation puts particular emphasis on material wealth such as scientific inventions considered as the products of civilisation.

2.6. Characteristics of Culture

The various definitions of culture attest its complexity as a human phenomenon. Nevertheless, in order to facilitate the understanding of its very nature, Cushner and Brislin (1996:6) suggested several characteristics. First, culture is human, this means that it is made and does not exist in nature. Second, it has subjective facets (beliefs, assumptions, values) “the invisible, less tangible aspects of a group of people”; and objective ones “things as the artefacts people make; the food they eat, the clothes they wear, and even the names they give to things”. Third, culture is not innate but learned. It is constructed and transmitted socially and collectively through interactions.

This process begins right from childhood where each one learns what is appropriate and what is expected from him in his culture. The learned values are accepted without reflection. However, when one comes in contact with another culture, he may notice that what is appropriate in his culture may not be in the other one. Fourth, people belonging to the same culture can communicate easily without words, i.e. they can fill in the blanks and deduce what

is not said explicitly. Fifth, some cultural values of a society may change through time due to some factors, but they are generally picked up by the members of that society without opposition. Sixth, cultures are described contrastively by highlighting their differences. Seventh, culture is dynamic and ever changing. Eighth, culture serves as a 'filter' which can be seen both as selective and limiting to its people. Ninth, since each culture is set up of different sub-cultures such as: age, gender, social class⁷, ethnic groups⁸, etc., members of one culture do not have exactly the same behaviours. For convenience, it is crucial to discuss the chief components separately:

a. Culture is Socially Learned

Culture is learned through language, literature, local history, formal and informal education, and is therefore transmitted across generations. Today, with the advent of modern technology culture is easily learned through the various mass media and internet. Additionally, culture is not inherited, but individuals acquire it in the process of growing up in a society or some other kind of group. The process by which young people learn the culture of those around them is called enculturation or socialisation.

When a person learns the culture of a society rather than the one in which he is raised, the process of acculturation occurs. Saying that culture is learned means that the major way infants and children learn culture is by observation, imitation, communication, and influence, and not by trial and error learning. It also means that culture is not acquired genetically, i.e. by means of biological reproduction, but culture is something people born into a particular group acquire while growing up among other members.

b. Culture is Socially Shared

To say that culture is shared is to emphasise that culture is collective and based on social interaction and creation. Culture cannot exist by itself, it is shared by some groups of

people. The people who share a common cultural tradition may be numerous and geographically dispersed. At the other extreme, the group of individuals that shares a common culture may be small, for instance some Amazonian tribes are composed of few hundred members, yet these members speak a unique language and have different traditions and beliefs. In spite of the complexities, to say that culture is shared is to stress that people who share a common culture are capable of communicating and interacting with one another without serious misunderstanding and without being obliged to explain what their behaviour means.

The notion that people share culture means that they share a common cultural identity; that is, they can recognise themselves, and their culture's traditions and customs as different from other people and other traditions.

c. Culture is Dynamic

No culture remains constant or changeless. It is subject to slow but constant change. Culture is responsive to the changing conditions of the human beings. Since culture is made up of individuals who belong to it, it is constantly reformed by these individuals. Specialists believe that because people are dynamic culture is dynamic. It is not static, it is ever growing and changing into something new. Very often, there are ideas that worked in the past but may not work as well in the future. Sometimes, what seemed right and certain before can later appear somehow unsound and imperfect. Because most cultures interact and are in contact with other cultures, if one element in the system morphs into new components, it is likely that the entire system must adjust.

The following diagram illustrates perspectives, products and practices of the culture of a society (Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 1996):

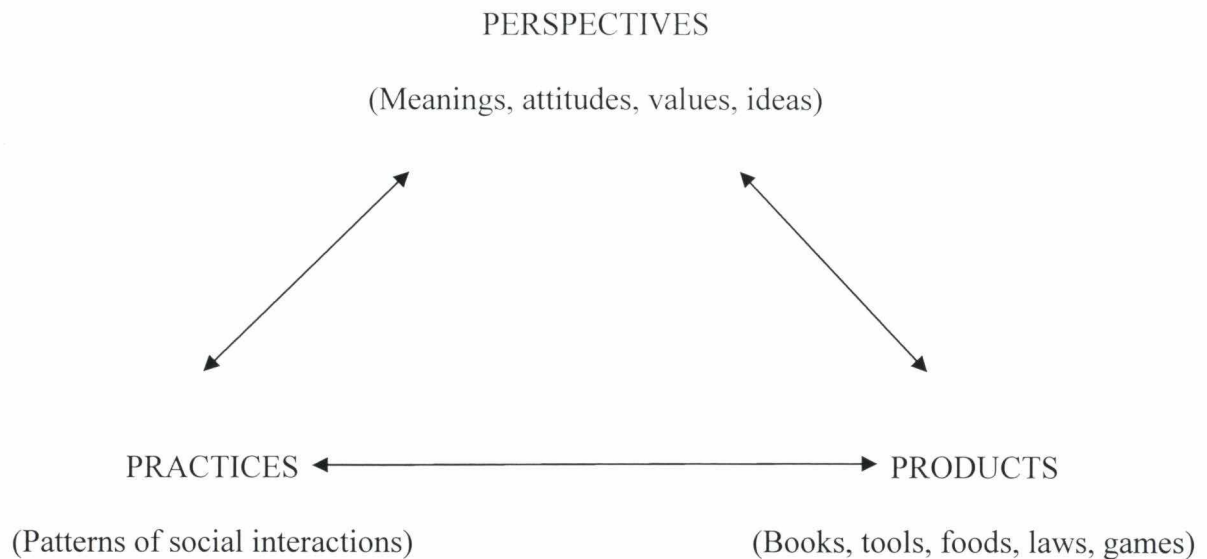


Figure 2.1: Perspectives, Products and Practices of the Culture of a Society

2.7. The Main Cultural Components

2.7.1. Beliefs

Beliefs are the individuals' representation of the outside world. It is "cultural input" that one takes from his surrounding environment. There are those which seemed to be true such as (1+1=2). Others seemed to be less probable like 'all the girls are talkative'.

A belief refers to the assumption and conviction that is held to be true by an individual such as: Muslims believe in the Day of Judgement, angles, etc. It is the basis of one's actions and values. Moreover, Beliefs serve as a storage system of one's past experience, including thoughts, memories and interpretations of events. They are shaped by the individual's culture. Thus, the cultural belief is the one that is shared by the most people of a given culture.

2.7.2. Values

Values are things to be achieved. They refer to moral principles expected from members of societies in different situations and depend upon the culture. They reveal what is right and wrong, good and bad; they tell how to live one's life. Besides, they are the basis for one's behaviour and motivation. They are often concerned with desired aims, such as the

Muslim value of Allah mercy, as well as the way of behaving to achieve these goals such as cleanliness. What is more, values change through time i.e. they are different in every social situation and may only be embraced by some and not by others in the same culture.

2.7.3. Assumptions

An assumption is a belief that is not proved. A culture is based on a set of assumptions about life and world. Moreover, a cultural assumption is when a person develops specific values and attitudes related to his/her cultural background. Without assumptions, people would need to ask about the meaning of things.

2.7.4. Attitudes

Attitudes are the way people feel and think, i.e. emotional reactions that are unobservable by other people. They are the established ways of responding to people and situations based on the learned beliefs, assumptions and values. They are done implicitly, so the surrounding persons do not grasp one's feeling or thought. Hence, they store these emotional responses the same way beliefs store the content of the past events.

2.7.5. Behaviours

Behaviours refer to what people do, the manner people act, on the ground of their acquired beliefs and values. Human beings are expected to engage in a variety of behaviours according to their social ranks (parent, supervisor, manager, etc.). In describing the number of roles people fulfil in their daily lives when interacting with each others, Cushner and Brislin observe:

“Productive, efficient, and healthy persons are able to shift roles as needed (e.g., from participant to leader, from employee to spouse) and understand the appropriate behaviours in each context”

(ibid.: 297)

2.7.6. Stereotypes and Prejudices

Stereotypes are widely considered beliefs about a group of people. They help individuals realise what to expect from others. They may be positive or negative but most of the time negative ones, which one has about particular groups of persons, mostly on the basis of preconceived ideas, and then assuming that all members of that group will think and behave identically. Because they frequently function at unconscious level and so are constant, people have to work consciously to reject them. For example, if some people think that most women are bad drivers, they will tend to notice when a female driver makes a mistake but to ignore bad male driving.

Prejudices, on the other hand, are those opinions and attitudes (usually negative) that are grounded on one's own stereotypical assumptions or ignorance (based on little or no evidence). Whereas stereotypes tell people what a group is like, prejudices tell persons how they are likely to feel about that group.

2.8. Cultural Differences and Similarities

The similarities and differences across cultures can make a huge difference between people. Utilising and understanding cultures, their similarities, and their differences will allow a teaching process to thrive.

a. Cultural Differences

Cultures of the world are different in many respects. The differences are not simply between nations, there can be differences within communities.

Sometimes, cultural differences arise among people due to their behaviour, which may appear to be perfectly recognised and valid from their own point of view, from the standpoint of their own culture, but may be odd in another atmosphere.

When encountering a new environment, it is normal to feel disoriented and anxious. Adapting to different cultures takes time and making this transition can be more difficult than imagined. It is only through developing a greater awareness and understanding towards different cultures from one's own, that it would be possible to make sense of and accept the others.

b. Cultural Similarities

It is stated that cultural similarities allow people to go further than their own culture and this results in enabling them to learn about others. In this sense Damen thinks that: "it was what we share that makes it possible for us to learn another culture" (Damen, 1987:94). Most of the times, human rights and values are similar in all cultures. Supporting this view, Gunter insists:

"I don't know of any culture that considers murder legitimate, I know of no culture in which rape, torture or genocide is held justifiable. These fundamental values are more or less the same in all cultures around the world"

(Gunter, 2000:51)

2.9. The Interrelationship between Language and Culture

It has been argued that language and culture are inseparable and that they cannot be divorced from each other.

In any culture, there is a language through which people of that culture express their thoughts and ideas and externalise their norms. Thus, it can be said that culture is a component of language and language on its turn reflects a community's culture. A well known fact is that language is an aspect of culture and culture is an aspect of language. Both are so intimately interwoven, interrelated and interdependent that they cannot be dissociated the one from the other. For this reason, Byram (1992) believes that any language teaching process has to

include cultural elements of that language. Thus, one cannot learn a language and ignore its culture: *“to speak a language is to speak a culture, to exchange language which embodies a particular way of thinking and living”* (Byram, 1992:169).

Since then culture and language cannot be divorced from each other, Byram keeps insisting that:

“Language cannot be used without carrying meaning and referring beyond itself, even in the most sterile environment of the foreign language class. The meanings of a particular language point to the culture of a particular social grouping and the analysis of those meanings - their comprehension by learners and other speakers - involves the analysis and comprehension of that culture”

(Byram, 1989:41)

The interrelationship between language and culture can be looked at from a cognitive angle. Scholars put forward that different people speak differently because they think differently, and they do so because their language provides different ways of expressing their world. Even so, one of the most prominent theories in this context is *The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis*. Prior to this hypothesis, it was advocated that language is necessary for human thought and that understanding a culture needs a mastery of its language. Nevertheless, *the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis* assumes a strong relationship between language and culture which basic element is communication. It is said that without language, communication would be limited and without culture, it would not exist at all. This shows that language and culture reciprocally act upon and depend on each other. In the same context, Whorf argued that thought is determined by the language that any individual speaks, and he made the following generalisation:

“We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the

world is kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has been organized in our minds- and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our mind”

(quoted in Colbert, 2003:8)

Yet, this view witnessed some modifications because of the criticisms made by other scholars such as Pinker (1994). A modified version of the Whorfian hypothesis is that languages provide maps of cultural priorities, not cognitive possibilities, i.e. a language is an aspect of culture and a culture is an aspect of language. Brown (2000) stresses this relationship «*a language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language*”.

Culture is related to language in several ways, it is semantically encoded in the language. Language as a code that constraints the way people think, likewise culture. Another argument that supports the idea of relation is that the shared context is very important in implementing the meaning of the words uttered. That is, culture is expressed through the use of language. More precisely, the way people speak reveals to some extent to which culture they belong.

Another point from which the interrelationship between language and culture can be examined is from a functional and pragmatic point of view. Two examples that can be cited are the *Speech Act Theory* of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) and *the Cooperative Principle* of Grice (1975). Speech act refers to the “*actions performed via utterances*” (Yule, 1996:47). This means that when a speaker utters a sentence, he wants to convey (the locutionary act and the illocutionary force). The reaction of the hearer is called the perlocutionary act. When the speaker and the hearer share the same background knowledge, the interpretation will be successful and comprehension will be achieved, for the utterance in itself is culturally loaded. Furthermore, the idea of shared knowledge in communication is supported by Grice (1975). He argues that in an interaction the interlocutors have to respect maxims of quantity, quality,

relation and manner. Thereby, the utterance needs to be concise, precise, clear, truthful and relevant. If the maxims are flouted because of any reason, misunderstanding and misinterpretation are the outcomes. When the context in which the speech occurs is not shared between people, they cannot understand each other.

Additionally, in order to prove that language and culture are related, Kramsch (1998) suggested three ways in which language is related to culture. First, *language expresses cultural reality*. This means that people use language in order to speak about their experiences and express facts, ideas and events that other people have a common knowledge about. Then, *language embodies cultural reality*. This implies that language is creative and it enables its users to express themselves through verbal and non-verbal ways. Finally, *language symbolises cultural reality*. Each group has its system of signs which symbolises its members' cultural identity. This is noticed in the way each group of people uses language which is referred to as "a symbolic guide to culture".

To sum up, from all these arguments, it is clear that language and culture are unavoidable in communication and thus, they are related. Certainly, understanding a language needs understanding of the language itself and an awareness of and sensitivity towards its culture. Thus, teaching a foreign language cannot happen without the integration of the cultural component.

2.10. Culture and Language Teaching

Culture is a component of language and language reflects a community's culture. Indeed, Kramsch (1998) related language to *identity* and culture. She argues that there is a natural connection between speakers' language and their identity, the gestures they make and the vocabulary they use. In the same view, Byram (1989:41) argued that: "*language pre-*

eminently embodies the values of meaning of culture, refers to cultural artefacts and signals people's cultural identity". Moreover, he supports the idea that one cannot learn a language and neglect its culture because speaking a language means living and expressing its culture. Furthermore, teaching a foreign language needs the implementation not only of language knowledge but also knowledge about its culture. Language is a means of communication and culture can be considered as a foundation of communication. For this reason, culture has to be introduced in the teaching process. In the same vein, Kramsch (1993:8) asserted that: *"If, however, language is seen as a social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching"*.

According to Tucker and Lambert, the teaching of culture is seen as a means of *"developing an awareness of, and sensitivity towards, the values and traditions of the people whose language is being studied"* (Tucker and Lambert, 1972:26).

In recent studies and from works of several scholars such as Fairclough (1989), Byram (1989) and Kramsch (1993), it has been indicated that the cultural content as a contextual background for language should be included in teaching programs. However, the method and the manner in which the foreign culture is introduced need to be carefully selected. In other words, the cultural content that is presented to the learners needs to be appropriate to their home culture. Foreign language learners are not required to adopt beliefs and assumptions of the target culture. On the contrary, knowing about customs and beliefs will improve language proficiency.

In sum, culture is a complex entity which comprises a set of symbolic systems, including knowledge, norms, values, beliefs, language, art and customs, as well as habits and skills learned by individuals as members of a given society. Moreover, culture is not fixed but changeable through time.

2.11. The Main Objectives of American Civilisation Teaching

If foreign language instruction is to be a successful and beneficial for learners, teacher education must include multicultural awareness and foster an acceptance and respect of distinctive cultures and linguistic traits in order to help students acquire a foreign language and learn the modes of a new culture while maintaining an esteem appreciation of their culture.

Effective instruction requires teachers to formulate learning goals which take into consideration the learners' needs.

2.11.1. The Linguistic Objectives

Teaching American Civilisation has to offer a range of enriching linguistic insight to enable students to function effectively in English. Making cultural issues an inherent part of the curriculum, identifying key cultural items in every aspect of the language, and teaching the cultural context of conversational conventions will help teachers enable their learners being successful in speaking English and knowing what is appropriate to say to whom, and in what situations, as well as understanding the beliefs and values represented by the different forms and usages of the language.

Throughout the course, the teachers aim at focusing on language use in realistic settings. When speaking about the American experience and culture and supporting the lessons with authentic materials, students may learn some facts, procedures, and practice certain grammatical rules.

2.11.2. The Cultural Objectives

Besides its linguistic objectives, 'American Civilisation' has crucial cultural aims. The teaching of American Civilisation aims at revitalising the educational system by creating an understanding and awareness among students about the plurality of the cultures of America

and integrating this knowledge with education. The main thrust is on linking language with culture to achieve what Hymes and his followers named communicative competence. Incorporating cultural components in the teaching process will introduce the learners to American culture and create awareness amongst students and teachers of their role in conserving and preserving their own cultural heritage.

Being “*a branch of culture studies and as such is closer to the social sciences theoretically than to the humanities*” (Sykes, 1963:253), American civilisation will equip English students with the tools they need to approach the American culture.

2.11.3. The Intellectual Objectives

In the teaching of American civilisation, teachers tend to help their learners develop to the greatest possible extent a competency in comprehending and producing the target language, both spoken and written, as well as socio-cultural competency in communicating with people who speak the target language. Since the learning of a foreign civilisation rewards human resourcefulness, and commitment, teachers should instil a new vision of human greatness, and tolerance within their learners. This will equip them later with desired capabilities and skills to contribute to the productivity and manufacture of a variety of goods, as well as run the administration, and fulfil diverse tasks.

2.12. Conclusion

This theoretical part has provided some insights into the concepts of ‘civilisation’ and ‘culture’. This section has cited the types of relationships existing between these two notions. It has also given a general description of the principles that American civilisation is based on and grows from through the exploration of the principal schools in the area of teaching American culture.

Notes to Chapter Two

1- From 'Holism', which is a belief that the whole is more important than its parts; it implies that understanding is gained by studying relations among parts.

2- From 'Ethnocentrism'. It is a tendency to judge other nations, cultures or groups of people as inferior to one's own. Instead of making false assumptions and generalisations about the differences between cultures, humans should learn to recognise that societies and cultures operate and function differently than one's own. For instance, the notion of punctuality is stressed differently in Western and Middle East cultures.

3- Liberty (or Freedom) is the ability to think or act as one wishes, a capacity that can be associated with the individual, a social group or nation.

4- A collection of people who share a common genetic inheritance and are thus distinguished from others by biological factors.

5- A social and cultural distinction between males and females, as opposed to sex, which refers to biological and therefore ineradicable differences between men and women.

6- It is the culture that is widely disseminated via the mass media. More precisely, it is a culture which is produced by mass media having an impact on the public opinions and values. It is also known as "media culture" and has another alternative term which is "image culture".

7- A social division based upon economic or social factors; a social class is a group of people who share a similar socio-economic position.

8- From 'Ethnicity': that is a sentiment of loyalty towards a particular population, cultural group or territorial area; bonds that are cultural rather than racial.

CHAPTER THREE

Investigating the Teaching of American Civilisation in an LMD Context at the University of Oran

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Chapter Three

Investigating the Teaching of American Civilisation in an LMD Context at the University of Oran

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the reality of American civilisation teaching at the University of Oran with reference to second year students. It will describe the research instruments used to explore the current situation of this teaching.

3.2. Investigating the Reality of American Civilisation Teaching

A thorough understanding of the current situation of the teaching of American civilisation at the University of Oran reveals the existence of gross inadequacies that call for immediate actions. For a better exploration of this teaching reality, a number of research instruments such as (questionnaires, interview, data based on classroom observation, and informal discussions) are utilised to gain an insightful account of the situation before suggesting any changes.

3.3. The Educational Approach Utilised

- **The Case Study**

A case study is a powerful research approach which focuses on and assembles through information about various events within a real-life context. In his definition of a case study, Yin (1984) proposes that it is a research means which:

“investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context: when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used”

(Yin, 1984:23)

Therefore, one has undertaken a case study as a strong research procedure used to provide insights into key issues within real-life settings.

3.4. Collecting Data

The researcher tried to get in touch with the teacher covering the module of American civilisation to gain their cooperation. The purpose of the research was explained and key data were collected. One has made regular observation of classes by taking notes about teachers' practices, problems encountered, learners' feedback, and other issues. Moreover, potentially pieces of information were gathered from a large portion of students and teachers through questionnaires and an interview administered to the teachers of American civilisation.

To avoid that some participants might misinterpret some points in the questions, one has attempted to pilot questions on a small group of students and colleagues.

3.4.1. Means of Data Collection¹

Before describing how the research was carried-out, it is important to provide some background information on the utilised means of data gathering, i.e. questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation.

a. The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a printed document composed of a list of questions used to gather information from people about a given issue. Brown explains:

“Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers”

(Brown, 2001:06)

Also, a questionnaire is a data-gathering tool used to elicit different kinds of information and opinions. Richards (2005) states clearly:

“Questionnaires are one of the most common instruments used. They are relatively easy to prepare, they can be used with large numbers of subjects, and they obtain information that is relatively easy to tabulate and analyze. They can also be used to elicit information about many different kinds of issues, such as language use, communication difficulties, preferred learning styles, preferred classroom activities, and attitudes and beliefs”

(Richards, 2005:60)

This statement shows that the questionnaire is a helpful research tool employed to obtain particular information about various topics.

The researcher has utilised the questionnaire as an effective mechanism for efficient collection of specific data from a large group of students in addition to other useful information obtained from teachers. Confidentiality being highly respected, the questionnaire allows for a reliable method of analysis as all respondents are asked the same standardised questions.

b. The Interview

The interview is a conversation between the interviewer and the informant to gather data in the form of verbal responses. Interviewing is a way to assemble information as well as to gain knowledge from individuals. Accordingly, Kvale (1996) regards interview as:

“...an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data”

(Kvale, 1996:04)

In this research work, the interview is conducted with American civilisation teachers to investigate issues in an in-depth way and to capture the teachers' attitudes and personal

opinions. It provides also an insightful idea about possible suggestions for enhancing the situation of teaching/learning American civilisation at the University of Oran.

c. The Classroom Observation

It is a useful process in research by which a teacher sits in one or more class sessions to see real-life teachers practicing the profession in naturalistic environments. As Good notes: *“One role of observational research is to describe what takes place in classrooms in order to delineate the complex practical issues that confront practitioners”* (Good, 1988:337).

One has carried-out classroom observations as a helpful procedure to record the teachers’ practices and the students’ actions. As a powerful research strategy it offers a detailed and precise evidence about several aspects of the class than other data sources.

3.4.2. The Pilot Study

Before addressing the questionnaire to the whole population of students, a pilot study was carried-out with an important number of participants with distinct levels of competence as far as English is concerned to verify that the questions were clearly posed, and to take into consideration the respondents’ remarks concerning the wording of questions.

3.4.3. Interpretation of the Findings

First, the data is collected, then it should be interpreted and analysed in an objective and critical way to make sense of the results.

3.4.3.1. Students’ Questionnaire

a. Determining the Population

The questionnaire was addressed to the second year EFL students. This population was made up of 436 learners (male and female) as shown in the table below:

Option	Number	Percentage
Male	94	21,56%
Female	342	78,44%

Table 3.1: Gender Distribution

b. Purpose of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire sought to get an overview about the students' linguistic and cultural requirements, the importance of American civilisation in their academic achievements, their attitudes towards the English and English-speaking cultures, and the changes that may be made to improve the current situation of teaching American civilisation at the University of Oran.

c. Types of Questions

The students' questionnaire comprises three sorts of questions:

- Open-ended questions
- Closed-ended questions
- Multiple choice questions

• **Open-ended Questions**

The purpose of this type of questions is to offer the possibility to the participants to express their view and ideas in a free-flowing way to get insightful feedback for possible enhancements.

Example: Do you have any other comments which might be helpful in improving the teaching of American civilisation at your University?

• **Closed-ended Questions**

This type of questions contains all possible options of answers, and the informant has to select among any of the given multiple choice answers.

Example: Which foreign language did you study at high school?

- English
- Spanish
- German
- Other (specify)

- **Multiple choice Questions**

These questions give the respondents the opportunity to classify the suggested answers.

Example: What do you think of the topics dealt with in your American civilisation courses?

Interesting

Quite interesting

Not interesting

3.4.3.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

In an attempt to find out the main difficulties encountered by American civilisation teachers when covering the module, the inadequacies in the way the American cultural components are provided to the learners as well as the need for a professional training to overcome these difficulties, a questionnaire composed of 17 questions was addressed to a group of 5 teachers. The participants were asked to fill the questionnaire anonymously offering them a wide room for freedom to express themselves.

3.4.3.3. Teachers' Interview

The other self-report method which was used to explore the teaching of American civilisation at the University of Oran is an interview addressed to all American civilisation teachers (all years taken together) being the field specialists and the people directly concerned with this teaching and whose contribution is regarded as very helpful. This interview was conducted to know the main difficulties that teachers face in their classes, the reasons behind

the learners' poor achievement in this module, and the awareness about the value of professional development as a tentative remedy to refine the current situation of American civilisation teaching.

3.5. Analysis of the Findings

3.5.1. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

To help the respondents express themselves freely, and to transform the data into credible evidence, the respondents were told that anonymity will be highly preserved. The questionnaire was sequenced as follows:

- Students' English language background: the last two questions cited in the first rubric of the questionnaire intended to identify the amount of English language the learners have acquired.
- The importance of learning English and the English culture as well as the importance of American civilisation in academic achievement were the main concern of the three following questions:
- Questions 8, 9, 10, 11: The learners' attitudes towards the English language, the English culture and the module of American civilisation were developed in these questions.
- Question 12: the students' viewpoints concerning the main topics covered in American civilisation syllabus were checked in this question.
- Questions 13, 14, 15: the possible changes and learners' propositions to enhance the teaching process of American civilisation are mentioned in these questions.

3.5.2. The Students' Questionnaire Results

- **Question 1:** Gender distribution

One notices that within this target population the girls heavily outnumber the boys.

- **Question 2:** Which foreign language did you study at high school?

The following table shows the foreign language learnt at high school and the number of students who learnt English.

Foreign language studied	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency
English	436	100%

Table 3.2: Foreign Language Studied at High School

Table 2 demonstrates that English was the foreign language learnt at high school by all the participants.

- **Question 3:** How long have you been studying English?

Number of years	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency
5	436	100%

Table 3.3: Years of English Study at High School

The results mentioned in table 3 reveal that the number of years of exposure to the English language is equal for all the respondents.

- **Question 4:** What does learning English mean to you?

The great majority of the students answer that they are willing to learn English (95,87%) and that they find crucial to master all four macro skills. They expressed the desire to further post-graduate studies to have access to the job market.

- **Questions 5-6:** Do you think that it is important to learn about the culture (s) of English-speaking countries?

98,16% of the participants claim that it is vital to learn about the culture of English-speaking countries as opposed to a minor group of students (01,84%) who believe that it is of no great importance because they state that the priority should be given to the learning of linguistic skills.

- **Question 7:** How important to success in your studies is American civilisation?

The table below illustrates the importance of American civilisation in the curriculum:

Percentage	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency
Degree of importance		
High	400	91,74%
Moderate	20	4,60%
Low	16	3,66%
Total number	436	100%

Table 3.4: The Importance of American Civilisation in the Curriculum

91,74% of the students answered that a good achievement in American civilisation is of paramount importance to reach academic fulfilment.

- **Questions 8-9-10-11-12:** Attitudes Towards English and English-Speaking Cultures

- **Questions 8-9:**

70,64% of the respondents have a positive attitude towards English. Yet, a considerable number of learners 90,82% claimed that they dislike the English-speaking culture and are willing to learn about the British and American cultures.

- **Questions 10-11:**

An important group of participants (81,19%) expressed their strong desire to learn about the American culture because they pointed out that the module of American civilisation helps them get a deep insight into the American society and see their own culture from a new perspective.

- **Question 12:**

The great majority of informants (75,00%) asserted that the topics covered in the module of American civilisation are not interesting.

- **Questions 13-14-15:** Further Suggestions

- **Questions 13-14:**

The students' answers made known that the current American civilisation teaching does not satisfy their needs. Furthermore, they acknowledged their limited skills in this area. According to them, there might be something wrong in the teacher's competence and methodology. As indicated in the following statement:

"It seems clear that students are not necessarily unmotivated or unwilling learners; they are simply uninvolved in the depersonalization of the traditional classroom. They are willing to learn; they simply may not be able to endure the way they are taught. I now know if I really want to see motivation in my students, I have to be motivated to rethink what it is I am doing to them"

(Luce, 1990:2-3)

Moreover, among the changes that the learners proposed, one can cite the following:

- Using authentic materials more in lectures
- Developing critical thinking
- Providing summaries instead of plenty of history texts
- Reducing the memorisation of dates
- Emphasising on the teaching of cultural components

• **Question 15:**

The students were offered the opportunity to express themselves freely and to propose some possible suggestions to enhance the current situation of American civilisation teaching at the University of Oran.

One can draw the conclusion that:

- The majority of learners expressed a positive attitude towards learning American civilisation.
- The students revealed their strong desire to learn the American culture and claimed that it is the teacher being the main agent of change who is the most important element in improving the teaching methodology of American civilisation.
- The informants suggested that enhancing the teaching of American civilisation relies mainly in increasing the teachers' Education through professional development opportunities. They also stressed that the improvement of American civilisation teaching is a shared responsibility between teachers, the institution and the decision makers.

3.5.3. Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers have been asked to fill in a questionnaire which included several questions that aimed at obtaining a feedback about their personal thoughts and opinions regarding the

present time situation of the Teaching of American civilisation at the University of Oran. Further, the teachers were asked about the professional needs to better fulfil this teaching.

3.5.4. The Teachers' Questionnaire Results

- **Questions 1-2:** Teachers' Status and Work Experience

All the teachers to whom the questionnaire was administered hold a PhD, and have a work experience which exceeds five years. This reveals that the members of the teaching staff have impeccable credentials and high academic qualifications.

- **Questions 3-4-5-6:** General Statements about the Content of the Syllabus and the Students' Involvement in the Learning Process

The teachers recognised that the current syllabus of American civilisation does include some important aspects of the American culture, however, the way they are presented to the learners requires considerable expertise. Most of teachers said they expressed a great discomfort when being in their classes. They explained that the students are not fully engaged in the learning process due to the absence of active learning techniques. They added that American civilisation classes do not provide the necessary guidance which can lead the learners to a better understanding of the different concepts of values that shape the Americans attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, they admitted the students' very limited exposure to authentic materials being a powerful tool for an effective teaching.

- **Questions 7-8-9:** Teachers' Familiarity with the Cultural Aspects included in the Syllabus

Teachers who replied the questionnaire feel that they are familiar with the great majority of the cultural elements taught to the students. Almost all teachers think that since

the teaching of American civilisation is performed by Algerians, the cultural items dealt with are carefully selected to avoid any kind of culture shock².

- **Questions 10-11-12-13:** Difficulties Experienced in American Civilisation Classes
- **Question 10:**

The teachers' answers	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0%

Table 3.5: The Teachers' Answers about the Problems Faced in American Civilisation Classes

This table indicates that the totality of teachers recognises the existence of difficulties when covering the cultural items in their classes.

- **Question 11:**

When asked about the difficulties encountered in their classes, the teachers expressed many concerns, among which the following were cited:

- An overcrowded syllabus which does not fully focus on the cultural dimension.
- The absence of authentic cultural contexts for language practice activities.
- Teachers' fear of lack of knowledge about the key elements of the American society.
- The main emphasis is put on imparting facts

- **Question 12:**

The teachers' answers	Number of teachers	Percentage
Yes	4	80%
No	1	20%

Table 3.6: The Teachers' Answers about the Need for a Specialised Training

This table denotes that the largest part of teachers strongly believe that a specialised training would be a very helpful procedure to succeed in dealing with the mentioned difficulties.

- **Question 13:**

Through professional development teachers will be able of:

- Initiating their students into the core components of the American culture.
- Getting their learners reflect on their individual cultural backgrounds and contrast them with the backgrounds of the people of the target language.
- Being equipped with the capacity of preventing culture shocks which may have effects on the learners' feelings of belonging when interacting with people from the target language.
- Being aware of the cultural distinctions will enhance the ability of the teachers to address the particular needs of the students.

- **Questions 14-15-16:** The Need for Improving the Teaching of American Civilisation

- **Question 14:**

The teachers' answers	Number of teachers	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0%

Table 3.7: The Teachers' Answers about the Refinement of American Civilisation Teaching

The obtained results imply that the improvement of the teaching of American civilisation is imperative and needs immediate action.

- **Question 15:**

When replying to this question, the teachers suggested the following initiatives:

- Implementing various techniques for teaching culture that stress the four skills.
- Planning lessons that integrate cultural elements.
- Organising discussions and debates based on cultural instruction.
- Offering an ongoing teacher education since the teachers are the sole providers of knowledge.
- Basing the courses on amassing bits on factual information is ineffective, that's why teachers should raise their cross-cultural awareness through professional training.

- **Question 16:**

As responses to this question about the inadequacies in dealing with the cultural parts in American civilisation teaching the teachers stated the following:

- The use of theoretical pedagogy.
- Traditional classes based on verbal lectures and note-taking.
- The lack of professional training.
- The inadequacy between the current teaching and the stated objectives which prioritise the acquisition of the real-life cultural components and an insightful understanding of the complexity of the American culture.

- **Question 17:** The Need for Modifying the Content of the Current Syllabus

Responses to this question show a clear indication that all the teachers asserted the need for re-examining and re-considering the content of the present time syllabus. They stated that necessary transformations should be undertaken to design a syllabus which will:

- Provide a multi-cultural instruction.
- Allow students to learn through action and involvement.
- Take into account the students' learning styles.
- Help learners gain a cross-cultural awareness.
- Satisfy the learners' needs and expectations.
- Help students attain the skills that are needed to better understand, analyse, and criticise the cultural constituents and patterns.

3.5.5. Analysis of the Teachers' Interview

As another supportive data collection tool an interview was carried-out with eight teachers of American civilisation to have an overview of the main issues experienced in the courses, and to obtain some suggestions as a tentative remedy for the current teaching situation.

- **Question 1:**

In response to this question, the teachers provide various definitions of the word “civilisation” going around the same idea, i.e. they agree that civilisation is a state of a developed human society, its culture, its industry and its way of life during a certain period of time in a specific part of the world.

- **Question 2:**

In an attempt to find out the main reasons behind the lack of motivation to learn American civilisation, the teachers stated that the causes are manifold such as:

- **The Teacher-Learner Relationship:**

This rapport can lead to a lack of motivation if neglected. On the other hand it can raise motivation if it is given careful attention.

- **Teachers' Lack of Specialised Training:**

In the absence of specialised instructors, there is currently a growing gap between the actual skill levels that teachers have and the required skills to effectively perform the job. This translates into decreased learners' motivation.

- **Classroom Atmosphere:**

It is argued that the circumstances in which the training process occurs affect the student's desire to learn. This environment should offer security, respect, acceptance, and a low level of anxiety. This view point is well explained by Watson who believes that when the classroom climate is encouraging:

"students are more likely to become engaged in, and committed to, the school and, therefore, inclined to behave in accord with its expressed goals and values"

(Watson, 2003)

- **The Selected Topics:**

It seems that the learner found the topics dealt with in American civilisation classes not appropriate.

- **Insufficient Number of Hours:**

It has been noticed that American civilisation classes at the University of Oran occur in a fortnight's time.

- **Question 3:**

Replying to this question, teachers asserted that the teacher is seen as the first key to motivation. Through his/her role which includes: taking in charge the whole classroom,

imparting knowledge, and involving the students' in the learning process they can enhance the learners' performance, increase motivation, and heighten academic achievement.

- **Question 4:**

The answers to this question revealed that the teachers recognised that there is no collegiality between them which constitutes a real handicap to the promotion of the teaching of American civilisation.

- **Question 5:**

The teachers admitted that the teaching aids are tools which give guidelines to the course, yet the use of these instruments remains very limited when covering this module.

- **Question 6:**

Responding to this question, most of the teachers stressed the importance of the affective factors. This psychological side has been a main concern of Krashen and others (1982) who explained that:

“Research now suggests that attitudinal and motivational factors have more to do with the successful attainment of communication skills in a second language than metalinguistic awareness does”

(Krashen et al, 1982:70)

According to the teachers, being trained in educational psychology is a powerful quality which can help establish and nurture the learner's motivation, progress, and success.

- **Question 7:**

This question shows that teachers are really aware of the endless benefits of professional development. They described this strong procedure as the one that can:

- Increase and enrich the teachers’ knowledge of academic content and teaching skills.
- Address and stress the students’ wants and expectations.
- Engage the students in the learning process and develop their autonomy.
- Provide a basis for critical reflection on teaching practices.
- Establish good working relationships among colleagues.

- **Question 8:**

Teachers strongly believe that teaching as a profession is a science and an art, and to succeed in performing this honourable task, instructors need to be equipped with high intellectual and pedagogical standards and skilled psychologists.

3.5.6. Analysis of the Classroom Observation

Being a strong data collection instrument used to get a good grasp of the context under study, the researcher undertakes the process of observation to get an objective view of the lessons and to record different aspects of teaching practices. Richards and Farrell view observation as a strategy which:

“provides an opportunity for novice teachers to see what more experienced teachers do when they teach a lesson and how they do it...it can be a way of collecting information about teaching and classroom processes”

(ibid.: 86)

Throughout this research work and over one year, classroom observation has revealed the following details:

- The teaching is performed in traditional way based on lectures and note-taking.
- The teachers deal with reticent students.

- The learners seem to find the courses inappropriate and annoying.
- They are not involved in the learning process, and interaction between students is absent.
- When asked rarely about different elements related to the course, the learners do not provide answers that involve thought and reasoning.
- No use of authentic materials when covering the course.

3.6. Conclusion

The main objective of this chapter was to mention the main research procedures undertaken to better explore the current teaching of American civilisation. It has also discussed the obtained findings and their analysis.

Notes to Chapter Three

1- It is worthy to point-out that one single data source will not sufficiently answer all critical educational questions. Multiple measures are employed to help capture a more comprehensive picture of what occurs in the classrooms (i.e. triangulation data).

2- It is the impact people feel when they move into a culture different from the one to which they belong. It is a state characterised by the absence of familiar and comforting features of one's own culture and by the presence of offensive and hostile aspects of the new culture.

CHAPTER FOUR

Recommendations

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4.5. The Role of the Learner

4.6. The Role of the Institution

4.7. Conclusion

Notes to Chapter Four

Chapter Four

Recommendations

4.1. Introduction

The main concern of this section is to offer some recommendations through useful guidelines based on the obtained findings, and focusing mainly on the teachers' role and professional growth. These proposals comprise also the classroom climate, the relationship established between the learner and teacher as well as the learner's role and the educational institutional role.

4.2. The Learning Atmosphere

In the area of education, the term atmosphere means the physical and psychological context where the learning process occurs. It comprises the setting, the ambience and the circumstances under which learners grasp knowledge and are involved in the process. It is agreed that the nature of the conditions will have impacts on the learners' desires to acquire knowledge. Thus, this classroom environment needs to have some specific aspects to become an encouraging and motivating climate:

"The answer to 'making school interesting' is to create in every school... attractive environments where every youngster can feel accepted and may achieve success. On the most obvious level this means neat and attractive (not necessarily new) buildings, abundant teaching materials, and skillful and understanding teachers"

(Stiles, 1971:194)

According to Stiles, an inviting classroom environment is the one which offers acceptance, competent and tolerant teachers, as well as plentiful teaching materials. It is worthy to state that the psychological conditions are vital to implement a motivating atmosphere in the classroom.

A relaxed, free-anxiety educational setting will urge the learners to make efforts to raise their interests and make their motivation up. In supporting this idea, Ngeow (1998) writes:

“Understanding and creating language learning environments thus becomes a primary concern of the language teacher. Teachers can observe circumstances under which learners acquire language and can make adjustments toward creating optimal learning conditions”

(Ngeow, 1998:2)

In insisting on the importance of motivation as a contributing factor in increasing the learners' achievement, Littlewood adds:

“The development of communicative skills can only take place if learners have motivation and opportunity to express their own identity and to relate with the people around them. It therefore requires a learning atmosphere which gives them a sense of security and value as individuals. In turn, this atmosphere depends to a large extent on the existence of interpersonal relationships which do not create inhibition, but are supportive and accepting”

(Littlewood, 1999:93-94)

This reflection suggests that a stimulating classroom atmosphere can enhance learners' motivation, in almost the same way a discouraging environment can affect negatively the learners' achievement.

4.3. The Teacher-Learner Rapport

To promote academic and professional success for the learners and the teachers, the classroom should be an environment free of behaviours which can undermine the important missions of the educational institution. An atmosphere of trust, fairness, and mutual respect is crucial. Although both teachers and learners bear significant responsibility in creating and maintaining this atmosphere, teachers carry particular duty with respect to their evaluative roles relative to students work and to appropriate professional behaviours.

In addition to that, out of class communication makes student-teacher relationships more personal and contributes to student learning. The teacher being the one who manages the classroom, shows respect, gives positive feedback, is patient, inspires confidence, masters his/her subject, and establishes discipline, is seen as the main partner to have the capacity to make learners feel better or worse about the sort of relationship that exists between the students and their teachers.

All these cited qualities will help the teacher in creating a good relationship with his/her learners that can lead to a good classroom atmosphere. Thus, Scrivener (1998) claims that:

“Rapport is not a skill or a technique that you can mimic. It is not something you do to other people. It is you and your moment relationship with other human beings. Similarly ‘respect’ or ‘empathy’ or ‘authenticity’ is not clothes to put on as you walk into the classroom, not temporary characteristics that you take on for the duration of your lesson. You cannot role play ‘respect’ or any of the other qualities. On the contrary, they are rooted at the level of your genuine intentions”

(Scrivener, 1998:8)

Similarly, the role of affect is crucial in establishing a good teacher-learner relationship. Cognitive factors gained too much importance from leading educationalists who “have focused so intently on the cognitive and had limited themselves so completely to educating from the neck up” (Rogers, quoted in Arnold, 1999:5).

Taking into consideration the affective side in teaching is crucial for the success of the teaching/ learning process. This component plays a pivotal role in interpersonal communication and can offer assistance to learners who find difficulties to cope with their teachers, their classmates and the learning context. In the same line of thought, Moskowitz asserts:

“Affective education is effective education. It works on increasing skills in developing and maintaining good relationships, showing concern and support for others, and receiving these as well. It is special type of interaction in itself, consisting of sharing, caring, acceptance, and sensitivity. It facilitates understanding, genuineness, rapport and interdependence. Humanistic education is a way of relating that emphasises self-discovery, introspection, self-esteem, and getting in touch with the strengths and positive qualities of ourselves and others. It enables learning to care more for ourselves and others. In addition to all humanistic education is fun”

(Moskovitz, 1978:14)

This reflection shows that learners can show progress if they feel that they are within a relaxed atmosphere that is likely to motivate them and help them overcome anxiety and frustration.

In maintaining that the success of teaching/learning process is the outcome of teacher-learner partnership, Wright comments: *“...we can achieve nothing without the co-operation of the learners. The learners can achieve little without the co-operation of the teachers, too”* (Wright, 1997:32).

It is important to mention that all the factors cited formerly work in a collaborative way pushing the teaching/learning process towards the common aim of the teachers and learners which is success.

“A language planning in a multilingual context requires the decision-makers to proceed according to long-term intentions, not to conjectures. The latter have often led to reforms developing paradigms of convergence in their apprehension of the future and of tomorrow’s society in a world celebrating diversity”

(Miliani, 2000:16)

Decentralisation can also decrease the teachers’ motivation due to participation of non- specialists in the decision making and executive processes.

4.4. Main Suggestions

After pointing-out the main encountered issues that teachers and learners face in American civilisation classes, one tries to suggest some possible solutions. Recommendations include the chief agents of the educational process (the teacher, the learner, the institution). The prime emphasis will be put on the teacher’s role and specialised training being the principal agent of change in the instructional operation.

4.4.1. The Role of the Teacher: Professional Development

It is agreed that teachers have distinctive needs at different times throughout their careers, and the needs of their learners and the institutions in which they work also change over time. The pressure for teachers to bring up to date their knowledge in fields such as foreign language acquisition, teaching trends, technology, or evaluation is very strong, and it is the educational institution that provides a key source for further professional development.

Professional development often involves examining various dimensions of teacher’s practices, understanding different styles of teaching, and identifying learners’ perceptions of classroom activities. This professional growth is based on the assumptions that it is an

ongoing process rather than an occurrence that begins and ends with formal training or graduate education.

This process can be provided and assisted both at the institutional level and through teacher's own personal endeavours. Richards and Farrell (2005) believe that professional development is this educational philosophy which is:

“based on the belief that knowledge is actively constructed by learners and not passively received. Learning is seen as involving reorganisation and reconstruction and it is through these processes that knowledge is internalised. In teacher education, this has led to emphasis on teachers' individual and personal contributions to learning and to understanding of their classrooms, and it uses activities that focus on the development of self-awareness and personal interpretation”

(Richards and Farrell, 2005:6-7)

This statement makes known that professional development is a teacher learning process viewed as a personal construction that encourages teachers to investigate their own beliefs and thinking processes.

Furthermore, the General Teaching Council for England draws up a list of recommendations for ongoing professional development in the field of teaching, which focuses on: *“engaging the individual teacher in reflection and action on pedagogy, the quality of learning, setting targets and high expectations, equal opportunities, planning, assessment and monitoring, curriculum and subject knowledge, and classroom management”* (GTC, 2000).

These components upon which professional development is built help the teachers identify personal needs and set priorities for efficient growth.

Stressing the major role of professional development as a great way to grow professionally allowing the teachers to fulfil a number of functions both intellectually and

socially, the Association for Science Education (ASE) (2000) proposes a framework which categorises seven domains for development:

- Subject knowledge and understanding.
- Pedagogical content knowledge.
- Development of teaching and assessment skills.
- Understanding teaching and learning.
- The wider curriculum and other changes affecting teaching.
- Management skills: managing people.
- Management skills: managing yourself and your professional development.

According to ASE these seven areas that they named 'Professional Development Matrix' should be the focus of teachers to refine their instruction and to create a more inclusive environment that promotes students' learning.

Professional development area	Description of understanding to be developed in each area	Possible elements of an activity	Examples of appropriate evidence
1. Subject knowledge and understanding	<p><i>Having a sound knowledge of the subject area that you have to teach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of understanding of recent advancements and changes in your taught subject security of subject knowledge in areas to be taught 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> course/meetings attendance; library research; self-study packs; industrial placements or links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> written report on impact of 'new' subject knowledge; presentation at team or department meeting
2. Pedagogical content knowledge	<p><i>Translating one's own understanding of the subject into forms that will be understood by pupils of varying abilities and ages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> examination of the teaching of particular parts of the curriculum including translation of one's own subject knowledge into suitable classroom activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> classroom-based curriculum development or research; comparison of own approaches with other teachers or researchers; course attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> documentary evidence of classroom innovation or evaluation e.g. teaching materials; evaluations; pupil reactions; learning outcomes, etc.
3. Development of teaching and assessment skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of teaching skills which are felt to be underdeveloped or under-used e.g. use of ICT in assisting learning; use of particular teaching techniques; promotion of classroom discussion; individualised learning; strategies for differentiation and equal opportunities, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> course attendance and classroom implementation; departmental implementation; team teaching; evaluation of teaching and learning strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> documentary evidence of teaching strategies- e.g. evaluations; pupils' responses and learning outcomes; observation report by fellow teacher; demonstration to colleagues, etc.
4. understanding teaching and learning	<p><i>Being aware of the significance of the findings of recent years on the ways in which pupils learn best</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflection on the basis for the classroom practice of oneself and of others- why do you teach this way? e.g. an examination and comparison of learning theories; learning styles; theories of classroom management, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> observation of teaching and learning- examination of theoretical underpinning; library research; course attendance; departmental review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-review report; written report explaining the practice seen; written comparison of some current theories with own practice

5. The wider curriculum and other changes affecting learning	<i>Being able to place one's teaching in the context of national developments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of knowledge relating your context to wider teaching issues e.g. awareness of curriculum policy developments at national level; links with industries; regional and national initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> active membership of ASE and other professional bodies; industrial placement; activities within school cluster; liaison with feeder schools; liaison with FE/HE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> documentary record of activities which have been undertaken as developments in this area with a comment on the outcomes for the individual and for the department
6. Management skills: managing people	<i>Being able to manage others effectively</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of any changing responsibilities taking on a management role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflection on current role and responsibilities; participation in pupil extracurricular activities; taking the lead in departmental activities, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentary record of responsibilities and activities, with comments on the outcomes
7. Management skills: managing yourself and your professional development	<i>Being able to manage oneself effectively</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of skills such as time management; stress management; course administration; resource management; team management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> course attendance-implementation and reflection on outcomes; participation in activities requiring additional skills, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-review report; Documentary evidence of skills demonstrated

Figure 4.1: The ASE Professional Development Matrix

4.4.2. Suggested Types of Professional Development Procedures

Professional development encompasses a range of procedures comprising those which can be undertaken at the individual level (such as self-monitoring), those which are based on collaborative activities (such as teacher study groups) and others which involve the educational institutions (such as workshops).

a. Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring known also as self-observation is an effective strategy used to give teachers an evaluation about their current level of performance and skills based on collected data about their own teaching and classroom running. It provides an insight about one's own weaknesses and strengths and serves to promote self-determination, self-reliance, reflection and review.

a.1. Advantages of Self-Monitoring

The primary advantages of self-monitoring can help the teachers:

- Have a deeper understanding of their own teaching styles and ultimately, their effectiveness.
- Gain a better awareness of their own individual teaching styles through reflective practice, so that they can improve the practices and behaviours in the classroom.
- Enhance their teaching methods and refine student comprehension.

a.2. Strategies used in Self-Monitoring

Being described as a powerful professional procedure, self-monitoring can be undertaken through many ways including the following:

a.2.1. The Questionnaire

Questionnaires are helpful tools that serve a number of purposes. They provide an overview of how the teacher approaches his/her work and offers evidence of the teacher's resourcefulness, effectiveness, and inventiveness. They are also considered as a source of review and reflection.

Additionally, questionnaires can stimulate the teacher to engage in a self-assessment of various aspects of his/her own teaching with a focus on specific facets of the lesson, comprising elements related to the organisation of the lesson, the learning activities, the amount of time devoted to different skills, etc. To better document what occurred throughout the lesson, teachers are advised to design collaboratively questionnaires to track their teaching with purpose to share their results.

a.2.2. Audio-Recording

Audio-recording can provide a basis for reflection, because it gets control of the moment to moment processes of teaching, since many things which occur in a classroom cannot be recalled.

The tape recorder could be set up and turned off till the students become accustomed to its intrusion in the classroom, then it is activated and placed in a location where it can record the exchanges which take place during the lesson including critical incidents, and the interaction of the class.

To insist on the major role played by the audio-recording in providing opportunities for teachers to examine their practices and behaviours, Mc Kern (cited in Burns, 1999) cites a number of questions that can be investigated through the use of this device:

- What is the role of the teacher (e.g., expository, inquiry)?
- Are the students involved and interested?
- What do you wish to observe (e.g., aspects of behaviour, problems)?
- What are the positive features of the performance?
- Are the goals of the lesson clear?
- Do any distractions occur?

a.2.2.1. Listening to the Audio-Recording

Listening to the recording will foster a reflective approach allowing teachers to recognise their professional identities and obtain more useful information from this mentoring process.

a.2.3. Videotaping

Videotaping is seen as an efficient approach to self-monitoring. It is viewed as an account of practitioners at work. It is a way of gathering data to get feedback on one's teaching.

Richards and Farrell (2005) have summed up what should be considered when video-recording a lesson:

- Who will do the videotaping? There are several possibilities for videotaping the lesson. The teacher could ask a colleague or a student in the class to videotape it, technician or other member of the school staff might agree to do it, or a video camera could be set up and simply turned on.
- What should be included in the video? A decision will have to be made concerning what the focus of the video will be. It could be the lesson as a whole or a particular aspect of the lesson, such as teacher-student interaction, or student performance of a lesson activity. If someone is filming the lesson for the teacher that person will need to be properly briefed on what the teacher is looking for.

(ibid.:44-45)

It is crucial then before videoing the lesson to verify the availability of the person destined to perform this task, and to decide about the specific details of the lesson that should be recorded.

a.2.3.1. Reviewing the Video

When reviewing the video, teachers can better comprehend the positive and negative features of their performance. Besides, this procedure divulges many unexplored aspects in their teaching which will induce them to be more aware about their own practices and behaviours and hence change them.

Freeman (1998) proposes bearing in mind the following questions when reviewing a video-tape:

- What questions do you have about your teaching as you watch your students learning in this lesson?
- What puzzles you about what you see? What are you unsure of?
- What aspects of the students' learning do you want to better understand?
- Why do you think things are happening as they are on the tape? What speculation does this raise about students' learning and/or your teaching?
- What do you know about your teaching or their learning that you are interested in verifying?

(Freeman, 1998:56-57)

These above questions are very helpful for the teachers to develop self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and to determine areas for betterment.

It is worthy to note that through self-monitoring procedures, American civilisation teachers will develop the habit of keeping a reflective journal, as well as reviewing and analysing their entries very often. Therefore, they will be able to address their day to day needs and longer-term development.

b. Teacher Study Groups

It is a collaborative problem-solving instrument used by a community of teachers engaging in reflection. This strategy creates a culture of collaboration and unceasing learning strengthens relationships, develops trust and a sense of community among teachers which will lead to improved student learning outcomes.

Defining teacher study group, Richards and Farrell (2005:51) state that it involves “*a group of teachers meeting to discuss goals, concerns, problems, and experiences*”. They also maintain that through this strategy “*Teachers get to know their colleagues better and begin to function as a community of professionals rather than individuals working in isolation from each other*” (ibid.). So, this effective way offers opportunities for teachers to examine their teaching methods and to formulate ideas for classroom management.

b.1. Advantages of Teacher Study Groups

From the process of meeting together and discussing different issues related to teaching and learning, the teachers can obtain a great number of benefits such as:

- **Intensified motivation**

As a result of talking with colleagues, reflecting on different problems, listening carefully to what they say, and by offering suggestions, the teacher might become more motivated to develop ideas for follow-up application in one’s teaching.

- **Building a sense of community between teachers**

Teacher isolation is seen as one of the major impediments to enhanced instruction and student learning and collaborating with peers, because through discussing various teaching strategies it would be possible to establish a sense of a sharing attitude among teachers.

- **Increased awareness**

As a result of joining a group and identifying specific encountered problems, then offering propositions about how to change directions in one’s own teaching, teachers might

become more aware of the various issues brought in their profession and would be well-prepared to be involved in other professional development tasks. As James (1996) puts it: *“The person, using the group solidarity to support others and to be supported then becomes empowered to act productively elsewhere”* (James, 1996:94).

b.2. Strategies used for Teacher Study Groups

Many types of study groups might be useful in the language teaching context:

b.2.1. Reading Groups

Through this activity teachers can select articles and professional books to be read and analysed. They can later gather useful information then apply it in their classrooms to better serve their students' needs.

b.2.2. Topic-based Groups

In order to improve classroom practices, and to determine how content can be changed, a group of teachers can set up to discuss particular topics of interest. This will enable them to observe and analyse their findings and modify their instruction to better meet their learned expectations.

b.2.3. Organising Seminars

A seminar is an academic meeting which brings together different kinds of educators and experts from within the country and abroad to debate main concern and exchange information and ideas. This will provide an in-depth analysis of different subjects and update the knowledge of the participants.

b.2.4. Initiating Research Project

Planning research projects is a great opportunity for teachers to learn more about subjects of common interests with their peers. This research project could be undertaken in

their classrooms, through it they can gather useful data, analyse it and share their findings to develop effective solutions.

b.3. Considerations when Setting-up Teacher Study Groups

Careful considerations should be thought about when mapping out a teacher study group. The main elements comprise: group members, group size, group goals, and trouble shooting.

b.3.1. Group Members

The major step in forming a teacher study group is to select committed members to come together to talk about their work and to discuss issues that are important. Another factor to be taken into consideration is to determine the main goals prior to the formation of the group.

b.3.2. Group Size and Goals

Another factor to be taken into account is to decide on the number of the teachers who will participate in the study group. Kirk and Walter (1981) propose that "*the ideal number of members in a group be between five and eight*" because they argue that too many members may result in passive teachers who will not actively participate and this will prevent from achieving the group's major goals.

b.3.3. Troubleshooting

Establishing a teacher study group means interacting with colleagues having different views, goals and beliefs. These issues can be solved if the group members are committed to the success of this professional activity. To preclude these problems, Oliphant (2003) provides a number of ideas, some of which are outlined as follows:

- Don't spend too much time on complaints, particularly those of one person. Focus on "achievements and accomplishments" as well.
- Offer feedback that is supportive.
- Remember that the purpose of the group is not to provide therapy for personal problems for which professional assistance might be advisable.
- Talk in meeting should be formal discussion, not informal teachers' lounge chat.
- Focus on the practical: Try new ideas instead of just talking about them.
- Focus on offering support and encouragement to teach other in solving problems, rather than on complaining.

(Oliphant, 2003:205)

Forming teacher study group is a great opportunity which can enable American civilisation teachers to figure out answers to their questions. By interacting with their peers they can share problems, ideas, and find alternative solutions for the issues they have been struggling with.

c. Teaching Journals

A teaching journal is a written account of what actually happened during the lesson. This procedure can benefit teachers by writing focused-arguments, expressing their emotions, facilitating their critical thinking, and therefore promoting their reflection. Richards and Farrell (2005) define it as a record of: "*observations, reflections, and other thoughts about teaching, usually in the form of a notebook, book or electronic mode, which serves as a source of discussion, reflection, or evaluation*". They add that a journal may be used as:

"A record of incidents, problems, and insights that occurred during lessons; it may be an account of a class that the teacher would like to review or return to later, or it may be a source of information that can be shared with others"

(ibid.:68)

c.1. Main Advantages of a Teaching Journal

As another form used for teacher professional growth, keeping a teaching journal can provide plenty of benefits such as:

c.1.1. Getting feedback

- Teachers may use their journals as a guide to tailor some of their courses.
- Journals may offer the possibility to the practitioners to write down their lessons, goals and plans, then immediately after a class session, they can verify whether they reached those goals or not, afterwards they can decide on the alternatives they might try another time.
- They can give an account about the strengths and weaknesses of the course and any changes that would be constructive.

c.1.2. Self-evaluation

- A teaching journal is a useful aid to help teachers reflect on their own teaching and can assist them as they work to develop their own personal teaching styles.
- Implementing a teaching journal is a powerful way of performing self-evaluation allowing teachers to re-evaluate whether they are on track towards their stated objectives or they need to re-examine their end goals. This self-appraisal will generate self-confidence which in turn will lead to new aims and therefore more efforts.

Ho and Richards (1993), in a survey of thirty-two teachers who had implemented journals, conclude that 71 percent of the teachers found it useful, 25 percent found it fairly useful, and only 4 percent did not enjoy writing a journal.

Some of the teachers' reflections about journal writing are:

- Writing a journal forces you to reflect on certain issues and bring them out into the open.

- Journal writing gets you thinking about things that are unconsciously going on in the mind.
- It enables you to discover the importance of relating your own experience of learning to that of the pupils you teach.
- It enhances awareness about the way you teach and how students learn.
- It serves as a means of generating questions and hypotheses about teaching and the learning process.
- It is the most natural form of classroom research.
- It promotes the development of reflective teaching.

c.2. Strategies for Implementing a Teaching Journal

There are different ways used to carry-out a teaching journal, (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Ho and Richards, 1993) put forward the following recommendations:

- Decide on your audience: yourself, a peer, and/or an instruction.
- Decide on your focus: a lesson, a technique/method, a theory, a question posed.
- Make entries on a regular basis (after a lesson, daily, or once a week).
- Review what you have written regularly - every two or three weeks.

c.2.1. Electronic Journals

An electronic journal provides a forum of thoughts which helps broaden talks about beliefs, behaviours, encountered issues, learning outcomes, etc. One of the main benefits of this professional tool is that it can be sent to trusted colleagues and other experts. This sharing of information will allow teachers to discuss and examine the finer details and considerations involved in their work and propose possible remedies. Moreover, they may find out that they are practicing skills and other pedagogical practices without realising it.

c.2.2. Intrapersonal Journals

Keeping an intrapersonal teaching journal is to record teaching primary concerns on a daily basis. Through this procedure teachers will be able of documenting what they practice during their work and write down the steps they go through in their classrooms. By drawing up these steps, they will become more aware of their own experiences. Accordingly, Ron Klug explains that:

“A journal is also a tool for self-discovery, an aid to concentration, a mirror for the soul, a place to generate and capture ideas, a safety valve for the emotions, a training ground for the writer, and a good friend and confident”

(Ron Klug, 2002:1)

Additionally, when looking back over their journals from time to time, teachers will get insightful views about their own actions and behaviours, and therefore be better involved in resolving various issues.

c.2.3. Dialogical Journals

Another useful process in writing a teaching journal is called dialogical journal which involves an audience of other colleagues who will share the teacher’s personal educational experiences. This type of journals will offer comments from peers about past and current teaching practices. This form of collaboration can provide tentative solutions to help teachers perform differently should similar situation occur in the future.

It is paramount to stress that implementing a teaching journal for American civilisation teachers would be a practical professional way which will help them to record their individual thoughts and reactions to teaching. Sharing personal journals with other colleagues is a useful strategy for comparison, discussion and further reflection. Moreover, keeping a journal allows teachers to comment on various observations provided by trustworthy peers, to change their teaching directions, and to implement new applications in their classrooms.

d. Workshops

A workshop is an invaluable resource designed for teachers to address a range of instructional experiences and goals. This activity enables participants to explore their own practices, and helps them in gathering useful resources to refine their teaching and to satisfy their learners' needs. In this respect (Richards and Farrell, 2005) point out:

“A workshop is an intensive, short-term learning activity that is designed to provide an opportunity to acquire specific knowledge and skills. In a workshop, participants are expected to learn something that they can later apply in the classroom and to get hands on experience with the topic, such as developing procedures for classroom observation or conducting action research. Workshops can also provide opportunities for participants to examine their beliefs or perspectives on teaching and learning, and use this process to reflect on their own teaching practices. Workshops can address issues related to both institutional improvement and individual development and they are led by a person who is considered an expert and who has relevant experience in the workshop topic”

(ibid.:23)

Therefore, workshops are strongly recommended to assist teachers in educational initiatives and personal performance.

d.1. Advantages of Workshops

As a powerful activity for teacher's professional development, workshops serve a number of purposes including:

- **Workshops provide specific knowledge**

Workshops are planned for teachers interested in exploring their own practices. They are considered as a practical way which enhances active debate and enables participants to nurture their skills, augment their knowledge, and enrich their instruction in a supportive atmosphere.

- **Workshops can increase motivation**

Workshops provide a good opportunity to access face-to-face communication, through which a great amount of information is shared and exchanged. Active debates are enhanced and participants will be able to identify defects and weaknesses, develop alternatives from which suitable solutions can be selected, and consequently turn theory into practice. These hot discussions help in keeping teachers' motivation up.

- **Workshops can enhance innovation**

Planning workshops is a powerful procedure which will engage teachers in collaborative environments and activities that can add enhancements and creativity to lessons. Teachers will take a closer look at interactive presentations and discover how easy it is to design projects and therefore developing new innovative types of teaching styles and techniques.

- **Workshops are of limited duration**

Being a powerful format for providing teachers with new strategies, methods, and materials that can be criticised in their classrooms, workshops are highly recommended as a strong instrument for professional development especially for teachers who are overworked and under pressure because they are short-term.

- **Workshops reinforce collegiality**

By engaging in workshops teachers will create learning communities where objectives will be effectively achieved, better fulfilled, and a dynamic and personal relationships will be established among learners lasting sometimes beyond the workshop itself.

d.2. Procedures for Designing Workshops

Certain factors need to be taken into consideration when planning a workshop such as:

- **Select a suitable topic**

Because workshops depend on interactive discussions and group involvement, it is crucial to define clear goals and keep them at the centre of the debates before organising these professional meetings. The workshops should also address specific issues that members have relevant experience in or situations that they wish to modify or ameliorate so that all the participants will take profit.

- **Decide who will participate**

Organisers should be as specific as possible in determining the workshop's objectives, and in making a list of who needs to attend, however it is clever to leave always some openings for last-minute additions. A limited number of participants is worthy of note because if group size is too important, there is a tendency for some attendees to be silent, and more leaders will be required. It is imperative to think about specific details such as appropriate location, technology aids, provided facilities, and accommodation for participants coming from a long way away.

- **Choose a workshop leader**

Organising and conducting a successful workshop requires a leader who embodies a number of qualities. This facilitator should be a leading expert knowledgeable about the subject-matter and who knows how to figure out to bring enthusiasm into this event. This person should be able to offer a relaxed atmosphere where people feel comfortable about speaking up and interacting with each other in an unfamiliar group.

- **Design suitable activities**

Workshops are useful for everyone involved, that's why prior planning is fundamental. It is also vital to select the types of activities that will offer great opportunities to the participants to debate issues, share thoughts, and suggest possible solutions. Moreover,

organisers are advised to make sure that the activities are suitable for the size of the attendees and that the needed resources to run the sessions are available.

Watson, Kendzior, Dasho, Rutherford, and Solomon (1998:161-162) describe the following sorts of activities performed in workshops ranging from one day to five days on cooperative learning:

- **Unity-building activities:** Fun, nonthreatening, but purposeful activities designed to let participants get to know each other and share relevant ideas and experiences related to the workshop topic.
- **Direct instruction presentations:** Sessions providing an overview or instruction on key topics, ideas, theories, and techniques, often supplemented by written materials.
- **Partner work:** Pair-work, problem-solving and discussion activities involving interviewing, problem-solving, discussing readings.
- **Small-group discussions:** Focus groups of four to six members in which participants discuss information and suggestions from the workshop and develop strategies for application.
- **Role-play / practice sessions:** Role-play sessions in which participants apply and practice strategies and techniques presented during the workshop.
- **Co-planning activities:** Lesson-planning activities designed to develop skills in working with a partner.
- **Reflection time:** Sessions scheduled at the end of each day to reflect on what has been learned in pair or group discussion or through journal writing.
- **Plan a follow-up action:** An ideal way to verify if the workshop was a success is to have a follow-up plan. This might consist of designing a questionnaire to get the members' views on how well the event went. Workshops planners are strongly

recommended to get in touch with the participants and inform them about the actions and decisions that were reached after the workshop has ended.

It is critical to mention that opportunities offered by workshops (such as attending sessions, participating in constructive discussions, rotating roles, giving presentations, etc.) give American civilisation teachers tools and reference points for class reflection, and help them update their professional knowledge in various areas.

4.5. The Role of the Learner

It is paramount to mention that the main purpose of this study is to emphasise the teacher's role, yet this focus does not prevail over the learner's duty. Being convinced that the teacher is the prime catalyst for change in the educational process does not prevent the call to learner's autonomy. Vanijdee (2003) in explaining the meaning of autonomy writes that it is: *"a capacity- a construct of attitudes and abilities- which allows learners to take more responsibility for their own learning"* (Vanijdee, 2003:76). Therefore, students should see their learning process as a personal discovery.

At the University of Oran, English students and mainly when dealing with American civilisation classes should look for opportunities to have access to specific services that will help them satisfy their aspirations. Further, thanks to the availability of technological means these students have plenty of possibilities to enhance their learning such as exposure to knowledge about various topics and issues related to the American culture. They can also select their own elements outside the classroom to help build up their intellectual skills and develop an intercultural competence and critical thinking, then bring them back to the classroom. Moreover, it is important to stress that unlike Western countries where university costs continue to rise; Algeria has increased its level of investment in universities, hence the learners should be eager to play a major role in improving their own learning experience.

4.6. The Role of the Institution¹

It is argued that the educational institution should be highly committed to invest more resources in the ongoing training of teachers to promote a capacity to change. In the same vein, Gordon and Partington regard the role of the institution in providing the teacher with a continuing professional growth as:

“an essential rather than a desirable objective, an obligation rather than an option- both a professional expectation and duty and a responsibility that institutions have for their staff”

(Gordon and Partington, 1996)

From the gathered data, it seems that the section of English at the department of Anglo-Saxon languages at the University of Oran is a teaching institution where the environment does not support creativity and teacher education. Furthermore, one notices that the working relationship between the teachers is not satisfying and lacks collegiality. As a proposal to overcome these issues, one proposes that this establishment is urged to offer more finance and huge support to serve wider audiences of teachers.

4.7. Conclusion

In an increasingly globalised world, the profession of teaching is constantly changing and practitioners need to upgrade their skills to satisfy their learners' needs. The results of this work reveal that 2nd year EFL students claim that their American civilisation teachers have a serious lack of training and awareness of the area they cover, they see teacher-training as a priority.

Consequently, the cited strategies offer a rich pool of skills, knowledge and resources and are driven to understand and adapt to the changing needs of teachers, based on the demands of new research, emerging technologies, and faculty interest and experience.

Notes to Chapter Four

1-Being aware of the role of the educational institutions in providing great opportunities for their teachers to pursue professional development and in their effective contribution in the success of the learning/teaching process, the researcher has insisted on mentioning this establishment in the recommendations. Describing quality indicators in an institution, Richards (2005) attests: *“Language teaching institutions vary greatly in terms of how they view their educational mission. Some schools- hopefully the majority- are committed to providing quality educational services. They have a clearly articulated mission. They take seriously the development of a sound curriculum and set of programs, hire the best available teachers, and provide quality instruction and the kinds of support teachers need to achieve their best”* (Richards, 2005:201).

GENERAL CONCLUSION

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This work has been an attempt to explore the reality of teaching 'American civilisation' at the University of Oran. It has been explained that there are several shortcomings as far as the teaching methodology is concerned, which had led students to see little value in this subject and not to perceive the classroom atmosphere as supportive.

The first chapter pictured the worldwide role of the English language locally and on an international scale. It has also described the state of the art of ELT in Algerian educational and higher educational institutions.

Insights into the conceptualisation of language, culture, and civilisation as well as the nature of 'American civilisation' and its main movements were the main concern of the second chapter.

The heart of the matter of this study was discussed in the third chapter through data collection and the analysis of the findings.

Being convinced, that there is no ideal method of teaching, chapter four was a trial to propose some key strategies focusing on the teacher professional education and on his/her major role as being a catalyst for effective change in the teaching/learning process and the most contributing one in raising the learners' motivation and achievement.

It is important to note that this research has shown that the two concepts 'civilisation' and 'culture' are inseparable being both the product of the human being. It is agreed that language reflects culture and that throughout time it has proved to have an influence on it and on the whole life of people who belong to that culture. Including the teaching of American

civilisation in the degree of English at the University of Oran presents powerful opportunities to the students to learn English and to get an insightful view about cultures. Yet, at the University of Oran this teaching is witnessing serious pedagogical issues.

This research work has indicated that no relation is observed between the content of this subject and the cultural and linguistic objectives it is presumed to reach. One has concluded that in addition to the problems of syllabus content and teaching methodology American civilisation courses are mainly based on dealing with historical facts, retaining specific dates, and using history books as teaching resources. Authentic materials are absent and visual aids are utilised in a limited way.

Considered as a core part of a university education, American civilisation seeks to refine students' linguistic skills and to promote their global awareness about world cultures through participating in discussions, reflecting on different aspects of the American culture, reading books, and launching controversial debates. These intellectual activities will help them develop critical thinking and build up argumentative skills. Moreover, American civilisation classes are considered as forums which open up a whole new world where learners are supposed to experience the complexity of American culture without worries since it is the place where they can discover plenty of elements about the American community by observing it, and being involved in it.

When covering American civilisation courses, teachers should enhance their syllabus design continually by selecting topics which stress America's richness of racial and cultural diversity and help the learners deepen their knowledge and awareness about many cultures. However, the obtained results revealed that the current situation of American civilisation teaching fails to achieve the expected goals.

This work does not pretend to offer a magic remedy to the problems faced in the teaching of American civilisation but it is considered as a trial to investigate this teaching and to propose some tentative solutions and general guidelines to help teachers grow in proficiency as global instructors. This research has revealed that the teaching of American civilisation at the University of Oran was not successful in achieving its desired objectives, and therefore this issue remains a matter of debate.

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APPENDICES

5. Do you think that is important to learn about the culture(s) of English-speaking countries?

- Yes

- No

6. If No, state your reasons

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.....

.....

7. How important to success in your studies is American civilisation?

High

Moderate

Low

Section Three: Attitudes Towards English and English-Speaking Cultures

8. Do you like English? -Yes -No

9. Do you like the English-Speaking Cultures?

Very much

Indifferent

Not at all

10. What culture do you prefer to learn more about and why?

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11. What are your feelings about American civilisation as a module?

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12. What do you think of the topics dealt with in your American civilisation courses?

Interesting

Quite interesting

Not interesting

Section Four: Further Suggestions

13. Do you believe any changes should be made to the way American civilisation is taught?

- Yes

- No

14. If yes, please specify the modification which should be made?

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15. Do you have any other comments which might be helpful in improving the teaching of American civilisation at your University?

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Appendix 2: The Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Teacher

This questionnaire is part of a magister project that aims at gathering data concerning the current situation of the teaching of American civilisation within your institution, and what can be done to improve this teaching.

Confidentiality being highly respected, your accurate answers will be of a great help to the researcher in carrying out this work. Being highly interested in your experience, you are kindly requested to answer all the questions.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Section One: Teachers' Status and Work Experience

1. Status:
 - a. Permanent teacher
 - b. Part-time teacher
2. How long have you been teaching English? years.

Section Two: General Statements about the Content of the Syllabus and the Students Involvement in the Learning Process

3. Are culture-specific items (such as concepts, objects, etc.) well explained within the current syllabus?
 - Yes
 - No

4. Does the current syllabus contain difficult perspective on aspects of the American culture?

- Yes
- No

5. Are the students involved in the learning process?

- Yes
- No

6. If yes, to what extent?

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.....

Section Three: Familiarity with the Cultural Aspects included in the Syllabus

7. Are you familiar with the different cultural aspects mentioned in the syllabus?

- Yes
- No

8. Are there some cultural aspects that you have judged 'inappropriate'?

- Yes
- No

9. If yes, please specify

Section Four: Difficulties Experienced in American Civilisation Classes

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10. Do you encounter some difficulties when dealing with some cultural parts in your teaching?

- Yes
- No

11. If yes, can you cite them?

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.....

12. Do you think that you need specialised training to overcome these difficulties?

- Yes
- No

13. If yes, please explain

Section Five: The Need for Improving the Teaching of American Civilisation and Modifying the Content of the Current Syllabus

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14. Do you think that the teaching of American civilisation within your institution needs to be improved?

- Yes
- No

15. If yes, what do you suggest?

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16. If you think that there are inadequacies in the way the cultural component is provided, explain where do you think they lie?

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17. Does the current syllabus provide useful information about the American culture and guidance as how to present it to the learners?

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Appendix 3: An Interview with American Civilisation Teachers

Questions:

1. Throughout collecting data, I came across plenty of definitions of civilisation. What is your own definition of civilisation?
2. How do you evaluate students' motivation to learn American civilisation? Are they motivated and eager to know about this module? If no, whose defect is it?
3. To what extent is the teacher able to stimulate and sustain students' interest in the course of American civilisation?
4. Does it happen to you to work with colleagues to raise the quality of the teaching of American civilisation?
5. How effectively are the teaching aids (handouts, overhead projectors, blackboard, etc.) used in the lesson?
6. Do you think that there are other desirable teacher qualities which may enhance the current situation of teaching American civilisation and develop students' concern in learning this module?
7. Are you really aware of the value of professional development in improving the teaching competence?
8. Are there any other additional suggestions?

Appendix 4: A Sample of Interviewee's Answers

Answers:

1. Civilisation is the state that removes mankind from the state of "nature". Another definition can be added, it is a whole set of spiritual and material elements that enable societies to gain social security for their survival.
2. Generally, they want to learn how this powerful nation evolved through history, but the "Classical Presentation" of civilisation courses kills their motivation. Well, I think that the main responsible of this poor achievement is mainly the teacher.
3. Students' interest grows when they are involved in the learning process. Students should be asked to detect the historical facts that change the course of American history, for example, or to take part in the lecture by presenting themselves parts of it.
4. No, co-ordination does not exist between American civilisation teachers.
5. They give guidelines to the course.
6. The teacher should feel more concern and more responsible about his/her profession first, and his/her duties towards the students. This constant feeling should be his/her driving force.
7. Yes I am, as an experienced teacher, I am fully conscious that we will attain our expectations as teachers only when our teaching competencies are continuously re-evaluated.
8. An active and expert teacher would certainly help us learn new, innovative and fresh teaching competencies.

The Need for Professional Development in the Teaching of American Civilisation:

Case of 2nd Year EFL Students at the University of ORAN

ملخص:

يدور محور هذه الأطروحة حول فحص الوضعية الحالية لتدريس الحضارة الأمريكية لطلبة السنة الثانية إنجليزية بجامعة وهران في سياق تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. ساعدت المعطيات المحصّل عليها من خلال الاستبيانات والمقابلة و تدوين الملاحظات على إدراك الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلبة في هذا المقياس، كما بينت تحاليل هذه المعطيات أنّ نقص التكوين المستمر للأساتذة و الكفاءة اللازمة لتدريس هذه المادة يعدّ من الأسباب الأساسية وراء الصعوبات التي يصادفها هؤلاء الطلبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الحضارة الأمريكية- الثقافة الأمريكية- اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية- التكوين المستمر للأساتذة.

Résumé en Français:

Le présent travail a pour but d'explorer la situation actuelle de l'enseignement de la civilisation américaine aux étudiants de deuxième année anglais à l'Université d'Oran dans un contexte d'apprentissage de l'anglais en tant que langue étrangère. Les résultats obtenus suite à l'utilisation des outils de recherche tels que les questionnaires, une interview, ainsi que des notes d'observation ont donné lieu à une meilleure compréhension des difficultés éprouvées par ces apprenants. L'analyse de ces résultats a révélé que le manque de développement professionnel des enseignants et le besoin de formation spécialisée sont des raisons valables engendrant des difficultés dans cet apprentissage.

Mots- clés:

Civilisation américaine- culture américaine- l'anglais en tant que langue étrangère - développement professionnel des enseignants.

Summary in English:

The present work aims at exploring the current situation of teaching American civilisation to second year students at the University of Oran in an EFL context. The obtained results through the use of many research tools, such as questionnaires, an interview, and classroom observations have offered an insightful view of the main difficulties faced by these students. Moreover, the analysis of these findings has indicated that the lack of professional development and the teachers' need for specialised training to cover this area of teaching are considered as chief reasons behind these encountered difficulties.

Keywords:

American civilisation- American culture- English as a foreign language- professional development.

Presented by:

ZAGHAR El Alia Wafaâ



Supervised by:

Pr. BENMOUSSAT Smail