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Exploring EFL Students and Teachers' Perspectives on Promoting Students' Pragmatic Skill through Raising Intercultural Awareness

The Case of Second Year Master at 8 Mai 1945 Guelma University.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in
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Dedication

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Allah, the most merciful, for everything.

With heartfelt gratitude to the person I have become through this journey, I dedicate this dissertation to myself. Through every challenge faced and obstacle overcome, I have grown, learned, and persevered. This work symbolizes not just academic achievement, but the embodiment of my dedication, resilience, and belief in my abilities. Here is to celebrating the journey, embracing growth, and honouring the self that made it all possible.

To my dearest mother, whose absence left an incurable pain in my heart that no words can express. Though you are not here to see this moment, your memory inspires me in every achievement. Your spirit continues to encourage me; I always strive to make you proud. I love you my heart.

To my dearest father, your belief in my goals, even when I doubted myself, has been a source of strength and inspiration. Through your guidance and unconditional support, you have taught me resilience. This dissertation is dedicated to you my hero.

To my brother, my son, Ghoullem I love you. To my soul sister, and my source of encouragement Imane your belief in me has been a light during my darkest of times. To my cousins Doua, Ilhem, and Hiba. To my source of wisdom who have shown me the power of resilience Amel. To my Zehioua my emotional cutie who have been my partner during these five years. To my doctor Zineb, my friends Amani, Alaa, and Chaima. This dissertation is dedicated to you my guiding stars, with infinite gratitude and love.

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Fatine Hadil

Dedication

In the name of Allah we start,

because of Allah we walk rightly, and Allah we thank when we arrive.

I owe a lot to the person who taught me all, my first teacher and my compass in life, my light in the darkest of nights, my supporter and protector, the loving mother and the reason of my happiness, my "3mima."

To my loving parents,

My very first and forever best friend, my secret keeper, my walking companion, my encourager and the one who offered me wings, my dad.

My first-row fan, the one who eases my loneliness at all costs, my model and the one I am always proud to say "She's my mom"

To my sister, my favourite perfectionist, my laughter among my tears, the one who pushes me to win, and the one who always lifts me up, to you, Affef.

To my boon companion, my partner in crime, my matching puzzle, my dearest "Kawther"

To the sister I met once upon a time, the first-step friend and the one who got my back, to my "Amani"

To the exception, the treasure I got, the sweetest soul I have ever known, my smile-stimuli, to my "Alaa"

To the one who once said "You owe yourself to be great", and my TM classmates.

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To the souls of my beloved ones, "Sidi", "Tata" and "Walid". To their adorable daughters

To the voices in my head, to the times I was drained but persisted, to the one who strived and the only competitor of mine, "Me"

To you, anyone and everyone, who helped through a word, a prayer or a pat!

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Abstract

One of the major aims of Foreign Language Teaching is to achieve efficient communication that encompasses both linguistic and communicative aspects. However, English as a Foreign Language learners may suffer from communication breakdowns that are mainly due to pragmatics deficiency. Since this issue is becoming more and more recurrent among students, attempts were made to improve this skill. Therefore, cultural knowledge has been emphasized as a solution; i.e., raising students' intercultural awareness through making them acquainted with different cultural aspects. This latter would help in improving the use of language in context. Thereby, this study aims at exploring the role of intercultural awareness in enhancing students' pragmatic skill. The study focuses on scrutinizing whether the goals of incorporating culture in Foreign Language Teaching were met through teachers and students' perspectives. For this regard, and based on the hypothesis that students' intercultural awareness is raised, then their pragmatic skill would be promoted, the research employs a descriptive analytical method with two different data-gathering tools. A questionnaire was administered to 103 second-year master students at the department of English Language, University of 8 Mai 1945 Guelma, accompanied by teachers' interview conducted with 12 teachers. The aim was to investigate students and teachers' views towards the efficiency of including culture in English as a Foreign Language classrooms to form pragmatically competent students. The findings proved the truthfulness of the hypothesis which show that intercultural awareness promotes pragmatic skill and both students and teachers affirmed that. Even more, they insisted on the great impact of culture and intercultural awareness in the learning process as a whole and pragmatic competence specifically.

Keywords: Communication, pragmatic skill, intercultural awareness, culture, pragmatic competence, English as a Foreign Language learners, teachers.

List of Abbreviations

CP: Cooperative principle

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

FTA: Face Threatening Acts

NC: Native Culture

PT: Politeness Theory

TC: Target Culture

TL: Target Language

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General Introduction

In today's interconnected world and with the growing interest of individuals to learn foreign languages, EFL classrooms focus on the linguistic aspect of the language which results in linguistically competent students. However, mastering a language requires not only linguistic competence but other various competencies namely pragmatic competence that goes beyond the mastery of grammatical rules and vocabulary and involves how to navigate complex social interactions effectively. This latter is crucial for good communicative competence, which is the overall aim for learning a language. As teachers and researchers realized this, they devoted time and effort to improve pragmatic skill to achieve successful communication. Culture, on the other hand, is very important in EFL classrooms because language can never exist without its culture. It is the mechanism that oil the communicative process. In fact, lately it is seen as the fifth language learning skill. Thus, intercultural awareness is crucial for pragmatic skill development since it enables individuals to be active interlocutors; it fosters understanding which is essential for establishing meaningful communicative relationships. Therefore, teachers emphasize raising intercultural awareness that entails recognizing the target language's culture and the differences that may interfere in conversations.

1. Statement of the Problem

As educational landscape become increasingly emphasized, there is a growing interest towards forming great communicators. In addition to the linguistic competence, pragmatic competence also is very crucial when it comes to language learning because it enables EFL learners to act appropriately with different social contexts. This latter is composed of different aspects where culture is considered as one. Thus, the lack of pragmatic skill is affected by cultural knowledge. Students who ignore the importance of culture suffer from low pragmatic competence. In other terms, they lack the ability to use the language appropriately in different social and cultural contexts. This affects their performance and language use. Therefore, EFL

teachers aimed at raising intercultural awareness to promote pragmatic skill. This study then tries to investigate various perspectives of teachers and students over the implementation of culture in EFL classrooms to promote pragmatic competence.

2. Aims of the Study

Based on the fact that the department of Letters and English Language has already been teaching culture which may has an influence on learners' pragmatic skill, this research aims at investigating to what extent students and teachers are aware of the variables' relationship. Moreover, it endeavors to:

1. Investigate the relationship between intercultural awareness and the development of pragmatic skills among EFL students.

2. Identify effective teaching strategies that EFL teachers use to raise intercultural awareness and enhance students' pragmatic skills.

3. Explore the perceptions of EFL students on how intercultural awareness activities impact their pragmatic skills.

4. Examine the challenges EFL students face in acquiring pragmatic skills through intercultural awareness initiatives.

5. Assess the effectiveness of intercultural awareness programs in promoting pragmatic skills from the perspectives of both EFL students and teachers.

3. Research Questions

This study tackles the following questions:

1. How do EFL students perceive the impact of raising intercultural awareness on their pragmatic skills in communication?

2. What strategies do EFL teachers use to incorporate intercultural awareness into their teaching to enhance students' pragmatic skills?

3. What challenges do EFL students face in developing pragmatic skills through inter-cultural awareness activities?

4. How do EFL teachers evaluate the effectiveness of intercultural awareness activities in promoting students' pragmatic skills?

5. What are the differences in perspectives between EFL students and teachers regarding the role of intercultural awareness in pragmatic skill development?

6. How does exposure to different cultures in the classroom influence students' ability to use language appropriately in various social contexts?

4. Research Hypothesis

This research hypothesizes that:

-   If students' intercultural awareness is raised, their pragmatic skill would be promoted. (H1)

-   If students' intercultural awareness is raised, their pragmatic skill would not be promoted. (H0)

5. Research Methodology and Design

5.1. Research Method and Data Gathering Tools

This research is conducted through using the descriptive analytical method to test the hypothesis. Data is collected through a semi-structured interview with teachers, as well as a semi-structured questionnaire is administered to students to quantify their attitudes and perceptions. Thematic analysis is used to identify recurring themes and patterns in the qualitative data, while statistical analysis is employed to analyze quantitative findings.

5.2. Population and the Sample of the Study

A sample of 103 out of 140 of second year master students at the department of Letters and English Language at the University of 08 Mai 1945 Guelma, and 12 teachers of master degree at the same department were randomly chosen. The main reason being addressing this

sample is that they are directly exposed to modules related to culture. Furthermore, they have higher level of language proficiency and academic maturity compared to undergraduate students which allows for more in-depth discussions and insights into the topic. On the other hand, the involvement of teachers enabled to obtain reliable perceptions from experienced participants in this area.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of a theoretical and practical part. The first part broadly discusses the two variables in two chapters. The first chapter tackles pragmatics, an inclusive conceptualization will be given for making readers fully aware about pragmatics. The second chapter will equally lay the ground for culture and intercultural awareness and its contribution in language learning to give insights about the concept for clear vision of it.

The second part includes the third chapter that constitutes the practical part of the dissertation where the questionnaire and the interview are reported, analyzed and discussed. Finally, it is culminated by providing recommendations and pedagogical implications that may guide future researchers.

Chapter One: Pragmatic Skill

Introduction

The field of foreign language learning is evolving and language learners are taking advantage from the rapid development in the field of education to meet their first goal and achieve communicative competence along with linguistic competence. Hence, they always work to meet their desirable goal that is to communicate effectively. Teachers on the other side, try to help them for using language to communicate appropriately in different contexts. For that, pragmatic scale was emphasised as a crucial and core component of communicative competence. Therefore, this chapter is devoted to conceptualising and defining words related to communication and pragmatics and giving a clear explanation of some types and reasons for students' pragmatic failure.

1.1. Definition of Communication

The notion of communication is relatively wide and concerns various fields of study. Its first meaning in social sciences is "the communication of information in society" (Shakirova et al., 2018, p. 469). The second and third meaning is concerned with biology and technical sciences. The biological meaning is linked with the study that presupposes biological interaction, and the technical one implies "passageways, means, and connections and various technical systems" (Shakirova et al., 2018, p. 469).

Using the term communication in foreign language learning denotes a specific form of participants' interaction. It is the transmission and processing of information between interlocutors; his symmetrical phenomenon is the core of language teaching. Communication is an act or process of sending an encoded message that will be decoded and grasped by the receiver. It is a two directional operation that involves interlocutors. Etymologically, it comes from the Latin word "communicates" which means sharing and belonging together. It is the exchange and the flow of information and ideas from a person to another (Rohana, 2021, p. 02).

It is a routine activity in human daily life but specifically it is a complex process that encompasses various aspects and influenced by various factors.

Effective communication entails confident participants involved in the act. The sender is supposed to encode and convey the message which is the actual information delivered through the channel and finally reaches the receiver. Delivering the message can be either verbally using written or oral words or non-verbally using gestures and sign language. Communication can be direct or indirect. Direct communication is intentional while indirect communication includes expressions, physical behaviours and speech patterns (Salamondra, 2021, p. 22). Additionally, the purpose of communication is to provide knowledge and information to others to influence their thinking. Hence, it is important to master such crucial aspects to function effectively and be effective interlocutor. Therefore, communication minimizes the potential of any unkind feeling there during the process of learning a foreign language. Communication involves various skills including listening, speaking, reading, writing, interpreting and activating some cognitive skills including critical thinking (Samovar et al., 2017).

Communication can fail, yet participants should opt for achieving communication's common goal. Since they are not free from their own subjective goals, these subjective goals should align with the speech interaction common goal (Shakirova et al., 2018, p. 472). When the speaker focuses on his own subjective goals, s/he may neglect listener's importance as an active participant; this may lead to communication breakdown. It is claimed that "the lack of understanding can be a result of linguistic or extra linguistic factors" (Bazanella and Daniane, n.d., as cited in Shakirova, 2018, p. 472). The factors that influence communication can be either a weakness in the language itself or other non-linguistic factors. It is agreed that the levels of language layered into this phenomenon are phonetic, lexical, semantic, and pragmatic. The

pragmatic level is pertinent to the actual research. Lack of pragmatic skill can directly lead to prominent weakness in communication competence.

1.2. Types of Communication

Through Elaggoune's explanation of communication as "[something that] takes place whenever someone ascribes meaning to another person's words or actions" (2015, p. 2), and as Venkateswaran (2023, p. 12) discussed in his article, it is denoted that communication can be divided into four main types:

1.2.1. Verbal Communication

Although verbal communication is used interchangeably to refer to oral communication, but given the fact that the term verbal is derived from the Latin adjective "verbalis" that means "belonging to a word, consisting of words", written communication is also included in here as it contains written words. It can be formal, such as delivering a speech, or informal, like having a casual conversation with a friend. This type makes use of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

a. Oral communication

It is the process of interacting with people through orally produced words, along with unspoken words of sign language, to deliver a message. Aiming for an effective oral communication, participants should pay attention to their listening skills, interpretation and use of accurate words.

b. Written communication

As it is included in verbal communication, this type is also based on written words to communicate. It is a bit more complex than oral communication. Therefore, it requires more focus on grammar, clarity and conciseness to be more effective. This type of verbal communication is more often used in formal situations rather than oral communication.

Verbal communication is based on the four skills of language, sometimes even listening is considered as the fifth type of communication, but it cannot be considered complete without the nonverbal communication.

1.2.2. Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is the type of communication that uses everything that gives meaning except words; what is meant by everything here are gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, paralanguage, etc. (Coleman et al., 2021). In other terms, it is the act of producing meaning through the use of wordless messages. In an interview with Moyers (1989), Drucker emphasizes that "The most important thing is to hear what is not being said" (p. 408), which entails that nonverbal communication is a very critical component in communication. In other terms, most of the meaning lays in nonverbal cues that differ according to different cultures and contexts and that necessitates the individual to master it to have an effective communication.

The anthropologist Albert Mehrabian (1971) added even more power to nonverbal communication as the study he conducted, looking for the most impactful component in communication, revealed that the total impact of a message is about only 7% verbal (words), 38% vocal (tone. ...), and 55% nonverbal (facial expression, posture, …).

Figure 1

Mehrabian's 7-38-55 Communication Model
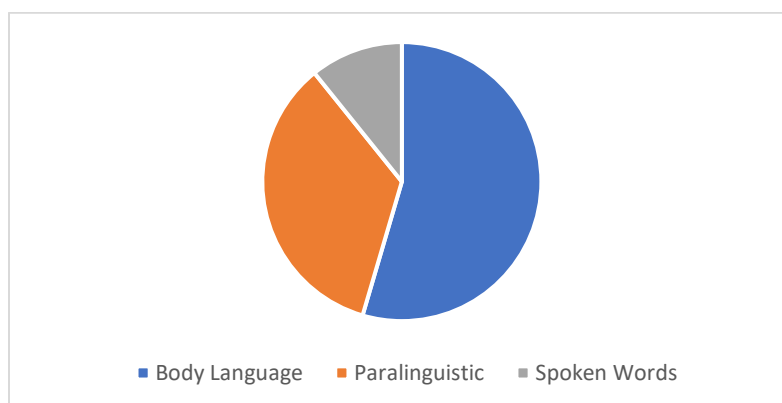
(Adapted from Mulder, 2012, p. 2)

1.2.3. Visual Communication

Using images, videos, graphs and charts is also another type of communication that people should wisely use in order to achieve understanding. It has to be clear, simple and it strengthens the information and make it more memorable.

1.3. Barriers to Communication

People need to communicate; it is one of their basic needs. It is needed for personal and even professional prerequisites. Communication is the act of sharing information, thoughts, feelings, or ideas between people or groups using different methods like speaking, writing, gestures, or electronic tools (Fatimayin, 2018). It involves both sending and receiving messages; it is crucial for human interaction and the exchange of knowledge and comprehension. Successful communication demands clear expression, understanding, and sometimes negotiation to ensure the intended message is accurately communicated and comprehended by those involved.

Communication is the lifeblood of human interaction, serving as the keystone for successful relationships, endeavours and societies (Michelman, 2009). It enables individuals to convey thoughts, share ideas, and collaborate effectively, fostering understanding and unity. In personal relationships, clear communication builds trust, resolves conflicts, and strengthens bonds. In professional settings, it facilitates teamwork, innovation, and productivity. Moreover, communication transcends cultural and linguistic barriers, promoting empathy, diversity, and mutual respect. Without effective communication, misunderstandings arise, relationships falter, and progress stagnates (Tomescu-Dumitrescu, 2020). Thus, its significance lies in its ability to connect people, bridge differences, and propel collective achievements in every sphere of life. Hence the process of communication faces many barriers. These barriers result from various factors whether internal or external. Thus, overcoming them leads to effective communication.

1.3.1. Definition of the Barrier to Communication

According to Kamath (n.d., para. 2), "A barrier is any issue or impediment that arises during the communication process and prevents or hinders the communication process". Barriers exist in the communication process. Every time people converse, we encode and interpret, we pass communications through a variety of ways. Communication breakdowns can occur at any level, at any time, or at any stage of the process. Occasionally, the sender might not always use words that the recipient will comprehend. Proper decoding by the receiver might not be possible. The surrounding area may be very noisy, which could be upsetting to us. Thus, the communication process can be hindered by obstacles. Barriers frequently develop in the thoughts of the sender and the recipient. The recipients do not receive the intended messages (Kapur, 2018).

1.3.2. Types of Barriers

Many barriers may be encountered while communicating. These barriers can create obstacles in the communication process. According to Kamath (n.d., para. 4), these barriers are classified into the following types:

a. Physical Barriers

Various barriers can impede effective communication in our surroundings and environment. Noise pollution, stemming from sources like traffic or industrial machinery, disrupts communication channels (Caldwell, 2019). Physical distances between individuals, compounded by differences in time zones, pose challenges in coordinating communication efforts. Defects in communication systems, such as malfunctioning telephones or internet networks, hinder the smooth exchange of information. Additionally, selecting the wrong communication medium, like using emails for urgent matters, can lead to delays. Extreme temperatures and humidity further complicate communication processes. Moreover, human factors like speech impediments, hearing impairments, and poor handwriting contribute to

misunderstandings in message delivery. Identifying and addressing these barriers are vital for ensuring effective communication.

b. Language Barriers

Language barriers present significant challenges in communication due to differences in languages, word meanings, or pronunciation. Linguistic and semantic disparities can lead to confusion among people. For instance, individuals who do not share a common language struggle to communicate effectively, resulting in difficulty and frustration. Moreover, the multiplicity of words and their varying meanings can create ambiguity and misinterpretation. Similarly, words with similar pronunciation but different meanings, known as homophones, pose challenges in comprehension. Likewise, the use of jargon or technical terminology by professionals can further complicate communication for those unfamiliar with such language. Lastly, bypassed instructions or shortcuts in conveying messages can lead to misunderstandings, as seen in instances where literal interpretations clash with intended meanings. Addressing these language barriers requires awareness, clarity, and efforts to bridge linguistic gaps to facilitate effective communication (Kamath, n.d.).

c. Psychological Barriers:

Psychological barriers, rooted in the complexities of the human mind, pose significant challenges to effective communication (Kumbakonam, n. d.). Despite their pervasive nature, individuals often fail to recognize or acknowledge these barriers, complicating interpersonal interactions. Factors such as ego, prejudice, and emotional disorder contribute to the creation of psychological barriers, hindering genuine understanding and connection. Ego-driven attitudes and biased opinions can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings, while emotional disturbances can distort communication channels. Besides, self-image issues and intentional message filtering further exacerbate communication challenges. Closed-mindedness, status differentials, and skewed perceptions also impede effective communication, making it difficult

to convey and receive messages accurately (Kumbakonam, n. d.). Poor retention, lack of interest, and daydreaming further disrupt communication processes, hindering the transmission of information. Overcoming these psychological barriers requires self-awareness, empathy, and a willingness to address personal biases and shortcomings in communication.

   d. **Socio-Cultural Barriers:**

Cultural differences encompass a broad spectrum of practices, values, and principles that shape individuals' way of life. These disparities often create barriers to effective communication, especially in a globalized world where people from diverse backgrounds interact regularly. Variances in language, religious beliefs, dress codes, and food habits can lead to confusion and misunderstanding among individuals (Kim & Williams, 2021). The concept of time, punctuality, and social hierarchies also vary across cultures, further complicating interactions (Zhao, 2021). Etiquettes, mannerisms, dining norms, and non-verbal cues differ from one culture to another, adding layers of complexity to communication. Also, cultural differences in the perception of personal space and value systems contribute to communication challenges. Recognizing and understanding these socio-cultural barriers is crucial for fostering mutual respect, empathy, and effective communication across diverse cultural contexts.

1.4. Communicative Competence

In Chomsky's introduction of language, he clearly made a distinction between the concepts of competence and performance. On one hand, he defined competence as the individual's knowledge and ability to use the language, making more emphasis on the grammatical knowledge. On the other hand, he termed performance as the real application of the language in real life situations of where, when and how and with whom (Chomsky, 1965, as cited in Reishaan & Taha, 2008, p.36).

However, later linguists opposed Chomsky's high focus on the linguistic competence, asserting that is not the only competence that is required in a learner that makes him learn and

use the language perfectly. They claimed that it is crucial for a language user to possess another kind of competence, referring to communicative competence, to enable him to produce appropriate language in accordance with the various social contexts and participants of communication, mainly.

Hymes (1972), as a leader of this opposition, defined communicative competence as a standing-alone concept linked to the ability of using appropriate grammatical utterances suitable within different settings considering any other affective factor. In this way, he did not only oppose Chomsky in the point that he limited language learning to only linguistic competence but also believed that, in addition to it, learners should focus on the social aspect of the language. For that, Hymes presented the framework of communicative competence as follows:

(1) Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible.

(2) Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible.

(3) Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate.

(4) Whether (and to what degree) something is done.

(Hymes, 1972, as cited in Xin, 2007, p. 41)

Subsequently, the framework Hymes laid, stands upon the four points mentioned above. It highlights, at first sight, the linguistic side and correctness of grammatical structures, secondly, the psycholinguistic feasibility and capacity, thirdly, the appropriateness in relation to the context and situation, and fourthly, the performance of what is said as it can be actually done.

After communicative competence was introduced, Canale and Swain (1980) developed another model discussing this competence providing four components that are: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence and lastly discourse competence that was added later in 1983. As it appears in both models, despite grammar and structure,

Canale and Swain put more focus on the sociolinguistic aspect due to its strong effect in language learning where they meet with Hymes in the third point of appropriateness linked to the social and cultural context. In addition to the verbal and nonverbal repair strategies that compensates for any breakdowns in communication, they finally shed light on discourse competence dealing with mainly textual rules that are strongly related with communicative goal (1983, p. 96).

Some other scholars view communicative competence divided differently, namely Van Ek who provided six elements when discussing it. He kept on the linguistic, discourse, and strategic competences and made further elaboration untying socio-cultural competence from the sociolinguistic one and adding one more competence that is social competence. (Van Ek, 1986). This may be interpreted as the raising necessity of emphasizing cultural effect in language learning.

In 1990, Bachman in his turn defined communicative competence as the ability to use the owned knowledge appropriately in any given context, and for clearer view, he referred to it as communicative language ability. Furthermore, he presented two components for the language ability that are organizational competence and pragmatic competence. The latter includes illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence (Yoshida, 2003).

In a nutshell, all later linguists approved Hymes' view that acquiring communicative competence means being knowledgeable about the different aspects related to language. In addition to possessing the ability to act adequately within different contexts to reach a correct, appropriate and effective communication. In other terms, Hymes' emphasis on communicative competence and the advancements by later researchers went beyond Bachman's contribution, which made pragmatic competence another facet to communicative competence. This is a significant point in the field of language teaching since it leads to a more successful learning environment.

1.5. History and Definition of Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a recent core branch of linguistics. Yet, its development and prosperity have extended nearly over a century. It originally derives from a special branch of philosophy of language (Arif, 2016, p. 26). Scholars have been studying pragmatic issues since the days of ancient Greece, Rome, and Pre-Qin China. According to Aristotle's *De Interpretation* in the Organon, the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BC) investigated pragmatic issues in the study of philosophy, logic, and rhetoric. The study of language use by Pre-Qin scholars in ancient China revealed a strong pragmatic tendency in Chinese philosophy that dates back to this time. These pragmatic ideas included the rich concepts found in the theories of the Confucian school, which included "Rectification of Names," the Taoist school, which included "Nameless Thoughts," the Naming school, which included "controlling name," and other renowned scholars.

However, the name 'pragmatics' as a discipline did not emerge until the 1930s (Arif, 2016, p. 26). This term's emergence is not accidental; rather, it is the outcome of language philosophy's historical shift, or the 19th century's 'linguistic turn.' The study of language shifted its focus from the psychology of ideas and thoughts to the language of sentences and meanings.

 Over the course of over a century, pragmatics has evolved, grown, and become successful. It is an almost perfect discipline with its systems of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology. A lot of scholars claim that John L. Austin's 1962 book *How To Do Things With Words* is where pragmatics originated. Speech act theory has been consistently enhanced and enlarged by Herbert Paul Grice (1913-1988), John R. Searle (1932), Stephen C. Levinson (1947), Geoffrey Leech (1936–2014), Avram Noam Chomsky (1928), and Others. It is commonly acknowledged that the name "pragmatics" has its roots in the three dimensions of semiosis -syntactic, semantics, and pragmatics- that Morris outlined in his essay "Foundations of the theory of signs" (1938).

Subject matter, purpose, and boundaries of pragmatic study need to be reviewed in light of linguistic theory in order to understand why 'pragmatics' is classified as a subfield of linguistics. Notably, Peirce has long noted that the word pragmatics comes from the Greek word "pragmatikós" which denotes a distinct and unambiguous relationship between human objectives. The integration of pragmatics into the study of linguistics is predicated on the concepts of the linguistic framework, which are derived from Saussure's structuralism-based dualism of signs, or the theory of the link between signifier and signified. Language in linguistics has its own laws, and there is essentially no human reasoning involved in the link between signifier and signified (Niu, 2023, p. 56).

Pragmatics refers to the study of how context influences the interpretation of language and the practical use of language in communication (Slotta, 2020). In the context of an investigation, pragmatic language involves understanding the subtle nuances, implications, and intentions behind the words used, as well as the effectiveness of language in achieving specific goals within the investigative process. It is about grasping the ins and outs of language use to extract relevant information, discern truth, and navigate interactions effectively.

The study of pragmatics examines how language users link sentences to the proper context for each phrase. Another definition of pragmatics is the parameters that led to matching whether or not language is used in communication; elements of language usage or non-linguistic context that contribute to the meaning of the statement (kridalaksana, 1993, as cited in Islam Riau, n.d., p. 1). Thus, the additional definition of pragmatics as the parameters determining whether language is effectively used in communication refers to the elements of language usage and non-linguistic context that influence the meaning of a statement. These parameters include factors like context, social cues, and the relationship between the speaker and listener, shaping how language is interpreted and understood in communication.

Pragmatics also can be defined as "it is a branch of linguistics that discussed what including the structure of the language as a means of communication between speakers and listeners, and as reference language signs on things extra-lingual spoken" (Verhaar, 1996, as cited in Islam Riau, n.d.). It examines how language is used in context to convey meaning beyond the literal interpretation of words. It considers factors like speaker intention, listener inference, and the social context in which language is used to understand the full scope of communication. Pragmatics is also regarded as:

> The study of the meaning conveyed by the speaker (writer) and interpreted by the listener (reader). Yule lays out pragmatics with four definitions: (1) pragmatic is a science that examines the meaning of speakers; (2) that examines pragmatic meaning according to context; (3) i.e., pragmatic about how what delivered it is more much than spoken; (4) that is pragmatic is a field that examines the form of expression according to the relationship of distance. (Yule 2006, as cited in Islam Riau, n.d., p. 4)

To conclude, pragmatics is the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of language in context. It focuses on how language is used in real-life situations to convey meaning beyond the literal interpretation of words and sentences. It explores how context, social norms, cultural conventions, and speaker intentions influence the interpretation and understanding of language.

1.6. Definition of Pragmatic Skill.

Pragmatic skill is a term usually used interchangeably to mean pragmatic competence. It is among the concepts that came to exist after the development of communicative competence in 1972 by Dell Hymes (Hull, 2016). As it is observable, it is composed of "pragmatic" which means it deals with the hidden or unseen meaning that certainly needs to be understood, and "skill" or "competence" which is the individual's ability, here, to infer that hidden meaning. Simply, it refers to one's mastery of pragmatic rules and knowledge that enables him/her to

deduce the required meaning. Basturkmen and Nguyen (2017) declared that "The term pragmatic competence is used in this field to refer to second or foreign language learners' ability to produce contextually appropriate communicative acts or to comprehend them" (p. 1). That is to say, it helps the individual to make advantage of his/her pragmatic knowledge in order to use the language appropriately to reach the communicative aim.

Pragmatic skill, then, is the basic stone that makes communication flow steady as it helps its holders to perform skillfully and appropriately an utterance and, at the same time, to interpret correctly and acceptably the illocutionary meaning. Thomas (1983),straightforwardly, defines it as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context" (p. 96). One of best examples of where pragmatic competence can be observed is in a classroom setting where two classmates are about to start writing the lecture, one of them suddenly says: "I forgot my pen', the other immediately answers: "here's a pen you can use". The situation perfectly represents a scene where pragmatic competence is successfully achieved and the second person interprets his classmate's illocutionary meaning (Hull, 2016).

Additionally, pragmatic skill includes two parts. The first one is the pragma-linguistic competence that is concerned with mastering grammar rules and the correct use of utterances and vocabulary to produce a comprehensible and accurate language. The second one is the socio-pragmatic competence that makes use of the socio-cultural knowledge and follows social rules to be appropriate in communication (Xin, 2007).

By the end, acquiring pragmatic competence allows the individual to be correct and appropriate simultaneously to achieve successful communication. Also, one of the indications that an individual is pragmatically competent is when s/he manages to behave adequately in communication using his/her grammatical, social and cultural knowledge to decode the

intended meaning, and any failure in doing so, will eventually mean s/he is pragmatically incompetent.

1.7. Pragmatic Failure

Pragmatic failure is defined as "The inability to understand what is meant by what is said". That is to say, it refers to misunderstandings in communication, especially in intercultural contexts, where the intended meaning of words is not grasped by the listener due to linguistic, cultural differences, the inability to interpret the message, or the failure to grasp what is said (Sheng, 2016, p. 34). Pragmatic failure occurs when there is a miscommunication between speakers as a result of issues with language use, particularly when the speakers are speaking a foreign language. As Thomas stated "it is the failure to understand an utterance" (Sheng, 2016).

The concept "pragmatic failure" applies to misunderstandings between people from the same speech community. Hence, a miscommunication may occur within members of the speech community. This phenomenon can occur at the level of verbal as well as nonverbal level of communication. It also involves "the breakdown of communicative effectiveness due to misalignment between speaker intentions and listener interpretations" (Barron, 2003, p. 215). In other terms, communication fails because the meaning of the speaker is lost.

Therefore, pragmatic failure is the breakdown in communicative effectiveness resulting from a mismatch between speaker' intentions and listener' interpretations (Davletnazarova, 2021). Often it is due to a lack of awareness or inappropriate use of pragmatic aspects of language, including context, social conventions, and cultural norms. Pragmatic failure can manifest in various forms, such as misinterpretation of speech acts, inappropriate use of politeness strategies, or failure to understand implied meanings, leading to misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication (Thomas, 1983; Barron, 2003b).

1.7.1. Types of Pragmatic Failure

When an individual struggles to understand the message or fails to transfer his own message, he is in front of two occurring problems that are pragma-linguistic failure and socio-pragmatic failure.

1.7.1.1. Pragma-linguistic Failure

Thomas (1983) stated that pragma-linguistic failure happens when "The pragmatic force mapped by a speaker onto a given utterance is systematically different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language" (as cited in Hafsi, 2019, p. 14). She affirms that the problem happens when the intended meaning is lost because the utterance is unfamiliar to the one a native speaker would actually use to convey the same meaning. Also, when L2 learner fails to interpret the correct force given to that utterance, she/he will be unable to decode the message. By consequence, she/he faces pragma-linguistic failure (As cited in Darmayenti, 2010). Thomas (1983, p. 101) provided an example of when student failed to identify the speech act by responding, 'No I wouldn't', to the question, "X, would you like to read?". The learners failed to recognize that the speech act was a request and not a question.

One more reason that results in pragma-linguistic failure is when speakers rely on the norms of their first language and transfer them in intercultural communication in a foreign language where the norms are not the same. (Messikh, 2023, p. 345). The speaker here uses a word-for-word translation although those items might be unfitting in that context. Moreover, sentence construction of L2 generally differs from that of L1 which, in case translated directly, causes confusion and misunderstanding.

1.7.2.2. Sociolinguistic Failure

It refers to when the individual lacks knowledge of social and cultural conditions that guide the linguistic behaviour. He fails to form linguistically appropriate utterances as well as to interpret any of them based on the social context and rules. It occurs as a result of ignorance

of the social norms and cultural differences (as cited in Darmayenti, 2010). The learner in this case has a little knowledge that prohibits him/her from the proper use of language.

Furthermore, Thomas (1983) declared that this kind of pragmatic failure is more problematic as it cannot be easily detected and therefore hard to be corrected. In other terms, if one feels that something is wrong or missing and the communication is not successful, he cannot figure out where the obstacle lays and, by necessity, he cannot overcome that. Even if he can discover the problem it is challenging as it deals with something deep such as the person's beliefs and norms which has their roots well planted and socially constructed. Main reason that causes socio-pragmatic failure are politeness conventions. According to Thomas (1983), reasons are:

a) The size of imposition: for example, what a person considers a free good (i.e., requesting someone to grab something') differs depending on the relationship between the speaker and hearer and the situation. The relationships differ from one culture to another and the difference, by necessity, requires learners to pay attention within the target language context.

b) To make reference in the L2 to something taboo in that culture, although this topic can be openly discussed in the L1. In teaching new culture, teachers face topics that are normally and even welcomed to discuss in the target culture but that are considered taboos for students

c) Power and social distance assessments vary from culture to another. This difference is apparent observing the kind of relationship between an employer and employees or teacher and students etc., and any difference or interference of one cultural treatment on the other is violence to it resulting in socio-pragmatic failure (as cited in Stukan, 2018, pp. 28-29)

1.7.2. Causes of Pragmatic Failure

1.7.2.1 Pragmatic Transfer

Pragmatic transfer, as elucidated by Wannaruk (2008), is a significant factor contributing to the inappropriate utilization of a second or foreign language during

communication. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), this phenomenon entails the adoption of first language strategies for performing speech acts into a second or foreign language, which can manifest in inappropriate forms, words, politeness, and indirectness. Pragmatic transfer can yield either positive outcomes, aiding second or foreign language learners in their target language communication, or negative consequences, resulting in misunderstandings and pragmatic failure.

Kasper (1992) further categorized pragmatic transfer into two types: pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic. Pragma linguistic transfer involves the application of first language forms and strategies within the interlanguage, whereas socio-pragmatic transfer encompasses the transference of first language cultural perceptions regarding internal and external context variables into the foreign language (Barron, 2003). Irani (2014) contends that pragma-linguistic transfer often leads to pragmatic failure by continually implementing first language speech act strategies during interactions with individuals from diverse speech communities (Cutting, 2005). This entails expressing speech acts similarly, to how they are done in the first language during cross-cultural communication with individuals from varied cultural backgrounds. Thus, pragmatic transfer represents a complex phenomenon with implications for effective intercultural communication and language learning.

1.7.2.2. Different Cultural Values

Culture, as defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002), encompasses the practices, codes, and values unique to a particular community, and when combined with language, it gives rise to "discourse," representing the social identity of individuals through their ways of talking, thinking, and behaving. Tannen (1984) further asserts that culture is inherently linked to communication, emphasizing the significance of cultural competence in cross-cultural interactions. This competence involves not only an understanding of cultural elements such as social structure, traditions, taboos, and beliefs in both native and target languages but also

awareness of how things are done within those cultures. Consequently, language comprehension is deeply influenced by cultural and social factors, with knowledge of the target culture being pivotal for successful cross-cultural communication, while ignorance can lead to pragmatic failures (Timpe-Laughlin et al., 2021). The rules governing the realization of speech acts, both socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic, are culturally specific, as noted by House (2008), underscoring that a lack of awareness of cultural differences between the first language and the target language can result in cross-cultural pragmatic failure. In such instances, individuals may involuntarily make inappropriate choices regarding what to say in specific situations or to particular individuals due to cultural misunderstandings or ignorance.

1.7.2.3 Teachers and Teaching Materials

In the realm of language education, foreign language teachers bear the weighty responsibility of not only imparting linguistic knowledge but also clarifying its appropriate usage to enhance learners' linguistic and pragmatic communicative competence. However, a glaring inadequacy in the number of teachers proficient in the cultural intricacies of the target language community often causes pragmatic failures among learners. This deficiency poses a significant challenge: if educators themselves hesitate in cross-cultural communication, their efficacy in guiding students to avoid pragmatic failures diminishes considerably. Consequently, many foreign language teachers tend to side-line pragmatics, disproportionately emphasizing grammar, thereby unintentionally leading students toward pragmatic failure and communication breakdowns (Navarro, 2022).

Supporting this notion, Thomas (1983) identified certain teaching techniques, termed "teaching-induced errors" by Kasper (1981), which aggravate pragmatic failures. For instance, within classroom discourse, the widespread practice of eliciting complete sentence responses breaches the pragmatic principle of economy, habituating students to provide overly elaborate answers. Moreover, an excessive emphasis on "metalinguistic knowledge" by teachers may also

contribute to pragmatic failure, exemplified by students mistakenly equating the imperative grammatical category solely with the speech act of "ordering," overlooking its adaptability in commanding or requesting in formal spoken English (Krulatz & Christison, 2023). For instance, while the phrase "bring me the customers' files" is imperative in form, it constitutes a request rather than an order, yet students may avoid employing the imperative in formal requests, under the mistaken belief that issuing directives is impolite even in formal settings.

1.8. Speech Act Theory

Pioneers in the field of grammar and philosophy had already raised the issue that sentences are not always used to state facts or describe situations. Following their path analytically, John Austin (1962) devoted precise attention to point out that there is a different function for sentences. He, then, presented two kinds of the latter; constatives and performatives. The first mentioned refers to sentences in form of assertions or statements (True/ False statements or descriptive ones) while the latter concerns utterances used to perform an action (p. 1- 2).

Austin (1962) focused more on performatives, he reasoned that the utterances that are used to perform an action are to be titled "speech acts". Some of the speech acts are complaining, apologizing, requesting, offering, etc. He adds that when a person makes an utterance, he assumes that the hearer will recognize his communicative intention whether explicitly announced using one of the performative verbs, also abbreviated as (Vp), or implicitly comprised. An example provided by Austin is "I do (take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife), as uttered in the course of a marriage ceremony. Here we should say that in saying these words we are doing something-namely, marrying, rather than reporting something, namely that we are marrying" (pp. 12-13).

John Austin, setting everything right, put some sort of conditions to be fulfilled for the utterance to perform an act or as they are known as the felicity conditions as he preferred to

describe them as the indication "for the smooth or "happy" functioning of a performative" (p. 13). The first is that "there must exist an accepted conventional procedure" to follow some specific steps if needed, uttering necessary words and do what makes it accepted. Second, the persons and circumstances must be appropriate for the procedure. For example, someone is giving an order, he should have the authority and be in the right context to do so. If both already mentioned conditions are not fulfilled, there should be misinvocation.

The third and fourth of them are that "the procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and completely." This simply dictates that during the performance of an act, every part should be done in the right way without missing anything or committing mistakes, but if any failure to fulfill both of them occurs it is called misexecution. Moreover, if the four first conditions were unhappy ones, then they are called misfires (Austin, 2002, as cited in Zhang, Han & Li, 2020, p. 830).

The fifth and sixth to be fulfilled are about the intention where the person performing the action should be sincere and honest and properly execute it. If the unhappiness is on this level, they become abuses.

After analyzing the acts, Austin (1962) suggested three forces that the act has. He claimed that the first basic meaning of an utterance is the simplest and easiest as it is clear and needless to think a lot to get it; it's the locutionary act. However, he argued that the utterance does not only possess that literal meaning but it also carries the speaker's intended meaning. Because it is somehow blurred and cannot be easily figured out unless s/he uses background information and contextual clues, it is called illocutionary act. Whenever this act goes beyond its literal meaning and the hearer understands the act and reacts according to it, it means that the act has a perlocutionary force which influences the hearer and causes change that the speaker initially intends to occur.

John Searle (1969) classified speech acts depending on the function into five main ones which are declaratives, representatives, expressives, directives and commissives. Declarative speech acts, or declarations as Yule puts them, are statements made to create a different situation in the world (1996, p. 53); performed by someone who has enough authority either as a result of the hearer's actions and they are called verdictives, or just because the utterance is made and they are called effectives. A good example is when the Jury foreman states: we find the defendant guilty. This is verdictive because it is made by a person who has the authority to do so and the consequence of the defendant's deeds.

Representatives or representative speech acts are utterances that the speaker generates to express a proposition. The utterance is usually about stating a fact, beliefs or assertions and descriptions. Yule (1996, p. 53) illustrated using the two examples of "The earth is flat" and "It was a warm sunny day." Hence, whether the earth is flat or not, and whether the day was warm, hot or even cold the statements represent what the speakers believes the things are.

Expressive speech acts are clear that they express psychological state such as feelings. They convey the speaker's experience either caused by himself or the hearer. This kind of speech acts include thanking, welcoming, congratulating as in saying "Congratulations!" and apologizing saying "I'm really sorry."

Directives are utterances that the speaker utters to ask someone else to perform the action. They show the speaker's want and they come in form of requests, commands, orders and suggestions. For example, "Could you lend me your pen, please?" is a directive that comes in form of a request. Whereas, this one "Don't touch that" is an order.

Commissive speech acts are utterances through which the speaker commits himself to do some future action in which he will perform alone or as a member of some group. This last act includes promises, threats, refusals and pledges. To explain more, the examples provided are "I'll be back" and "We will not do that." The first one represents a clear promise that the

speaker commits himself to go back. Whereas the second, it shows a refusal of the speaker as a member of a group.

The following table summarizes Searle's classification and the direction of fit.

Table 1

The Five General Functions of Speech Acts

Speech act type	Direction of fit	S=speaker, X= situation
Declarations	Words change the world	S causes X
Representatives	Make words fit the world	S believes X
Expressives	Make words fit the world	S feels X
Directives	Make the world fit words	S wants X
Commissives	Make the world fit words	S intends X

Furthermore, Searle made another distinction based on the structure, asserting that whenever the form of an utterance conforms the function, the speech act is considered to be direct. However, an indirect speech act would have an incompatible form to function (Yule, 1996, p. 55). The following table clarifies the three structural forms and their three communicative functions together representing direct speech act.

Table 2

Direct Speech Acts

Sentence	Sentence type/ form	Function
You wear a seat belt	Declarative	Statement
Do you wear a seat belt?	Interrogative	Question
Wear a seat belt!	Imperative	Command/ Request

"Do you have to stand in front of the TV?" would be a good example of indirect speech. Here, the interrogative sentence Here the interrogative sentence does not stand for a real question nor

it requires and answer, but rather it is used to function as a request as the speaker is indirectly asking the hearer to move out of the way. (Yule, 1996, p. 55)

1.9. Politeness theory

Research on politeness has progressed through multiple phases. Most politeness researchers tried to systematize the investigation of politeness using various theoretical frameworks till the early 21st century. It is among pragmatics' most well-liked topics, with a background that extends to the 1970s. It is important to remember that politeness was the topic of early scientific investigation in numerous cultures, including the Chinese and Roman (Dickey, 2012, as cited in Kádár, 2017). The Cooperative Principle (CP), proposed by language philosopher Paul Grice in 1975, catalysed the development of contemporary pragmatic research on politeness. According to the CP, to create meaning, interactants must cooperate by adhering to the four maxims it outlines: quality, quantity, relevance, and manner (Kádár, 2017).

The theory known as Politeness Theory (PT) first surfaced within the pragmatic framework of language study. People employ specific techniques, according to PT, to establish effective communication. These techniques help them to establish a communication atmosphere that is as pleasant as possible (Guillan, 2019). It is stated that "In 1987, Brown and Levinson propose that politeness is a universal concept based on speech act theory" (Guillan, 2019, para. 14) Politeness is the expression of the speaker's intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face-threatening acts toward the listener. The speaker aims to lessen potential threats to the listener's social image or dignity arising from certain actions or statements, fostering positive interaction and respect (Guillan, 2019). Thus, it is the linguistic action with social realisation and cultural implications (Song, 2014, p. 4). Consequently, the act of being courteous may be an attempt on the part of the speaker to save face, either their own or that of the other (Goorabi, 2019, para.6).

P. Brown and S. Levinson proposed the key ideas of politeness choosing the concept

face as a basis, relying on Erving Goffmann's works. The notion "face", however, reflects two opposite needs of human: on the one hand, a desire to be approved of and appreciated by interlocutor (positive face); on the other hand, to have his/her independent point of view and relative freedoms of opinion (negative face) (Goorabi, 2019, para.3). Interlocutors can do several acts to save their face and protect the receiver face.

Gradually, Brown and Levinson expanded their idea, taking into account each communicator's activity as a possible threat to a particular face. The author's position is that people often try to shield their own faces during conversations, which obstructs honest and straightforward communication. Based on this, we may distinguish between the tactics of negative politeness (such as expressing regret, showing scepticism), and positive politeness (such as showing curiosity, demonstrating sympathy). Additionally, three fundamental socio-cultural factors are taken into account when measuring face-threatening acts: ranking, the degree of authority between interlocutors, and social distance (Salmani Nadoushan,2016, as cited in Goorabi 2019).

Figure 2

Possible Politeness Strategies
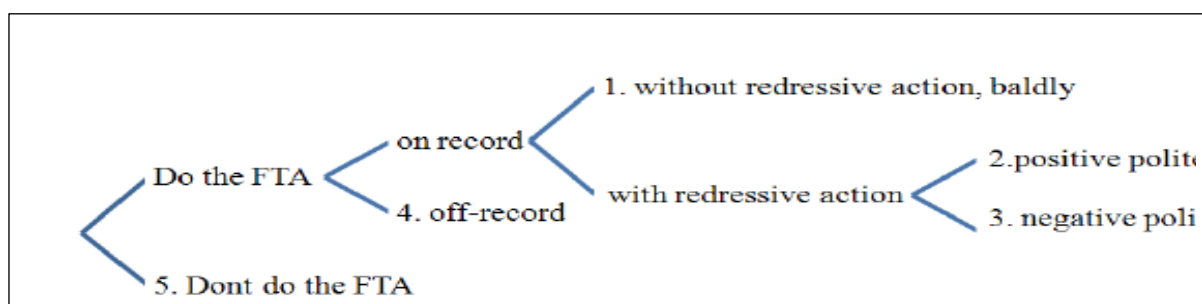
(Adapted from Brown & Levinson, 1987)

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), possible politeness strategies can be explained as follows:

A- Off-record - the avoidance of direct impositions, e.g. "I'm out of cash. I forgot to go to the bank today."

(1)   a. Hmm, I sure could use a blue pen.

(2)   a. Who would like to wash the dishes?

B- On-record - when only one intention can be identified by the participants

C- Bald (without redress) - involves understanding an act in the most direct, unambiguous and clear manner, e.g., "Clean your room" ("Do X!").

(1)   b. Hey, I want to use one of your pens.

(2)   b. It's your turn. Wash the dishes.

D- Redressive action "gives face" to the hearer, meaning that the speaker tries to overcome any possible damage from the FTA by modifying their behaviour, i.e., positive or negative politeness strategies to soften the FTA.

E- Positive politeness strategies addressed to the hearer's self-image (positive face), i.e., avoidance of threats to hearer's image, e.g., exaggerate interest in H, sympathise with H and avoid disagreement.

(1)   c. So, is it OK if I use one of those pens?

(2)   c. I know you've really been busy, but will you wash the dishes?

F- Negative politeness is oriented towards the hearer's negative face, i.e., avoiding threats to the hearer's freedom of action, freedom from impositions. Strategies involve being indirect, giving deference, using hedges, apologising for imposing.

(1)   d. I'm sorry to bother you, I just wanted to ask you if I could use one of your pens.'

(2)   d. I'm sorry to bother you, I know you've been kind of strapped with your work, but could you wash the dishes?

According to Song (2014), one of the main flaws in Brown and Levinson's politeness model is that it ignores the influence of culture. Intercultural communication requires cultural awareness and courtesy; both manifest and are perceived as a component of communication.

The degree of FTA and the weightiness decisions are influenced by social distance, relative power, and task imposition; nevertheless, these characteristics do not fully account for each speaker's choice. The speaker's culture actually plays a part in that. Even in cases where these three characteristics are predominant, cultural perceptions of them may differ. Put another way, the speaker's cultural background could affect the results of the calculation. In light of this, Song (2014) created the following four hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The greater the distance between the speaker and the hearer, the more polite strategy the speaker will select.

Hypothesis 2: The higher the social status (power) of the hearer, the more polite the strategy the speaker will select.

Hypothesis 3: The greater the imposition of the task, the more polite the strategy the speaker will select.

Hypothesis 4: The greater the cultural differences are, the greater the difference in speaker's perception of politeness weightiness will be.

Song (2014) carried out an empirical study with participants from various cultural backgrounds to look into the cultural implications of politeness (American and Korean). The degree of task imposition, social power, and social distance were all rated by the subjects.

a. Task imposition

Differences in culture have a big influence on how people view politeness and task imposition. Korean participants gave information desk employees a lower rating than American participants, but they gave the task of asking inquiries a higher rating (Song, 2014). This is because, irrespective of the rank of the respondent, Koreans find it awkward to pose questions.

Therefore, Koreans find it more oppressive to ask a passerby where a product is or what time it is, whereas Americans do not find it particularly imposing to complete these kinds of acts.

b. Social distance

Social distance perceptions are strongly influenced by familiarity and intimacy, and they differ depending on one's cultural background (Song, 2014). There are significant disparities between how Americans and Koreans perceive social distance from a grandfather. In Korean society, which is hierarchical and values deference to elders, Koreans frequently experience unease when they are with their grandfathers. On the other hand, grandfathers feel closer to people in the more egalitarian American culture, which reduces social distance.

c. Social power

The perception of social power, influenced by cultural differences, affects politeness weightiness (song, 2014). Korean students rated their social power lower than American students due to the high respect for education and professors in Korean culture. According to Brown and Levinson's theory, politeness is based on three factors: distance (familiarity), relative power, and task imposition. These factors are crucial in determining the weightiness of politeness, but their effects vary across different cultures, influencing verbal expressions and perceptions of politeness.

1.10. Factors Affecting Pragmatic Skill

Pragmatic competence proved its inevitable necessity in learning a language. Therefore, many attempts were made to discover the different elements that may affect this latter and, if used beneficially, they contribute to its enhancement. Some of these elements are represented in the following:

1.10.1. Grammatical Competence

Learning grammar and being a linguistically competent individual is such an advantage to develop pragmatic aspect and learn the target language despite the fact that it cannot stand

alone in improving it. The foreign language learner is asked to form grammatically well-structured sentences to be correct, and simultaneously, or a bit later, to learn where, how and with whom to use those sentences. Basically, foreign language learners or individuals cannot infer the meaning of the speech act, whether the locutionary or illocutionary one, if the utterance in itself is scrambled or ill-written or said. So, even if grammatical competence is not the only factor controlling the pragmatic competence, nor enough one, pragmatically competent students require good and solid linguistic foundation. (Jung, 2002, p. 17)

1.10.2. Instruction

As pragmatics cannot be taught as a whole, the teaching of its different forming areas is possible and beneficial. These areas include speech acts; rhetorical structure; conversational implicature; and the management of reference in discourse. For the teaching process, scholars in the field suggested two teaching approaches; explicit and implicit. Obviously, the explicit teaching approach tends to expose the learner directly to what Billmyer (1990), Bouton (1994), House (1996) and LoCastro (2001) mentioned as the target language pragmatic rules, in addition to providing a corrective feedback (as cited in Jung, 2002, p. 18). The implicit teaching approach, on the other hand, focus on pushing the learner to depend on himself in to assume the culturally appropriate ways to use a given item in a meaningful context. It is also important for teachers to help students to get in touch with what they do not know about the target language pragmatics and to become more independent at finding out about it by themselves. In the same vein, Wyner and Cohen (2015) agreed that:

> Another motivating option would be to have a pragmatics show-and-tell where each day different students are responsible for bringing in an aspect of language that they heard or saw in print. Ideally, they then take the initiative to figure out for themselves what the pragma-linguistic and/or socio-pragmatic ramifications of the language behaviour are, such as thorough checking it with an available NS [Native Speaker] of the language

(possibly through an Internet contact). The student then gives a short presentation to the rest of the class and, in a sense, becomes the expert on this behaviour. (p. 547).

1.10.3. Individual Factors

Worth mentioning are the individual differences that play a significant role in the field of pragmatics. Variations in the learners' age, gender, motives for language learning, attitudes towards the target language, and level of linguistic proficiency and pragmatic competence have an impactful power. In that, Barron (2003), Kasper and Rose (2002), Hassall (2001), Trosborg (1995) and Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) indicated that "…pragmatic knowledge is based on learners' individual needs and preferences, age, gender, and degree of exposure to L2 forms" (as cited in Maibodi, 2019, p. 107). Moreover, the interference of L1 also has an effect in the pragmatic competence; knowledge of native culture and others influences the development of pragmatic competence in which it can work either as a hinder or as a facilitator (Wyner and Cohen, p. 525).

1.10.4. Cultural Knowledge

Given the fact that a correct and appropriate use of the language demands comprehension of its two aspects linguistic, which has already been discussed above, and pragmatic that is concerned with the language in use and context, it is essentially to raise the components of pragmatic competence to reach that. Cultural knowledge here is underlined in the sociocultural competence that is one of the components. In other terms, teaching culture is fundamental in the course of developing pragmatics as the learner needs to know the cultural values and different beliefs and that places him in the context when interacting and helps him to conform to the cultural standards when possible and suitable. In confirming that, Lenchuk and Ahmed argued that awareness of the sociolinguistic and sociocultural variables that governs a communicative event is an essential requirement for the successful acquisition of pragmatics

by ESL learners because knowledge of mainly the community's cultural components affects the linguistic choices of speakers (2014, p. 84).

In short, cultural knowledge is among the affective factors and plays a crucial role in raising the pragmatic competence.

Conclusion

Pragmatic competence is about comprehending what is beyond the language, it is more or less how to use the language in different social contexts to satisfy communication goal. This leads to the realization that it is a mandatory competence that learners need to develop in order to master the language. Put differently, any failure to fulfill communicative acts, or inability to conform to the politeness conventions will cause pragma-linguistic or sociolinguistic failure. Consequently, playing on grammatical competence, instructions in pragmatics, and acquiring cultural knowledge are among the key factors in affecting communicative competence and pragmatic skill mainly.

Chapter Two: Intercultural Awareness

Introduction

The primary focus in the field of EFL teaching and learning falls on the grammatical competence. Yet, Hymes changed the path a bit and directed the attention towards the communicative competence where studies started to be more concerned in it due to its undeniable importance. Therefore, and since communication involves other facilitators, mainly culture, instructors concentrated on teaching culture to increase cultural understanding and develop communicative competence. Thus, this chapter deals with culture in general and its unavoidable impact on language learning and language use. In addition, it provides a thorough understanding for the concept of cultural awareness, states where its importance lays and what makes it advantageous. Moreover, this chapter seeks to reveal any barriers in the way of enhancing cultural sensitivity that has an impactful role in the language learning/teaching area.

2.1. Definition of Culture

What Scollon and Scollon (2001) stated "the word culture often brings up more problems than it solves" (p. 138), seems to be perfectly fitting when talking about defining culture. It is very complex to simply define culture as the concept existed ages ago within many disciplines and was defined differently even among researchers of the same discipline. The term itself is derived from the Latin "Cultura" which means "being cultivated" as Nababan (1974, p. 18) mentioned. Historically speaking, during the eighteenth century, the term culture was often used interchangeably with civilization referring to superiority in manners and reaching high achievements in social institutions. However, cultural anthropologists introduced a totally distinct idea where they based their studies on different features to mean culture. The English anthropologist E.B. Tylor (1871) defined culture as "… the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morale, law custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (p. 1). In his view, Tylor focused on the ideas, behaviours, manners and any other possible characteristics that bind a group of people together. Piddington

(1950, pp. 3-4) similarly affirms that "The culture of a people may be defined as the sum total of the material and intellectual equipment whereby they … adapt themselves to their environment." (as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 56).

Sapir (1921) put it as ". . . the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives..." (para. 1). It is then any spiritual or physical behaviours that are left from the past and remain into the present shaping it. Following the same path, Geertz (1973) claimed that culture is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (p. 89). These definitions of culture by Sapir and Geertz are somehow fulfilling, falling in the same pot. For them, they believe that culture has an informative feature of how people should communicate and act in different times throughout their lifetime; i.e., it gives sense to the actions and words and facilitate communication by laying shared ground for foreign language users. Furthermore, Barnett (1988) shares a similar view seeing culture as a combination of social constructs of a given community that gives meaning to the different symbols whether verbal or nonverbal.

From a humanistic view, Powys (1930, p. 274) stated that "Culture and self-control are synonymous terms. . . What culture ought to do for us is to enable us to find, somehow or other, a mental substitute for the traditional restraints of morality and religion…" In other terms, Powys' comparison of culture and self-control implies that culture is what governs social behaviour and keeps order within community at the level of communication and different social interactions.

In short, although culture is a vague concept that cannot be limited to only one definition, it can be best described as all the elements that unify and distinguish one community from

the other including behiavours, beliefs and knowledge that dictates norms of social life and interactions and guides communication.

2.2. Aspects of Culture

Culture is the link that brings people together; it is the essence of human existence. Within each culture, numerous aspects are embedded. The most important aspects of culture are language, symbols norms and values as they are presented in the following diagram:

Figure 3

Aspects of Culture
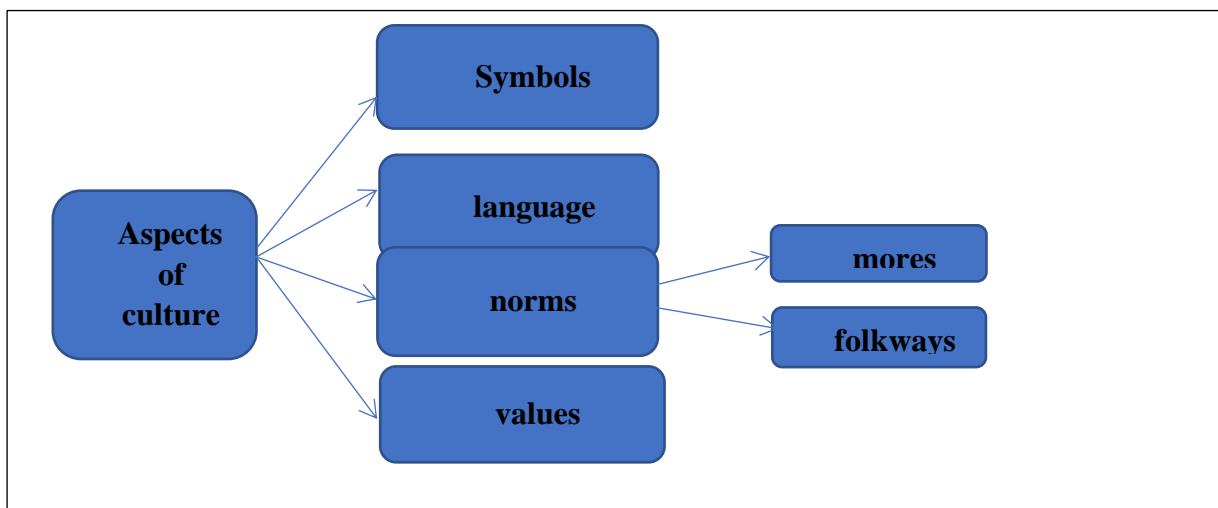
2.2.1. Symbols

Symbols are elements within a culture that represent abstract ideas, concepts, or values and convey meaning beyond their literal interpretation. They serve as powerful tools for communication, facilitating the transmission of cultural beliefs, norms, and traditions from one generation to another (Wilson, 2021). Many social groups use them to express a concept of their culture. Thus, they represent important cultural elements.

2.2.2. Language

Language is a complex system of communication consisting of sounds, words, and grammar used by members of a cultural group to convey meaning, express thoughts and

emotions, and facilitate social interaction. It serves as a primary vehicle for transmitting cultural knowledge, values, and traditions, shaping individuals' perceptions of the world and their place within it (Chiu, 2011).

2.2.3. Norms

Norms are established rules, expectations, or standards of behaviour that are widely accepted and practiced within a particular cultural or social group. They dictate appropriate conduct in various situations and serve as guidelines for interpersonal interactions, shaping individuals' behaviours, attitudes, and values within a society (Fischer et al., 2019).

2.2.4. Mores

Mores are norms within a society that are considered highly important for the welfare of the group and are often strictly enforced. They represent deeply ingrained cultural values and beliefs about what is morally acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. They are not governed by rules but any violation of mores typically results in strong social sanction or disapproval (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

2.2.5. Folkways

Folkways are informal norms within a society that govern everyday behaviours and customs. They refer to as customs, yet each group can develop different customs. Unlike mores, they are not considered morally significant, but rather represent socially acceptable conventions and traditions. Violations of folkways typically result in mild disapproval or social discomfort rather than severe sanctions (Kumari, 2022).

2.2.6. Values

Values are fundamental beliefs and principles that guide individuals' attitudes, behaviours, and decision-making within a cultural or social context. They represent deeply held convictions about what is considered important, desirable, or morally right within a society, influencing norms, customs, and social interactions (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

2.3. Characteristics of Culture

a. Culture is a Human Attribute

Culture is something that belongs to humans; no other creature has culture but the human being. Therefore, it is linked to man's existence as wherever humans exist culture is there. Groves (1928) defined it as "A product of human association" (as cited in Kluckhohn & Kroeber, 1952, p. 64). Humans create culture through their interactions with one another, to establish basic life standards. They also produce ways to cope with the environment around them to live in harmony.

b. Culture is Shared

Kluckhohn and Kelly (1945, p. 98) assumed that culture "[...] tends to be shared by all or specially designated members of a group" (as cited in Kluckhohn & Kroeber, 1952, p. 61). they asserted that culture is something that all members of one society possess and that it is all the common features that identify people's belonging to one group. Equally, Atsumoto (1996) agreed that it is "... the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next (as cited in Spencer-Oatey, 2012, p. 2). People who are part of one societal group usually have the same way of perception and behave in the same manner because they share the same culture and therefore, they consume the same beliefs and ideas that draw their actions.

c. Culture is Socially Acquired

As already claimed, each society has a culture that includes patterns of behaviour and similar way of looking at things as well as the different beliefs and values that are shared. Every member of a society acquires and learns this cultural knowledge as a member of his own society. Benedict (1947, p. 19) assured that ". . . culture is the sociological term for learned behaviour, behaviour which in man is not given at birth, …, but must be learned anew from grown people by each new generation" (As cited in Kluckhohn & Kroeber, 1952, p. 58). In other terms,

culture is not genetic but it is something either acquired during the first years of human life in informal settings as a member of a family or group of friends or through his exposure to the media; or it is learnt in formal contexts such as kindergartens, schools and formal institutions. Culture then is a socially constructed knowledge that every member of a community absorbs consciously or unconsciously through daily social interactions or systematic education. Furthermore, it is transmitted from one generation to another. Sutherland and Woodward (1940, p. 19) stated that culture includes everything that can be communicated from one generation to another (as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 47).

d. Culture is Dynamic

Since culture is a construct of society, it evolves as long as society does. It is not a static thing that remains the same through time; it changes because people change, they change their views, perspectives and values according to life circumstances. As an unavoidable result, and given that it is human made, human modifies, adds or removes accordingly to his changing views and beliefs. (Hishma, 2018, p. 47)

e. Culture is Integrated

Tylor (1871) has already pointed out this characteristic when he defined culture as "that complex whole" which clearly shows that it combines everything and anything in human life. It gives explanation to everything from the things we believe in, the principles that guide us, the daily practices until the concrete productions and different institutions. Adding to that, Gillin (1948, p. 191) stated that "Culture consists of patterned and functionally interrelated customs common to specifiable human beings composing specifiable social groups or categories" (as cited in Kluckhohn & Kroeber, 1952, p. 61). That is to say, all aspects of culture are connected and each one of them has an effect over the other; although they stand as unique components but neither is separate and, altogether, they shape a distinctive society.

f. Culture is Symbolic

All cultures are based on symbols that might be similar in some cultures. Yet, the meaning assigned to each symbol is totally different and vary from one culture to another because of the uniqueness of each culture. One of the critical symbolic elements of culture is language (Maou, 2012, p. 43).

2.4. Importance of Culture

Culture is something that everybody has; people create culture and it, then, shapes their identity, personality, beliefs and everything around them. They invent, use and socialise each aspect of their culture. Culture is both abstract and concrete concept that plays an important role in human life. It is the invisible bond that ties people together (Oakley, 2018). It is compulsory for individuals as well as for the society. It is important from the early stages of human life. Its preliminary importance can be identified as follows:

> it is vital for the individuals to communicate with others. From the stage of early childhood, when the individuals communicate with their parents, they provide them knowledge in terms of cultures… Therefore, it can be stated that culture renders a significant contribution in enabling the individuals to emerge into good human beings and in enriching their overall quality of lives. (Kapur, 2018b, p. 1)

Culture sculpts people´s identity. Hussain stated that "Culture makes human being a man or woman. It is culture that makes the human animal a man or woman, regulates his/her conduct and prepares him/her for group life" (2021, p.40610). This is leads to the fact that being truly human requires participating in the cultural stream "Just as it is necessary that fish must live in water, so it is necessary and natural that man/woman must live within a cultural framework." (Hussain, 2021).

Thus, culture is not just something that people passively have; it is rather a dynamic whole in which people engage and actively act. In addition to its importance in identity

formation, it is crucial for communication and understanding. Culture influences language, communication styles, and non-verbal cues, affects how people express themselves and interpret messages. Understanding cultural nuances is crucial for effective communication and building relationships. In addition to that, "culture has an immense effect on communication – it shapes how we talk to one another, what kind of language we use, and what kinds of communication are considered appropriate" (Lefringhausen et al., 2019).

In addition to the fact that it is the machine that oils communication, it can be the promoter of social cohesion. It can be confirmed that social cohesion is created when people are exposed to the common experience that connects them (Bervar & Trnavčević, 2019, p. 196). Therefore, culture is also considered as the fourth pillar of sustainability. Culture plays a crucial role in moulding values, beliefs, and behaviours related to sustainability. It encompasses traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, and collective identities, which influence how societies interact with their environment and resources.

Promoting cultural sustainability involves preserving indigenous knowledge, fostering cultural diversity, and promoting values. Integrating culture into sustainability initiatives can enhance their effectiveness and relevance within diverse communities. "The concept of culture has been embedded in, and enhancing, the paradigm of society of values and the very concept of sustainable development. Only sustainable culture shows needed vitality for enabling sustainable society." (Bervar & Trnavčević, 2019, p. 196).

To conclude, culture fosters intercultural dialogue; it promotes understanding, communication and appreciation among diverse communities. Through shared language or at least one dialect, tradition, arts, customs, culture facilitates exchange and promote mutual respect. Embracing cultural diversity encourages collaboration, empathy, and cooperation, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious global society. "A precondition for promoting intercultural dialogue and bringing communities together is a commitment of all stakeholders

for full co-operation and openness to cultural diversity and dialogue in order to avoid conflicts" (Bervar&Trnavčević, 2019, p. 196).

2.5. Approaches of Teaching Culture.

After realizing that being familiarized with the target language's culture is a must to effectively learn that language, scholars suggested several approaches to make the course of teaching culture possible and motivating for the target language learners.

2.5.1. Comparative Approach

This approach sheds light on both cultures, learner's native culture (NC) and target language culture (TC). Byram and Planet (2000) stated that the comparative approach: "does involve evaluation but not in terms of comparison with something which is better, but in terms of improving what is all too familiar. Comparison makes the strange, the other, familiar, and makes the familiar, the self, strange – and therefore easier to re-consider" (as cited in Kaouli, 2013). They declare that what this approach focuses on is a kind of comparison between both cultures in terms of facilitating TC through the similarities between it and the NC, and highlighting differences. As a consequence, it helps learners to reflect upon their own culture and consider the TC and thus raise their cultural awareness.

2.5.2. Intercultural Approach

Similar to the comparative approach, this approach is also based on comparing between both target culture and native culture. Although the large emphasis here is on the TC, its major aim is still to develop learners' intercultural competence. It focuses on helping learners create a sort of balance between both cultures and gain communicative competence. As it appears, this approach enables learners to preserve their own culture and cope with the TC (De Jong & Harper, 2005).

2.5.3. Multicultural Approach

Similarly, the multicultural approach compares between NC and TC but with including different existing cultures encompassed in the TC. Accordingly, it improves communicative competence through keeping on the learners' NC and promoting TC (Abbaspour et al., 2012, p. 22).

2.5.4. Transcultural Approach

By presenting the transcultural approach, Risager (1998) claimed that cultures are interconnected because of migration and businesses, etc., and therefore some foreign languages are used as lingua francas. She raised the idea that English as a foreign language is, among others, considered as lingua franca and thus it is not related to any culture (p. 12). Since this approach rejects any link between language and culture, it believes in teaching only language for communication aims.

2.5.5. Monocultural Approach

As the name denotes, monocultural approach is interested only in the TC. In opposition to the comparative approach, intercultural approach and multicultural approach, this one does not make any comparison between native culture and target culture. It rather gives a clear and direct attention that is fixed towards the TC and it totally ignores the NC. Because of this point, this approach was highly criticized (Saluveer, 2004, p. 31).

2.5.6. Theme-based Approach

Included in monocultural approach, theme-based approach is a thematic approach that shows standards and moral values of the target culture. It tends to present a profound understanding and provide contexts via dealing with themes that are vital in that TC. However, theme-based approach is criticized because it delivers a fragmented vision of the TC. To put it another way, the separate presentation of cultural themes makes it hard for students to get a flawless picture of the target culture (Saluveer, 2004, p. 34).

2.5.7. Topic-based Approach

According to Alan McLean (1994, as cited in Wiśniewska- Brogowska, 2004), a "topic-based approach can provide an oblique yet original encounter with British life and culture. It deals with key elements of current British life, such as class, privatization, education, health, not in isolation but within a series of unifying contexts." This approach also deals with topics related to the native language users' daily life and most current topics, which gives an insight into their beliefs, behaviours and culture. It does not give a half picture as the thematic approach, but rather allows for all integrated image which certainly allows a full understanding and increases both the interest to know the TC and target language (TL) and the cultural awareness as Wiśniewska- Brogowska confirmed (p. 86).

2.5.8. Problem-oriented Approach

Aiming to stimulate learners' interest towards the TC, this approach is used by language teachers in terms of positing a problem for the learners to think of and find a solution. It depends on the teacher to select the appropriate issue based on what s/he sees would attract his/her learners and not really vague that they get bored quickly. His role, here, is to guide them in reading a specific section that facilitates their solving process from one side, and keep them from being overloaded with unnecessary information from the other (Seelye 1993, p. 47). The advantage here lays in that when learners are searching for a key to their problem, they are getting informed and rising questions and interest about other information they meet.

2.5.9. Task-oriented approach

The last approach to mention is the task-oriented approach which is quite similar to problem-oriented approach in the point that both of them depend on learners' guided investigation to solve a given task or problem. However, this last one is about assigning the task to pairs or groups of learners who start by looking for the information and then share and discus

their outcomes together. This enables them to join their answers together to have a clear vision, and also, they may compare it to their NC (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993).

2.6. Strategies of Teaching Culture

In the way of raising cultural awareness, students should be exposed to various strategies and techniques. Thus, the following are some of the main techniques used by teachers to teach culture.

2.6.1. Role plays

An activity that gives students an opportunity to practice the language and prepare them to use it in real situations naturally. However, the roles students play are not, forcibly, the ones they are able to play in real life. This technique enables learners to observe and experience cultural behaviours and patterns of communication as well as to develop communicative strategies (Kodotchigova, 2002, para. 1).

2.6.2. Culture Capsules

This technique entails that the teacher orally presents a description of one aspect of the target culture highlighting the difference with learners' native culture. Usually, it is supported with visuals and relevant media. Sometimes, it revolves around students' engagement and presentation of a prepared paragraph. This technique is practical and it points out key differences of one's own culture and the target culture (Seelye, 1993, p. 174). If these culture capsules compose a series which is thematically related and the teacher is the narrator to provide cultural knowledge, they are called "culture clusters."

2.6.3. Culture Asides

Cultural Asides or what Nostrand (1974, p. 298) called "Incidental Comments". It is a technique in which the teacher provides a kind of comment or piece of information on a cultural element present within the text, picture or any teaching material. The scholar admits that it is

beneficial as it helps in making mental associations similar to those that native speakers make and creates cultural content. Yet, it presents disorganized and incomplete information.

2.6.4. Genuine Materials

Tomlison (2011) defined it as "A text which is not written or spoken for language-teaching purposes. A newspaper article, a rock song, a novel, a radio interview, instructions on how to play a game and a traditional fairy story are examples of authentic texts" (ix). Teachers who adopt this technique rely on authentic materials that are previously mentioned in addition to TV programs, menus, magazines, etc., which are designed for native speakers.

By using them for academic purposes, they offer direct contact with target language and culture and allows for a real experience. Usually, different questions are asked and in answering these questions, students can work individually, collaboratively or even at home as it is not important to get the right answer but rather to share their existing knowledge and increase their interest in certain culture. At the end, the right answer can be shared through any material or medium the teacher prefers.

2.6.5. Quizzes

Cultural quizzes are composed of some questions about a certain culture. They are mostly used to introduce a new culture and/or check learners' knowledge about that culture. Given the task, students will use their background cultural knowledge to answer and if they are wrong or hesitated, they will be interested to know the right answer which will be provided by the teacher. He can read a passage or play an audio and concludes with additional information, as they are now ready to learn and absorb new things. (Cullen, 2000, p. 2).

2.6.6. Cultural Assimilator

It is a short portrayal of an experience or "critical incident" between two participants of different cultures (usually the native and target culture) that describes a sort of miscommunication between them. Students, then, are given four possible choices of behaviours

reactions and they are asked to choose the culturally appropriate explanation based on their analysis. After that, teachers will give feedback and explain why one choice is preferable according to one cultural context. It mainly raises tolerance for cultural diversity enabling students to understand, act and perform in different contexts. In addition, cultural assimilators are effective, interesting and fun at the same time. Still, it is time and effort consuming in the preparation phase (Seelye, 1993, p. 163).

2.7. Definition of Cultural Awareness

"A fish only discovers its need for water when it is no longer in it. Our own culture is like water for the fish. It sustains us. We live and breathe through it" (Quappe & Cantatore, n.d.) The analogy of a fish realizing its need for water when removed from it relates directly to the concept of cultural awareness. In essence, cultural awareness involves recognizing and understanding the significance of one's own culture and the cultures of others. Cultural background often shapes perspectives, values, and behaviours in subtle yet profound ways, much like water enveloping a fish. However, it is easy to overlook this influence when immersed within our own cultural environment (Raeff et al., 2020).

While encountering different cultural contexts, whether through travel, interaction with diverse communities, or exposure to alternative perspectives, it is similar to being removed from familiar cultural "water." In these moments, people may become more acutely aware of the aspects of our own culture that they previously took for granted (Wisner, 2023). They may also recognize the diversity of human experiences and the multitude of cultural practices and norms that exist beyond our own.

Cultural awareness involves not only acknowledging these differences but also seeking to understand and appreciate them (Wisner, 2023). Just as a fish might learn to appreciate the importance of water by experiencing life outside of it, individuals can develop a deeper understanding of their own culture and an increased sensitivity to cultural differences through

exposure to diverse perspectives. This awareness fosters empathy, respect, and effective communication across cultural boundaries, ultimately enriching our personal and professional interactions in an increasingly interconnected world (Eden et al., 2024). The basis of communication is cultural awareness, which is the capacity to step back from oneself and recognize cultural conceptions, values, beliefs, why to act in such manner? Is that how people go about things? How do they see the world? In addition, why do they respond that way specifically?

Cultural awareness involves recognizing and comprehending the various norms, values, and behaviours of different cultures (Bennett, 2017). It entails showing respect and appreciation for the diversity of cultures, including differences in language, customs, and traditions (Tyler, 1982). Furthermore, it facilitates effective communication across cultural boundaries by understanding how cultural factors influence interpretation and expression (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Cultural awareness encompasses promoting inclusivity and equity by recognizing and addressing the unique needs and perspectives of diverse cultural groups (Sue et al., 2019). Thus, it involves cultivating empathy and cultural sensitivity, enabling individuals to recognize and empathize with the experiences and perspectives of others from different cultural backgrounds.

Cultural awareness entails increasing people's understanding of how their culture influences how they do things, such as how they communicate, what foods they eat, and how they go about our jobs. Being culturally conscious entails knowing why cultural variety is essential and accepting that not everyone will do things the same way we do. Being aware of this diversity enables to be more considerate of how people behave based on their cultural backgrounds.

2.8. Benefits of Cultural Awareness

Given the fact that culture is taking a huge attention nowadays in the field of language teaching and learning, its successful integration would eventually result in developing learners' cultural awareness and this latter is highly recommendable as it leads the individual to:

a. Consider One's Own Culture.

Depending on the various approaches of teaching culture where some of them allocate equal attention to target culture as well as native culture, it allows the person to reconsider his own culture. It gives him the chance to review his beliefs, values and behaviours and maybe to evaluate what needs removal, adjustment or addition. In a study conducted by Constantin et al., it revealed that "students were made aware of at least two different cultures, their own culture and the one they had to make research" (2014, p. 698). More properly, it guides him to look closely at his standing point and search into the foundations of his cultural views; i.e., it enables him to be aware of the origins of his views and attitudes.

b. Respect Other Cultures

Looking deep into cultures allows the learner to uncover the hidden part of them that he may have missed as he only met the production and practices of a given culture. Put differently, knowing the reasons behind certain actions make them, not necessarily acceptable, but understandable. A person might be astonished towards some actions that are different of his culture and sometimes even odd until he discovers why and at that point, he turns to respect others and the culture they came from, in addition to avoid misjudging them. Being culturally aware, consequently, prevents the individual from looking down to other cultures and rather to appreciate the differences detected ("The Importance of Understanding Different Cultures", 2020).

c. Obtain Diverse Perspectives

Analyzing different cultures is by no means helpful in different levels of learner's life. In one way, it keeps him up to a new experience of seeing the world from another person's eyes. Also, as already mentioned, culture affects everything even the way of thinking. Therefore, getting to know a new culture will definitely affect his way of thinking as well, and why not unveiling different and more efficient ways of making decisions or solving problems ("What Are the Benefits of Understanding Different Cultures?", 2023).

d. Attain an Effective Communication

Living in such a small and crowded world, the individual finds himself always in situations where he interacts with the Other whether in social events, business meetings or academic environments. In order to keep the conversation going appropriately to reach a specific aim, he should be aware of the Oher's culture. Being culturally aware increases his opportunities to avoid any misunderstanding and to act cleverly within any context.

e. Be Familiar with Nonverbal Clues and Symbols

In the same flow of communication, people who are culturally competent can easily interpret the nonverbal signs, gestures and body language of the Oher. They use this knowledge to understand the Oher and to help the Other's in understanding. If someone is not aware of a person's culture, he may fail to decode his culture-specific items whether explicitly uttered or the messages implicitly sent through paralinguistic features, symbols or body language. Thus, the communication will subsequently fail. Taking example here of symbols and idioms; using a symbol that has the meaning of greeting in one culture may be offensive in another, or using an idiom that has a positive connotation in one participant's culture and an embarrassing one in the other participant's culture which leads to embarrassment and communication breakdown.

2.9. Developing Cultural Awareness in EFL Classroom

Although learners need cultural awareness in their daily life to facilitate interactions especially when they are in multicultural society, but the first and most important place where cultural awareness needs to be developed is the classroom. Thus, there are many ways that may help; Altay (2005) listed them as follows:

2.9.1. Describing and Explaining Culture

In the past, cultural awareness was typically cultivated through exposition and explanation. Educators would discuss the target language-speaking community or communities, highlighting their history, literary, scientific, or artistic achievements. Visual materials often supported these explanations.

2.9.2. Experiencing Culture Through Language Use

Language usage helps students become aware of appropriate levels of discourse and behaviour, including politeness formulas and their connection to social attitudes, appropriateness, turn-taking norms, and more. This process enables learners to gradually understand societal expectations and values. Teachers play a crucial role from the start by guiding learners' thinking in this direction.

2.9.3. Dialogues, Skits and Mini Dramas, Drama Games

Dialogues are commonly used in the early stages of language learning as a powerful tool for cultural awareness development. A well-crafted dialogue allows students to immerse themselves in culturally-based scenarios, demonstrating behaviour appropriate for speakers of the target language. Through role-playing these dialogues, students not only become familiar with the language but also learn how to interact effectively in various social contexts.

Drama games, typically associated with young learners, prove to be beneficial for older learners as well with minor adaptations. Games like picture making, dubbing, ear to ear, Simon says, and walking are popular choices, offering significant motivation alongside skill and

cultural awareness development. These activities not only positively impact young learners' language acquisition but also cater to their need for energetic engagement, fostering a positive intuition toward the target language.

2.9.4. Masks and Puppets

Masks and puppets are valuable tools for young learners, shielding them from potential embarrassment or breaking social norms. These devices allow students to embody characters and explore cultural attitudes and values without personal risk. They aid in role-playing scenarios and represent cultural nuances effectively, enhancing cultural understanding in language learning.

2.9.5. Role-play and Simulation

Role play is a widely recognized method for fostering cultural awareness, adaptable for various class levels with simple adjustments. It involves "let's pretend scenarios within the target culture, encouraging students to enact themselves or imaginary personas in different situations. Role play and simulation, a more elaborate form of role play, both provide immersive cultural learning experiences, allowing students to engage actively and understand the target language community's culture. Simulation expands on role play by offering background information and involving larger participant groups, creating a dynamic learning environment resembling real-world scenarios like business meetings or television programs, enriching cultural acquisition in language learning.

2.9.6. Songs and Dances

Cultural education is greatly aided by songs and dances. The structure of songs and dances has formalized cultural pieces, which explains why. Because they are happy and enjoyable, culture is displayed subtly. Songs and dances also assist students in observing other points of view and customs. As a result, empathy for other cultures is realized.

2.9.7. Native Speakers in the Class

Being in a classroom with native speakers is really beneficial. Learners have the opportunity to acquire language that is directly connected to their culture when they encounter such an experience. They therefore combine language proficiency with discourse and cultural competency.

2.9.8. Using the Bulletin Board and Keeping up with the News

Pictures, films, and videos serve as powerful cultural tools in language classes, providing authentic settings and making distant cultures more tangible for learners to grasp concepts effectively. Visual materials offer a concrete and accessible way to understand and connect with target language-speaking societies.

2.9.9. Using Pictures, Films, Filmstrips and Videos

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Outside-class activities play a crucial role in developing cultural awareness among language learners. Pen pals and tape exchanges enable personal connections, student exchanges offer direct immersion in foreign language communities, and summer camps and language festivals provide first-hand experiences and interactions with target language speakers. These activities go beyond classroom limits, fostering deeper cultural understanding and personal connections with the language and its speakers (Altay, 2005, p., 179).

To conclude raising cultural awareness is crucial in the process of foreign language teaching as well as learning. It gives a more harmonious environment that keeps learners motivated and enthusiastic. It helps learners to create a balance between their cultural identity and others' and be more involved without any fear of identity loss.

2.10. Barriers to Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness is crucial in many domains including language learning. It promotes learning and equips learners with enough knowledge to pursue their interactional goals. Despite the advantages that cultural awareness has on the level of learning or/and teaching a foreign language, the process of raising it faces many obstacles. The main are mentioned below.

a. **Lack of Knowledge**

Nowadays, people are ignorant even about their own culture. It is a real problem if someone is living in a society where he daily practices some behaviours and acts in certain ways but he is unaware of where all of that came from. Since one of the basic things is to be familiar with your own culture, not comprehending it is a real challenge that hinders your process of knowing another culture and develop cultural awareness (Healthcare Editorial Team, 2023).

b. **All Cultures are Alike**

The idea that people across the world are similar, with the same way of thinking, same manners and deeds is very popular. Based on it, people treat each other similarly and behave likewise whether they are within the limits of their culture or with people of different cultures. This is a big flaw that prohibits people from learning other cultures, therefore they misinterpret them through their own lenses (Coleman et al., 2021).

c. **Ethnocentrism**

People who blindly believe that their own culture is superior to others' cultures will never respect any other culture or at least try to know it. They are restricting themselves to only see, appreciate and glorify their own culture excluding different cultures because these cultures are wrong, their own culture is the reference, and thus these different cultures are not worth considering (Coleman et al., 2021).

d. Stereotyping

Holding that usually biased and wrong image about certain group of people coming from the same ethnic group or culture is something that harms on both sides. The widespread stereotypes make it hard for learners to communicate neglecting those, already, perceived images. If the learner just places people in boxes based on their origins, he is already closing any path that may cause meeting, and if met, he would definitely misinterpret any action. Judging a culture or a person is only a hinderance that disables the individual from further reading about that culture and keeps him away from seeking accurate information to build up his views about it and getting more knowledge and understanding towards it (Coleman et al., 2021).

e. Xenophobia

Defined in Merriam-Webster as "Fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign", is among the challenges in raising cultural awareness. Xenophobic individuals and learners who suffer from this, usually, unjustified fear cannot let themselves to deal with anything new, including cultures (Moore, 2017, p. 27). They tend to avoid any contact with unfamiliarity and refuse any knowledge that seems odd to them and challenge their calmness. In consequence, they are not open to the differences of other cultures and cannot neither recognize them nor be able to improve their cultural awareness that necessitates an openness towards diverse cultures.

2.11. Cultural Awareness in FLT

Learning a foreign language provides access to diverse societies and cultures. Language is an integral aspect of culture and culture reflects language. This emphasizes the need of cultural awareness. People need to learn as much as they can about other cultures. Indeed, students must be global citizens by accepting and adapting to variety, or by attempting to break down cultural barriers and build cultural bridges. Being aware of one's own cultural

background, as well as that of others, allows one to make more meaningful and intentional decisions by taking into account the numerous ways in which culture impacts people's perspectives on the same circumstance. Definitely, developing cultural awareness is needed as it is stated that "Developing cultural awareness is not an end in itself but rather a means toward increasing a person's power, energy and freedom of choice in a multicultural world" (Pederson, 1998, as cited in Altay, 2005, p. 173).

To achieve proficiency in foreign languages, learners are asked to achieve effective communication. Yet, some issues may be found during the process of foreign language teaching and learning where in this context culture is highlighted. It is one of the indispensable issues in this field. Despite the fact that language does not only involve grammar and phonology, many people still believe that the target language culture is considered as a threat for learners. They assume that they may lose their own cultures in their way to achieve foreign language proficiency. In EFL classroom where language is taught, culture is also conveyed to the participants. The reason is that a full foreign language learning and teaching atmosphere cannot be realized without mastery of cultural understanding or intercultural communication, which are of paramount importance in communication. It is highlighted that language cannot be separated and broken down from culture (Christopher et al., 2014).

It is assumed that:

> If language is described as a mode of human behaviour and culture as "patterned behaviour", it is evident that language is a vital constituent of culture [...] each culture has a unique pattern and the behaviour of an individual, linguistic or otherwise, manifested through that is also unique. Foreign language will mean, therefore, changing the learner's behaviour and injecting a new way of life and new values of life into his already settled behaviour pattern (Lado,1963, as cited in Çakir, 2006, p. 2).

Understanding cultural differences is crucial for both learners and teachers of a second language. It is important to recognize that not everyone is "just like me" and that individuals are unique. EFL teachers' task is to form culturally aware and sensitive students. Their first mission is to know how to deal with different problems they may encounter concerning culture. Thus, students are asked to develop their communicative skills, gain a deeper understanding of the target and local cultures' languages and behavioural tendencies, develop intercultural and international understanding, and adopt a wider perspective in the perception of the reality (Çakir, 2006, p.04).

Mitchel explained that:

> It is evident that acquisition of linguistic knowledge and acquisition of cultural knowledge have significant importance. A basic task of the language acquirer is to acquire tacit knowledge of principles relating linguistic forms not only to each other but also to referential and non-referential meanings and functions… Given that meaning and functions are to a large extent socio-culturally organised, linguistic knowledge is embedded in sociocultural knowledge. On the other hand, understanding of the social organisation of everyday life, cultural ideologies, moral values, beliefs, and structures of knowledge and interpretation are to a large extent acquired through the medium of language… Children develop concepts of a sociocultural structured universe through their participation in language activities (as cited in Altay, 2005, p. 171).

There is an interdependence of linguistic and cultural knowledge acquisition. Language learners must grasp not just grammar but also the socio-cultural context to comprehend meanings and functions accurately. The symbiotic relationship between language and culture shapes individuals' understanding of societal norms, values, and conceptual frameworks from early childhood.

According to Pederson, learners must have more culture knowledge involvement if their answers to some questions that he listed as follows:

• Is the learner aware of differences in cultural institutions and systems?

• Is the learner aware of the stress resulting from functioning in intercultural situation?

• Does the learner know how rights or responsibilities are defined differently in different cultures?

• Is the student aware of differences in verbal and nonverbal communication styles?

• Is the student aware of significant differences and similarities of practices across different cultures?

After understanding the need for incorporating cultural knowledge, Altay stated that this step is followed by another one which is to specify teaching goals. He emphasised Rivers goals which are Firstly, learners must understand that societal norms shape people's behaviour based on the options allowed by society to fulfil basic psychological needs. Secondly, they should recognize how social variables like age, gender, social class, and location influence language use and behaviour. Thirdly, learners should be able to demonstrate typical behaviours in everyday life and crisis situations within the target culture.

Additionally, they need to be aware of culturally associated images linked to common words and phrases. Furthermore, learners should develop the ability to evaluate cultural generalizations based on evidence and to gather information from various sources such as libraries, media, and personal observation. Lastly, possessing intellectual curiosity and empathy toward the target culture and its people are essential elements for successful cultural acquisition in language learning (Rivers ,1998 as cited in, Altay ,2005, p. 173).

Conclusion

Culture has proven its importance in the field of foreign language teaching and learning, as well as the necessity of developing learners' cultural awareness. Taking into account this, researchers provided numerous approaches to teach culture and reach the ultimate aim. Additionally, despite the fact that different benefits are obtained from raising cultural awareness, learners face several obstacles that need both learners and teachers' cooperation and consistent work to defeat these difficulties and reach the ultimate goal of successful implementation of culture to enhance cultural awareness that is required in FLT.

Chapter Three: Field Investigation

Introduction

After going through the theoretical part with a magnifying glass, the ground is set to closely explore students and teachers' perspectives towards promoting students' pragmatic skill through raising their cultural awareness. This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of data extracted from students' questionnaire and teachers' interview. It also aims at examining the implications resulted from the collected inputs. Hereafter the present questionnaire and interview results would help to answer research questions. Additionally, they will satisfy the investigation's objectives, and confirm or reject the hypotheses. The chapter will be followed by some recommendations and pedagogical implications, and a general conclusion.

3.1. Students' Questionnaire

3.1.1. Aims of Students' Questionnaire

The current questionnaire aims at collecting quantitative data about students' awareness regarding the topic. It intends to gather specific and factual information. Also, it reveals students' attitudes, opinions and perspectives about promoting students' pragmatic skill through raising cultural awareness. Then, it obtains insights about how students perceive the importance of pragmatic skill and cultural awareness in FLL. As well, it inquires students' knowledge about whether teachers are trying to integrate culture or not. Thus, it seeks to gain data concerning the used methods and procedures if teachers do so.

3.1.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study is second year master students at the University of 8 Mai 1945 Guelma. Its selection was due to the fact that Master students were more exposed to cultural content than the students of the other levels. They possess the ability to establish a well-grounded thought concerning the present topic. They have a rich background knowledge accumulated during the past four years. Furthermore, they have higher level of language proficiency and academic maturity compared to undergraduate students, which allows for more

in-depth discussions and insights into the topic. Considering the prior arguments, a random sample that comprises 103 out of 140 students has been selected. The sample is counted using survey monkey website (Appendix C) to confirm the representativeness and generalisability of findings. Thus, the questionnaire has been administered online and 103 respondents were involved.

3.1.3 Description of Students' Questionnaire

The design of the questionnaire is based on the theoretical part and tackles the main points discussed. It is composed of 23 questions divided between three sections (Appendix A) arranged from general to specific. It was a mixture of open-ended and close-ended questions. The questions varied between Likert scale, dichotomous questions, and multiple-choice questions. The open-ended questions were a space where students gave further justifications and definitions. Thus, students had either to select one of the provided specified choices, or to freely answer the remaining ones, which enabled them to give their perspectives unrestrainedly. At the same time, they provided quantitative data. The last question was an open space for further comments and suggestions concerning the topic. This questionnaire has a crucial role and serves as a beneficial tool to collect students' insights concerning promoting students' pragmatic skill through raising cultural awareness. It helps to foster the validity of the results and provide clear view about the topic.

The first section is composed of four questions (Q1 to Q4). It aims at collecting some general information about the respondents such as their years of English instruction, their gender, and their level of English. The second section (From Q5 to Q11) is devoted to gather data about pragmatic skill, communication, and situations when students experienced pragmatic failure in addition to having some views about the causes of pragmatic failure. The third section (From Q12 to 22) tackles the second variable, which is cultural awareness and the relationship between the variables. It aims at checking whether students are culturally aware and introduces

many other questions. The section is concluded by the twenty third question, which is an opportunity for respondents to give further notes.

3.1.4. Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered online to second year master students of Guelma University. The answers were collected during a period of ten days (from May 2nd 2024 to May 12th 2024) to reach the required number of students. Some students were collaborative and answered the questionnaire appropriately. The questionnaire was piloted to a small number of students, which enabled to correct some mistakes. It also helped to ensure the accessibility to all the participants.

3.1.5. Analysis of the Results from Students' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information / Personal Background

Question One: What is your gender?

Table 3

Students' Gender

Options	Number	Percentage (%)
Female	81	78.6%
No	22	21.4%
Total	103	100%

Respondents vary between females and males. More than three-quarters of the population (78.6%) are females. However, less than one-quarter (21.4%) are males. This variability is related to the fact that the majority of the second-year master students of English language in Guelma university are females.

Question Two: Was it your choice to study English?

Table 4

Students' Personal Choice to Study English

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	94	91.3%
No	9	8.7%
Total	103	100%

Concerning studying the English language, nearly all the participants (91.3%) stated that it was their personal choice to study English. Yet, only 8.7% of the population admitted that studying it was not their choice. Thus, it explains the motivation and willingness to study and improve their level in English.

Question Three: How long have you been studying English?

Table 5

Period of English Instruction

Years	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
12 years	81	78.64%
More than 12 years	22	21.35%
Total	103	100%

As indicated in the Table 5, the majority of students (78.64%) have been studying English for 12 years. This implies that they succeeded in all their academic years. While 21.35% of students indicate that they have been studying English for more than 12 years. This whether implies that they failed once or twice during their career, they belong to the classical system, or

they started learning English from an early age. In total, a large number of students received

sufficient English education.

Question Four: How do you describe your level in English?

 Table 6

Level of English

Level	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Very good	28	27.2%
Good	58	56.3%
Average	17	16.5%
Bad	0	0%
Very bad	0	0%
Total	103	100%

As it is mentioned in the previous table, the majority of students (56.3%) assumed that

they have a good level of English. This implies that they demonstrate an outstanding ability to

use language. About 27.2% declared that they have a very good level. This implicates that they

fully master the language, which shows that they communicate effectively, and they are able to

advance in their career. Some students (16.5%) indicated that they have an average level, which

denotes that they need to work more to improve their level, and develop their abilities. No

student (0%) assumed that his/her English is bad or very bad. This denotes that all students are

capable of using language to a certain extent. They do not have obstacles that hinder them to be

an effective participant in the learning process. Thus, students' level ranged between average

to very good.

Section Two: Pragmatic Skill

Question Five: what makes good communication?

 Table 7

Elements of Good Communication

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Linguistic competence	38	36.9%
Adaptability	16	15.9%
Pragmatic competence	29	28.4%
Listening skills	20	18.8%
Total	103	100%

More than one third of the population (36. 9%) stated that linguistic competence fosters communication. This implies that they understand that having a strong command of language enables them to be active participants in the communicative process. Less than one third (28.4%) maintained that pragmatic competence can help to improve the process. This indicates that they are aware about the fact of not just linguistic knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in different social and cultural contexts matters in effective communication. 18.8% of students pointed out on listening skill. They believe that the receiver in this two directional process matters. Some students (15.9%) agreed on adaptability as an important component. This suggests that they comprehend that being flexible and responsive to different communication styles, contexts, and needs enhances the effectiveness of interactions.

Question Six: How often do you encounter situations where do you do not get exactly what is meant by the speaker?

Table 8

Frequency of Encountering Situations of Misunderstandings.

Frequency	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Always	0	0%
Usually	7	6.8%
Often	4	3.9%
Sometimes	53	51.5%
Rarely	36	35%
Never	3	2.9%
Total	103	100%

The previous table demonstrates the frequency of encountering situations where the intended meaning has not been got. Fifty-one students stated (51.5%) that they sometimes encounter situations where they do not get the exact meaning from what is said. More than one third (35%) claimed that they rarely could not grasp the meaning behind the words. About (6.8%) usually fall in these situations. 3.9% of students often do not catch the drift of the conversation. Only 2.9% never been in certain circumstances. Students do not always fall in certain situations because they developed a certain level of language proficiency.

Question Seven: Can you recall a specific situation where you or someone you know experienced pragmatic failure (e.g., a misinterpreted joke, a misunderstood question…)?

Students provided different situations where they experienced pragmatic failure listed as follows:

"Cases where you have different backgrounds, or their vocabulary, and speaking skills are not compelling."

"During a national conference, a teacher from another university gave a statement, which I considered embarrassing, but it was too normal regarding his regional culture."

"When my teacher said to a student, "here's the door" and the student kept staring at the door. He did not understand that she wanted him to get out."

"One day, my friend arrived late to the session, so the teacher asked him about the time (to give a remark for being late) and my friend gave him the actual time."

"One day our teacher told us, you need to know the size of the shoes you are going to wear in referring to our dissertation choice, I did not understand it from the first time."

"I remember a situation where a friend of mine, who was learning English as a second language, experienced a pragmatic failure during a job interview. In the interview, the interviewer asked my friend if he had any weaknesses. In his culture, it is common to respond modestly to such questions, so my friend mentioned a minor weakness. However, in English-speaking cultures, it is often expected to frame weaknesses in a positive light or discuss how you are working to improve them. The interviewer interpreted my friend's response as a lack of self-awareness or ability to handle criticism, which affected his chances of getting the job. It highlighted the importance of understanding cultural nuances in communication, especially in high-stakes situations like job interviews."

"When I went to the west of Algeria to Oran, I said a word it sounds normal in Guelma but for them it was very offensive, so a misunderstanding happened."

The students' summarized situations indicated that pragmatic failure might be due to many reasons including different cultural values and contexts, lack of contextual understanding, misinterpretation of social cues, inappropriate and inaccurate use of language, insufficient knowledge of social norms and conventions, and teachers' proficiency in structuring a coherent message that students may not get. Misinterpreting certain aspects can lead to pragmatic failure.

Question Eight: what are some common causes of pragmatic failure in communication?

Table 9

Causes of Pragmatic Failure

Options	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Stereotypes and prejudices	10	9.7%
Politeness	25	24.3%
Contextual factors	28	27.2%
Cultural differences	46	44.7%
Speech acts	13	12.6%
All of the above	40	38.8%

Table 9 above indicates that 44.7% of students claimed that the major cause of pragmatic failure is cultural differences. This denotes that they are aware that such cultural differences may lead to pragmatic failure and hinder communication. While 38. 8% agreed that all factors may lead to that failure. Around 27.2% agreed on contextual factors. This denotes that they are knowledgeable that context is crucial when it comes to language use. About 24.3% of students stated that politeness may be the cause. This hints that they know that the mission of decoding such politeness strategies may affect and lead to pragmatic failure. 12.6% chose speech acts. This denotes that only few students are aware that misinterpreting some speech acts can be a factor. Only 9.7% of students have agreed on stereotypes and prejudices as a main reason of pragmatic failure. This may show that it is not a major factor.

Question Nine: How important do you think understanding pragmatics is for effective communication in various contexts?

Table 10

Importance of Pragmatics in Communication

Extent	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
1	0	0%
2	1	1%
3	10	9.7%
4	6	5.8%
5	28	27.2%
6	26	25.2%
7	32	31.1%
Total	103	100%

As it is demonstrated in the Table 10, no student (0%) stated that understanding pragmatics is useless for successful communication. Only (1%) of students saw that it is of very little importance. A low percentage of students (9.70%) agreed that understanding pragmatics is modestly important for effective communication. Few students (5.8%) declared that it is quite important while 27.2% of them agreed that it is more important. Others, (25.2%), assumed that is a very important factor to enhance the communicative process. Finally, about one third (31. 3%) of the students asserted that it is mostly important. This implies that the majority of the students are aware of the importance of pragmatic knowledge for fostering communication.

Question Ten: when giving feedback or criticism, how do you balance directness with politeness to maintain effective communication?

Table 11

Ways to Balance Directness with Politeness.

Choice	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Avoiding direct imposition	32	31.1%
Overcoming any possible damage from face threatening acts	25	24.3%
Avoiding threats to the hearer's image	31	30.1%
Giving direct comments	15	14.6%
Total	103	100%

As indicated in Table 11, about third of students (31.2%) asserted that they avoid directly imposing on the other part. This leads to the fact that they prefer to be indirect to maintain harmony and preserve relationships. Less than one-third (30.1%) of the population stated that they avoid threats to the hearer's image. They can understand the advantage of fostering positive environment for giving feedback. About 24.3% of students agree that they overcome any possible damage from face threatening acts. This keeps the smoothness of the conversation, and peaceful flow of ideas. Finally, few students (14.6%) stated that they prefer giving direct comments over using some politeness strategies. They lean towards directness over politeness. The results showed that the majority balance directness with politeness while some students preferred being direct.

Question Eleven: How can individuals improve pragmatics competence

Table 12

Factors that Improve Pragmatic Competence

Options	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Seeking cultural Understanding	49	47.6%
Practicing active Listening	19	18.4%
Reflecting on personal Communication	15	14.6%
Role playing and Simulations	15	14.6%
Receive feedback	3	2.9%
Others	2	1.9%
Total	103	100%

According to the table above, that indicates factors which improve pragmatic skill, more than one third of the population (47.6%) agreed that seeking cultural knowledge can help to improve pragmatic skill. This implies that they understand the importance of knowing cultural norms, customs, etc. This enables them to be pragmatically skillful and then navigate social interactions effectively. 18.4% of students asserted that practicing listening can help. This hints that they apprehend the significance of attentive and empathetic listening in effective communication. Some students (14. 9 %) see that reflecting on personal communication may aid. They are probably aware that self-reflectivity is crucial since whenever a person reflects on his own performance, he will be able to point out his weaknesses, improve them, then actively participate in the communication process. About 14.6% of students chose role-play and

simulation, which leads to the fact that they are aware that these activities can help them to practice language in context. Additionally, they enable them to navigate real life situations when they can put their language in use. A few students (2.9%) chose seeking feedback. This implies that they see that the preceding factors had more importance. A very limited percentage (1.9%) of participants opted for other factors.

Section Three: Cultural awareness

Question Twelve: How can you define culture?

Students provided many holistic definitions of culture. Some of them highlighted some aspects and facets of culture. Others classified it differentiating between material and ideological culture. Others pointed on identity, race, and ethnicity. Their definitions can be classified as follows:

"Culture is about everything that rules society: values, beliefs, systems of language, communication, and practices that people share in common and that can be used to define them as an instinct collective unity."

"Culture encompasses the beliefs, behaviours, customs, traditions, art, and way of life shared by a particular group of people. It shapes their identity, norms, values, and how they interact with each other and the world around them."

"Culture includes race, religion, identity, beliefs, and other things."

"Something that everybody has."

"All the features that distinguish one group of people from another."

"Culture is everything that can influence our understanding and view of the world."

"Is the shared patterns of behaviours, beliefs, values, customs, traditions, language, and artifacts that characterize a particular group of people or society. It encompasses the way people live, interact, and perceive the world around them."

"A specific way of life of group of people that includes shared actions and behaviours among

the community."

"Culture is defined as the characteristics that differentiate a group of people maybe the ethnicity or race."

Thus, their definition indicates that they are knowledgeable about the meaning of culture. They agreed that culture is the complex whole that includes beliefs, customs, values, traditions, language, norms, etc.

Question Thirteen: Do you consider yourself culturally aware?

Table 13

Cultural Awareness

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	86	83.5%
No	17	16.5%
Total	103	100%

The vast majority of students (83.5%) consider themselves culturally aware. May be because they know their culture and its aspects and recognize the differences and borders between cultures. While only 16.5% do not see themselves as culturally aware. This indicates that they need assistance to develop it or they need to make more effort to explore cultures including their own.

Question Fourteen: Justify your answer

This question was asked to see what makes students see themselves culturally aware. The main and most agreed-upon answers are given below:

"I take into account others' customs, beliefs, and values because respecting other's culture is a part of respecting and cherishing mine; I tolerate others' culture and preserve mine."

"I could easily and successfully communicate with different people from different social and cultural backgrounds throughout 2 decades demonstrating empathy and openness."

"Sometimes, don't understand jokes, or proverbs which are related to my culture and misinterpret them and I also lack cultural knowledge when it comes to different cultures."

"I consider myself culturally aware because I have been exposed to different modules like CFLT and others that trained me on a diverse range of texts and topics, allowing me to understand and respond appropriately to cultural references, norms, and sensitivities."

"Because I respect others' traditions, customs, and beliefs, and I refrain from judging others' ways of living because I acknowledge that cultures vary greatly. No one should mistreat others simply because they don't share the same cultural background. Additionally, I genuinely enjoy learning about different cultures as I believe they greatly enrich a person's personality, potentially altering their perspectives and beliefs about various groups of people. I firmly believe in the equality of all individuals, regardless of cultural differences."

"Because I possess the ability to understand, navigate, and adapt to the cultural norms, values, and practices of the societies where I belong. This awareness allows me to effectively communicate, interact, and function within cultural contexts."

"I'm highly aware of the elements of my own culture and I have a modest knowledge of the target language culture or at least I know there are differences that I should pay attention to whenever I'm in a situation that needs that."

Based on the answers provided by the majority of respondents to this question, students are truly culturally aware because they are familiar with their own culture's beliefs, traditions and customs. As well, they are sensitive to other cultures' values and limits. Most important, their answers showed a great recognition of the differences among cultures and they respect them. Still, those who consider themselves unaware have explained that it is because they do not really know other cultures.

Question Fifteen: Which factors can hinder raising cultural awareness?

Table 14

Factors that Can Hinder Raising Cultural Awareness Ranked by Students

Option	Number	Percentage (%)
Lack of cultural knowledge	72	69.9%
Stereotyping	33	32%
Lack of exposure	50	48.5%
Language barriers	46	44.7%
Resistance to adapt	34	33%

The compiled information presented in Table 14 demonstrated that more than two-thirds of the population (69.9%) agreed that the factor that can largely hinder raising cultural awareness is the lack of cultural knowledge. Additionally, it seems that (48.5%) of the participants considered lack of exposure as a hinder in the process. Almost the similar percentage of the participants (44.7%) settled on language barriers. Also, resistance to adapt and stereotyping were chosen by 33% and 32% of the population respectively. This implies that students are aware that cultural awareness can be blocked due to cultural ignorance and the little exposure to the target language culture. Participants know that students' poor language abilities can prevent them from being culturally aware. In addition, they acknowledge that holding stereotypes about the target culture and resistance to adapt can also hinder the process of raising cultural awareness.

Question Sixteen: How often are you exposed to the target language culture?

Table 15

Students' Exposure to the Target Language Culture

Options	Number	Percentage (%)
Never	1	1%
Rarely	7	6.8%
Sometimes	30	30.1%
Often	19	18.4%
Usually	30	29.1%
Always	15	14.6%
Total	103	100%

As shown in Table 15, 30.1% of students declared that they are sometimes exposed to the target language culture and those who are usually exposed make 29.1% of the population. Less than one-quarter of the population (18.4%) mentioned that they are often exposed to the English culture. The previous results denote that students have been in classes where the target culture is discussed. Also, participants who claimed their permanent exposure to the target language culture represent 14.6% of the whole population which indicates that they do not only depend on their cultural academic exposure but they also surround themselves with culture. However, 6.8% of participants stated that they are rarely exposed to the English culture. Surprisingly, only (1%) of students claimed that they never met culture! These last two results can be explained based on the fact that some students have not chosen to study English and therefore they are indifferent to know its culture.

Question Seventeen: Do you agree that cultural awareness can help to improve pragmatic skill and then promote communication?

Table 16

The Effectiveness of Cultural Awareness in Improving Pragmatic Skill and Promoting Communication

Options	Number	Percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	10	9.7%
Disagree	2	1.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	6	5.8%
Agree	43	41.7%
Strongly agree	42	40.8%
Total	103	100%

By examining Table 16, we notice that 41.7% agreed that cultural awareness helps to improve pragmatic skill and then promote communication. Even more, 40.8% of students strongly agreed on the positive impact of cultural awareness on both pragmatic skill and communication. Combined together, they show that students are highly appreciating the importance of cultural sensitivity in relation to pragmatics. However, a small minority (9.7%) strongly disagreed and only 1.9% of them disagreed to this point which can be a result of students' not observing a clear relation between mentioned issues. 5.8% of the respondents were neutral when it came to this question.

Question Eighteen: Do your teachers equip you with enough cultural knowledge?

Table 17

Equipping Students with Enough Cultural Knowledge

Options	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	79	76.7%
No	24	23.3%
Total	103	100%

In this question, more than three-quarters of the population (76.7%) confirmed that their teachers equip them with enough cultural knowledge. Conversely, less than one-quarter denied the latter. This implies that most of teachers are trying their best to include cultural elements in the teaching process. Yet, time constraints and curriculums' obligations and other reasons do not set a favourable ground for teachers to equip students with enough cultural knowledge.

Question Nineteen: If yes, what are the approaches they follow?

Table 18

Students' Ranking of the Followed Approaches by Teachers

Approaches	Number	Percentage (%)
Multicultural Approach	48	46.6%
Comparative Approach	42	40.8%
Topic-Based Approach	23	22.3%
Task-Based Approach	18	17.5%
Others	16	15.5%
Monocultural Approach	14	13.6%

The generated results show that 46.6% of students agreed that teachers follow the multicultural approach which is probably the one that teachers find beneficial in giving insights to different cultures to raise students' awareness. It enables learners to develop empathy towards the target language culture. For the comparative approach, 40.8% of participants viewed it as the one followed by their teachers which can be a result of teachers' belief that comparing between the target culture and the native culture facilitates learning and brings more understanding. Moreover, 22.3% of the population shared the belief that teachers follow the topic-based approach which provides integral insights into the target culture and promotes interest in native culture. When it comes to the task-based approach, only 17.5% of participants communicated that teachers follow it. This implies that teachers find this approach as both time and effort consuming. However, 15.5% of the respondents revealed that they were exposed to other approaches as the list is long and the choice is open. Additionally, 13.6% of students agreed that monocultural approach is used by their teachers. Although this approach focuses on the target language culture solely, teachers use is due to some courses' nature. In brief, teachers mainly focus on the multicultural and comparative approaches, but they switch to different approaches and mix between them whenever possible and effective. This shows that teachers' choice of these approaches and putting more emphasis on both of them is due to their positive results on learners.

Question Twenty: In your opinion, what role does empathy play in fostering cultural understanding and effective communication?

This question was given to investigate students' opinions concerning the role that empathy plays in fostering cultural understanding and effective communication. The following points are some of their responses:

"Empathy is crucial for fostering cultural understanding and effective communication because it allows us to put ourselves in others' shoes, understand their perspectives, and appreciate their

experiences. By empathizing with others, we can better grasp the nuances of different cultures, recognize the impact of our words and actions, and communicate more respectfully and effectively across cultural boundaries."

"It doesn't."

"I think empathy play a crucial role in improving cultural understanding; it puts the whole communication at ease and provides smooth atmosphere where the communication can be more effective."

"I don't understand the relation between empathy and language!!"

"Understanding others' feelings and accepting their perspectives foster the communication."

"For a person to be culturally aware he should be able and willing to put himself in others' shoes. Whenever you communicate, you need to see the other's point of view before you make any reaction and this cannot happen unless you empathize with the other."

Diving in the answers, we could sense that some of the students are unable to make a link between empathy, cultural understanding and communication. Nonetheless, this was not the case for the large majority as they comprehended the role empathy plays in nurturing cultural understand and effective communication. In other words, most of the respondents agreed that possessing the ability to put oneself in other's shoes would certainly lead them to appreciating different cultures and thus maintain successful communication.

Question Twenty-one: How do you balance language proficiency goals with the learning of cultural content in your foreign language classes?

This question was also provided to see how students balance language proficiency goals with the learning of cultural content in the foreign language classes. Offered below are some of the answers generated.

"Incorporate cultural content alongside language proficiency goals by integrating literature, films, and traditions into language lessons and assigning projects that require cultural exploration."

"Very balanced, because both of them complete each other."

"It involves integrating cultural learning into language instruction to enhance overall language acquisition and cultural understanding."

"In foreign language classes, balancing language proficiency goals with cultural content involves integrating language skills with cultural activities, authentic materials, and meaningful interactions to deepen understanding and appreciation of the target culture."

"Not equally honestly because I sometimes seek to know the language more and say that the cultural content can come later and sometimes the opposite."

"As a student of English Literature and Civilization, I'm always exposed to culture either in the civilization sessions or in literature sessions, because we can't make an analysis of a literary work without having knowledge about the context into which the text had been written. That is to say, practicing the English language and the culture are daily routine for me."

"Balancing language proficiency goals with the learning of cultural content in foreign language classes involves integrating cultural content into language learning activities. This can be achieved through incorporating cultural readings, discussions, videos, and real-life scenarios into language lessons."

Despite the minority of students who has no clue, we can observe that almost all of them know the interrelated relation between language and culture. More than that, they acknowledge the importance of setting a balance between language proficiency goals and cultural content although its difficulty. They showed that they are making efforts whether inside the classroom with their teachers' instructions and guidance or outside the classroom undertaking it as task to achieve overall language command.

Question Twenty-two: Which strategies used by teachers that you find beneficial in improving your cultural knowledge and thus your pragmatic skill?

Table 19

Students Ranking of the Beneficial Strategies Used by Teachers to Improve Cultural Awareness and Pragmatic Skill

Strategies	Number	Percentage (%)
Cultural Assimilators	55	53.4%
Role Plays	51	49.5%
Quizzes	33	32%
Culture Capsules	31	30.1%
Genuine Materials	29	28.2%
Culture Asides	20	19.4%
Others	6	5.8%

Concerning the strategies used, 53.4% of students affirmed that teachers' most beneficial strategy is cultural assimilators. Following that, almost half of the students (49.5%) agreed that role play comes next as an advantageous strategy, whereas almost one-third of the population (32%) saw quizzes as useful in improving cultural awareness. Culture capsules and genuine materials were the choice of almost the same number of participants 30.1% and 28.2% of the population as they classify them effective. Additionally, less than quarter of the respondents (19.4%) admitted the value of culture asides. With that, there are 5.8% of the population who pointed out the usefulness of other unmentioned strategies. The shared results indicate that the more teachers vary strategies that involve native-like contexts, the more students get benefit and develop their cultural sensitivity and pragmatic skill.

Question Twenty-three: Feel free to add any further suggestions/comments

In this last question, respondents were given opportunity to provide any additional suggestions or further comments. All of them offered suggestions and some of their supplementary comments are presented below:

"I think it would have been better if we had cultural exchange programs that would help students foster their cultural knowledge better"

"One of prominent skills when it comes to speaking is Pragmatics skill. Raising awareness about that skill through culture facilitate the process of communication, especially in foreign languages."

"Cultural knowledge and pragmatic skill are both essential components of effective communication in any language."

"Teachers play a vital role in facilitating this process by incorporating cultural content into language lessons and providing opportunities for students to engage in cross-cultural interactions."

"This topic is highly important due to the fact that opinions are contradicting about it."

"Interesting topic, the questionnaire is very helpful, wish you all the best."

3.1.6 Summary and Discussion of the Results from Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire sectioned into three parts led to a variety of results. The general information collected have shown that the majority of respondents were females, only few males participated. Studying English was mainly their own choice, this was reflected in the high number of respondents and the way they answered the questionnaire, as they were motivated to do so. The majority of them had at least 12 years of English instruction. Their level ranged between average and very good. This denotes that they reached a certain level of English proficiency and they are more capable of using it.

Regarding the second section (pragmatic skill), the majority of students claimed that linguistic competence along with pragmatic competence make good communication. Yet, a number of them have chosen the other factors as it is indicated in table. Students has claimed that they sometimes encounter situations when they do not get the intended meaning (Table 8). They provided good examples when they experienced pragmatic failure due to some misunderstandings. They insisted that all the factors, mainly cultural differences, lead to this failure. This indicates their awareness about such factors that might prevent this miscarriage from occurring. The majority of students regarded pragmatic skill as a highly important skill for effective communication as it is shown in Table 10. This denotes that students are conscious that using the language appropriately in context has a vital role in the communication successfulness. Answers about balancing directness with politeness ranged between being direct and being polite with applying some effective strategies. A good number of students chose that improving cultural understanding can help in promoting pragmatic skill but the other answers stressed the role of the other factors.

The third section tackled cultural awareness and its relation with pragmatic skill. Students first defined culture as a complete whole that includes customs, beliefs, norms value, etc. Surprisingly, the majority of them consider themselves culturally aware and justified their answers with providing different situations and examples. A great number of students chose that the lack of cultural knowledge might hinder the process of being culturally aware in addition to the other factors. Thus, they are usually exposed to the target culture and strive to develop their cultural awareness. In Table 16, they agree that cultural awareness can help in promoting pragmatic skill, this shows their awareness of the huge importance of culture in enhancing language skills. Thus, their teachers equip them with that cultural knowledge following different approaches including multicultural approach, and using different activities. Their perspectives concerning fostering empathy and how their teachers balance a language

learning aim with developing cultural knowledge, differed according to their experiences. Finally, they gave comments about the topic and asked to have a final copy of the dissertation.

3.2. Teachers' Interview

3.2.1. Aims of Teachers' Interview

The administration of this interview is motivated by the fact that it enables the gathering of dense information concerning teachers' views towards the impact of cultural awareness on pragmatic skill. Since the interview allows researchers to gather qualitative data, it is, in this case, the best tool to reach detailed annotations on the topic under discussion. This interview aims at inspecting the different approaches and strategies that teachers use in teaching culture. Last, but most important, it offers opportunity for teachers to evaluate the integration of culture in the EFL classrooms.

3.2.2. Population of the Study

The topic of this research is about the perspectives of both teachers and students on the issue of culture in relation to pragmatic skill. For that, and more specifically, teachers of 8 Mai 1945 Guelma university compose the chosen sample for this interview. Considering the reliability and generalizability of the results, teachers were chosen randomly. Although there are more than forty teachers in the department of English language, administering the interview with the whole number is very difficult since it takes a lot of time and effort in organizing face-to-face interviews. Plus, analyzing results would take even more time and energy. Therefore, a sample of twelve teachers, a number which sought to be suitable and somewhat representative, were interviewed.

3.2.3. Designing Teachers' Interview

The interview included a total of twelve open-ended questions through which teachers can express their ideas and standpoints spontaneously. In general, the questions are designed to

seek teachers' views on the role of culture incorporation in improving pragmatic skill. However, the questions are somehow thematically ordered.

The first question is about teachers' teaching years which gives an idea about their experience. The following question which concerns the role of communication in foreign language learning seeks to understand how teachers see communication in the FLL. The third question tries to check teachers' elements of good communication. Thus, both questions discuss the concept of communication deeply. Moving to the fourth question, it digs deeper to introduce the link between pragmatics and culture. In the same theme, the fifth question attempts to reveal teachers' attitudes towards the integration of culture in their classes. Reaching the sixth question, teachers are supposed to provide different methods, strategies or lessons they use to integrate culture. This question aims to check whether there is a variety in teachers' choices or not. However, the seventh question, which looks similar to the previous one, addresses mainly the thorough description of the approach used by teachers in order to understand the way teachers implement culture and the motive(s) behind that. Question eight is about students' improvement and it is put to see how far teachers have succeeded in applying their approaches. The following question directly investigates teachers' possibility of assessing cultural and pragmatic skill. Question ten works as a help to know how a combination of directness and politeness serves better for effective communication and when to go for each alone. Question eleven is clearly asked to see if they validate the hypothesis that states that cultural awareness improves pragmatic skill and promotes communication. By the end, teachers are left an opportunity to add any comments or suggestions they have about the topic. Not to forget, regarding that some interviewees added some interesting comments, we were encouraged to ask unplanned questions that we mention them with each question respectively.

3.2.4. Conducting Teachers' Interview

In the period from May, 6th, 2024 until the 13th of the same month, interviews took place at the University's department of English language. In one of the classrooms, we invited teachers, each of them alone, where we interviewed them in a comfortable and friendly environment respecting their anonymity. The time of the interview ranged between 3 to 40 minutes depending on the teachers' information and engagement with the topic. With an exception of one teacher who emailed her answers, we insisted on face-to-face interviews to be able to detect the full picture including body language despite that teachers were very busy.

3.2.5. Analysis of Results and Findings from Teachers' Interview

Question One: How long have you been teaching English?

Figure 4

Teachers' Experience in Teaching English Language
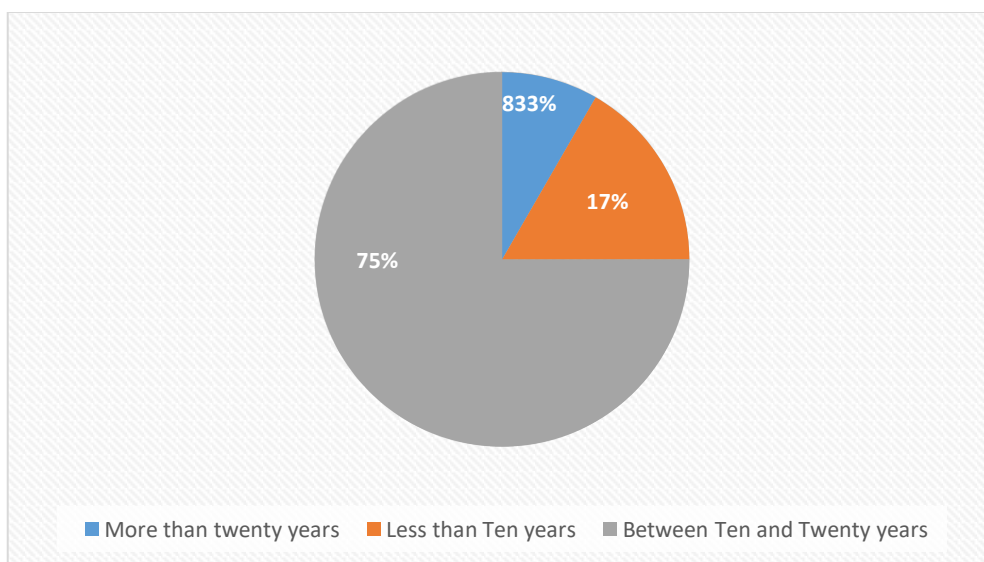
The first question aims at extracting information about teachers' experience in instructing English as a foreign language. Nine out of the twelve (75%) interviewed teachers have been teaching English for more than a decade now. This shows that they have a deep understanding of the subject matter and they established a well background in this concern. It means that they have a wide range of experiences which may include familiarity with different

students' promotion. Moreover, they taught different modules that enabled them to vary their teaching methods and approaches. Two teachers who form 16.66% of the population have been teaching for less than ten years. They have modest experience of teaching English. They are in the process of developing their teaching techniques. One teacher has been teaching for more than twenty years which means he has a long carrier with different generations. These findings indicate a diverse range of teaching experiences among interviewed teachers. This diversity could provide a balanced perspective combining the enthusiasm of newer teachers with the expertise of those who have already gone deeper in the field.

Question Two: How can you explain the role of communication in foreign language learning?

Communication is a basic skill that foreign language learners will to master. It allows them to put the language they are developing into practice. Thus, this question attempts to explore the different teachers' perspective about its role in FLL.

In this context precisely, communication is the interaction between teacher and student and student- student containing parts of the culture that may be expressed through the language. For that, learners don't use language as a code but rather as a vehicle that encompasses content which expresses culture. All teachers agreed that communication is the heart of foreign language learning. They all settled on the fact that it is essential, central and crucial in language learning, i.e., language itself is one means of communication and it is impossible to separate language from communication. Thus, it is the oxygen and the tool through which learners practice, refine, and internalize language skill. In other terms, it is what makes language, culture and skills explicit as it is the primary aim of learning the language. Communication involves all the four skills of language which are intertwined in the learning process. To conclude, the teachers shared the same point of view that communication is indispensable and whenever learners try to learn a foreign language, their ultimate objective is to achieve effective communication.

Question Three: What makes good communication?

Not all interactions where learners are exchanging words are considered as communication. A successful one entails meeting some standards. Hereafter, it is necessary to be knowledgeable about them.

Teachers in this concern provided some factors that may lead to effective communication. Some teachers shed light on linguistic competence; they considered grammar structure, syntax, vocabulary command, fluency and accuracy crucial. This denotes their focus on the linguistic aspects as the cornerstone of communication. Others put emphasis on the cultural knowledge as they acknowledge its importance. What matters most for them is the knowledge of norms, customs, values, beliefs, habits, practices etc. According to them, culture shapes different contexts and helps learners to adapt to them. They consider that learners should find the right position in order to learn effectively without denying their cultures. These teachers do not exclude the role of linguistic competence, but rather consider both factors interweaved. More than that, they stressed communicative competence as a key factor.

A number of teachers directed their focus to the crucial role of the listener. They considered understanding, reception and perception as the core of communication. For them, a learner should be an attentive and skillful listener. Yet, participants in the process should be equipped with some analytical skills and background knowledge that allows them to actively engage with one another. On the other hand, few teachers pointed on some factors regarding the message such as clarity, conciseness, coherence, adapting to different contexts and practice. In addition to that, the environment should be free from any threat or intimidation. Finally, one teacher drew attention to the critical role of body language and its interpretation. She claimed that mastering the skill of interpreting it prevents any misunderstanding. Their answers proved that they are highly mindful of the vital features for rich communication.

Question Four: Do you see any relation between pragmatics and culture?

Pragmatics and culture are strongly interrelated. While pragmatics is the study of language in context, culture shapes this context. Understanding pragmatics requires insights into the cultural system. It influences speech acts and communication styles. This question attempts to position culture within pragmatics based on teachers' perspectives.

All teachers saw that there is a firm relationship between pragmatics and culture; they regard culture as a source of pragmatics. In order to understand the meaning, a strong cultural ground is required. In others terms culture is the space in which pragmatics is performed. It is what decides the appropriate use of language. For instance, what is considered polite or appropriate varies greatly across cultures, impacting communication styles and expectations. They impact each other because a student who has a good command of language is able to appreciate the target culture. Being familiar with cultural elements helps students benefit from this culture and acquire language in an easier way. Therefore, teachers' familiarity with the great relationship between pragmatics and culture can set the ground to improve pragmatic skill.

Question Five: During classes, do you try to integrate culture in your teaching process?

Integrating culture is a must since language mirrors culture and culture reflects language. In a learning environment, it is the teachers' mission to incorporate culture to ensure a full mastery of language.

Some teachers stated that they are implementing culture but not to a large extent. For them some modules oblige them to do so for instance: Culture and Foreign Language Teaching, Literature, Civilization, and Oral Expression. Thus, the nature of the module controls the possibility of embedding culture in it. However, some teachers admitted that the modules they taught are somehow rigid and bounded with some rules which limited their freedom to introduce any cultural aspects, an example for that grammar and written expression courses. Some teachers contradicted this idea stating that is possible to highlight some cultural content even in grammar with including examples that reflects cultural aspects. Others claimed that they cannot

due to some curriculum and times constraints. They consider that this mission should be planned and guided from an administrative point of view. To sum up, opinions ranged between the ability and the inability to include such cultural content.

Question Six: Could you please provide examples of methods, activities or lessons you have implemented to promote cultural understanding in the classroom?

In the process of integrating culture there are various methods, lessons and strategies that teachers can use to increase cultural understanding. Teachers in this question uncovered different beneficial methods and activities that they see effective.

In some modules, a good number of teachers agreed that theory is suitable to integrate culture as Literary Theories raise students' critical thinking and awareness. It is one of the important tools that leads to the understanding and accepting of the other. For example, students are introduced to Postcolonial Theory, which is all about culture, or some cultural studies that offer different cultural lenses. In addition to presenting lessons as the one of idiomatic expressions, these teachers stated that they guide their students to read articles, titles or books of the related Literature that describes aspects of the target culture. On the other hand, among the activities that teachers use are role-plays, drama, debates, group work sessions or project-based activities which are centered on different cultures and contain communication and interaction between students, providing immersive experiences for them. They also use homeworks, giving students a cultural situation and asking them to look for the explanation of the situation or misunderstanding.

Besides, others confirmed that they make use of grammar activities that reflect culture as an opportunity to introduce cultural aspects. Furthermore, to support all of that, some of them emphasized the help of technology. Watching movies and documentaries, using projections, audio types and other multimedia approved to be of great help. Through that and other social media accounts, they expose their students to the target culture and at the same time enable

them to share their own. All of the aforementioned strategies demonstrated that teachers are trying hard to be creative and effective in the methods and strategies they apply to promote cultural understanding.

Question Seven: Could you please describe your approach to integrate cultural awareness into your teaching practices?

Approaches of teaching culture differ and so as the objectives of employing each of them. For this reason, teachers introduced the plan through which they apply certain chosen approaches and their aims.

Views concerning this question were kind of equal between two main approaches. Some of the teachers believed that the comparative approach in which they often highlight different aspects of each culture is the suitable as it gives equal and simultaneous attention to both, native and target cultures. Put differently, whenever they discuss any part of the target language culture, be it habits, beliefs, traditions or else, they bring the native culture to discussion and start a sort of comparison in order to realize their uniqueness and to recognize others' differences. One of the teachers added that they try to bridge both cultures so that they make their students feel themselves at ease with the other culture.

The other category of teachers decided on the multicultural approach. This latter focuses not only on target language culture but it also tackles varieties existing within the target culture. By this, it leads to the realization that we can use the same term, the same linguistic item but each time it is used in a new context associated to new meaning and this meaning may refer to a minor culture or a superior culture. Additionally, it fosters students' empathy, curiosity, and critical thinking, encouraging students to explore cultural differences without judgment, to appreciate the richness of diversity. One of the teachers emphasized the interdisciplinary approach especially in teaching literature. Finally, the implementation of all approaches is

implicit and does not require teachers to directly express what they are doing but reaching their objectives, which is developing students' cultural awareness, proves their success.

The fact that almost all teachers ratified one of the mentioned approaches does not exclude other existing approaches, in this context, but rather indicates that these are the highly effective ones.

Question Eight: Have you noticed any improvement in students' level specially their pragmatic competence since you integrated culture?

The main aim of using various methods, approaches and devoting efforts in instructing culture is to improve students' pragmatic skill. The wide majority of the teachers confirmed that they can actually say their hard work is observed through students' development. In other words, every year they can notice this change in students' level and the progress they made. They emphasized that the approaches that they are using has positively impacted most of the students' cultural awareness and pragmatic skill. One teacher has given an example where it clarifies and validates the efficacy of their approach. She said that one of the examples that she provided was "Do not forget to bring a bottle of wine with you," and immediately one of her students rephrased it as "Do not forget to bring a bottle of soda with you." The teacher argued that "wine" is part of the target culture but the student gave its equivalent in our mother culture. She pointed out that the student's reaction made it clear that she succeeded in, implicitly, integrating culture through the comparative approach. Teachers, also, affirmed that students showed greater cultural awareness and significant improvement in pragmatic skill. They are more knowledgeable on the different contexts. They can notice that learners have developed a kind of tolerance and a kind of openness. All of the teachers stressed the point that not all students have improved and there are always some exceptions. One of the teachers commented that one of the reasons that hinders the improvement is that some students do not value the point of appropriateness and context which prevents them from stepping forward. Yet, two of the

teachers believe they lack the opportunity to see a real improvement. In brief, teachers' reactions to this question showed that their process of incorporating culture is fruitful despite the exceptions and inconveniences that should be solved or at least minimized.

Question Nine: How do you assess students' progress in developing both cultural awareness and pragmatic skill?

Fostering students' pragmatic skill is important for their development. Educators' mission is not only about equipping their learners with the academic knowledge, but also developing their cultural understanding. Therefore, they need to assess the successfulness in this process through different methods and activities.

Teachers' ways of assessment were not the same since the nature of the module plays an important role in deciding the method of evaluation. A number of teachers assess pragmatic skill and cultural knowledge separately. For them, the former can be assessed through problem solving based assessment or context-based assessment; they include some activities like role-plays and simulations, situational tasks and real-life scenarios. They involve students in various and different context and try to see how learners are going to react, how they are going to solve their problems, and how they are going to communicate in order to achieve their desired goals. The latter can be evaluated through reflective essays and cultural presentations. Some teachers stated that they depend on some activities and observation; they determine students' progress through observing the change in their behaviour and the way of perceiving such things. They claim that it is hard to observe, yet it is one of the best methods. They consider time constraints an obstacle that hinders them from using a well-established pedagogical assessment. Few teachers state that they ask questions during the session and seek feedback and this is the only ways for them due to the lack of opportunity. Other claimed that they cannot do so and supported their point of view declaring that the rigid syllabi of grammar and linguistic modules hinder them from assessing certain cultural aspects and pragmatic skill. They stated that this

progress can only be seen in some modules like literature and civilisation. Finally, they stated that their students are all progressing in a way or another, whether when they evaluate them or when their colleagues do. The variety of teachers' experiences led to a variety of views regarding students' assessment.

Question Ten: When giving feedback or criticism how do you balance directness with politeness to maintain effective communication?

Feedback is a crucial component of teaching; it is important for teachers to master such skill. Regarding cultural context, a teacher should be able to appropriately give feedback whether directly or politely. Thus, for maintaining effective communication in EFL classroom teachers lean whether towards directness, politeness, or create such balance between them. This question seeks to extract their insights towards this issue.

Teachers did not agree on one thing. Some of them preferred being polite while giving feedback, because English as a language is characterised with correct forms. They considered direct one as a factor that can harm students, prevent them from trying, and hinder their initiatives. They prefer to convey negative feedback implicitly and in a sensitive way. They favour constructive feedback to raise their self-awareness to such cultural issues or toward the importance of promoting pragmatic skill, and to raise their consciousness toward how culture contributes in differentiation. They consider polite feedback as a way to protect students' cultural norms. Others favoured being direct; they consider that certain cultural elements require them to be direct when highlighting them. They consider it as a way that can directly help students in the process of learning. Few teachers indicated that they balance politeness with directness. They provide constructive feedback in a respectful manner, focusing on specific areas for improvement while also acknowledging students' efforts. They emphasize the importance of clear communication and cultural sensitivity, encouraging students to reflect on their language use and consider different perspectives. But at the same time, they are direct in

many situations and concerning many topics like religion. Therefore, for them directness alone is boring, and politeness alone is not beneficial. All teachers were aware of the importance of giving feedback to maintain effective communication, which is a direct result of pragmatic skill improvement, but their method of delivering it ranged between being polite, direct, or create a balance between the two.

Question Eleven: Do you agree that cultural sensitivity can help to improve pragmatic skill and then promote communication?

Effective communication is the target of foreign language learners. To realize successful interaction, they should be equipped with some important skills including pragmatic skill. Thus, cultural knowledge can support promoting this skill.

The majority of teachers shared the same view about this question. They highly agree that cultural awareness can be a great solution. When learners are aware with the target language values, customs, and norms they are more likely to adapt them -and not adopt them- so they will be active participants in the learning process. Thus, knowing culture can help in selecting language that is more appropriate and apply it if in the right context. It means that understanding cultural nuances and context is essential for interpreting and producing language in a manner that is appropriate and meaningful within a given cultural setting. Therefore, cultural awareness can prevent pragmatic failure. One teacher stated that it could impede developing pragmatic skill if the method used is not effective to the situation. As a whole, the majority wholeheartedly agreed that cultural awareness can help to improve pragmatic skill leading to effective communication.

Question Twelve: Do you have further suggestions or additional comments?

In this question, teachers provided different suggestions and additional comments. Firstly, they expressed their wish to have a training concerning ways to teach and include culture. They stated that it is not an easy task to do since they have to prevent students from the

process of assimilation and adoption. They claimed that their mission is about not only transferring cultural knowledge but also developing appropriate methods and strategies to do so. Secondly, some teachers liked the topic in term that it needs to be developed and implemented in the educational system so that they can make a kind of pedagogical assessment after an administrative decision to incorporate culture. It needs to be systemized so that their efforts will be a direct result of a well-established curriculum. Thirdly, they specified that due the technological advances that induce certain ideologies, which affect the way students see the world around them, this topic is highly important. Briefly, cultural awareness should be emphasized to avoid cultural and identity loss and enable students to contextualize their behaviours and reactions in terms of culture.

3.2.6. Summary and Discussion of the Results from Teachers' Interview

The administered interview collected data from different teachers who covered diverse courses and have a substantial level of experience. This ensured the variety in perspectives and reliability of the obtained information. Based on their answers, teachers have a common view concerning communication as they all agreed on the fact that communication is the goal of learning a foreign language and the mastery of this latter can only be observed through the former. Teachers, also, avowed the idea that communication necessitates the linguistic knowledge equally as the pragmatic and cultural one. This denotes that teachers are well informed about the fundamental role that communication plays within the FLL environment and they know the solid ground above which communication stands.

Teachers' answers matched as they all confirmed they revolved around the strong and fixed relation that links pragmatic to culture. The responses made it clear that English language teachers recognize the way that cultural context may change the meaning. Recognizing the heavy weight culture has in FLL classrooms, teachers has taken responsibility to implement it within their teaching process. Although some teachers admitted the difficulty they face, chiefly

due to some courses' nature, most of them keep trying to include some cultural elements whenever possible. Similarly, teachers' use of methods, lessons and activities varied depending on the course. While some of them find that presenting theoretical lessons and providing articles work better for them, others agreed that activities like role-plays, dramas, project-based work sessions and other technological tools are beneficial and fruitful.

In addition to that, teachers explained that following mainly the multicultural and comparative approaches in teaching culture make it easier for learners to take the best profit. These approaches, strategies and methods that teachers prefer to use indicate that they are highly aware of learners' needs and weaknesses. As well, it implies that teachers prove that integrating culture in FLT classrooms is a very sensitive step that needs assuming responsibility and attentiveness. The overall opinion is that teachers usually see development in their students' level especially when it comes to enhancing their pragmatic skill. Despite that, some teachers revealed that sometimes they are unable to evaluate their students' cultural awareness and pragmatic skill mainly because of the curriculum, others figured out some methods to do so. Some of them opted for problem solving based assessment or context-based assessment and observation as the best ways to assess. Others claimed that asking questions could be very helpful as means of evaluation. If this can lead to anything, it leads to the idea that assessment in this concern may be very challenging but teachers are attempting to make it through.

Furthermore, one of the tasks that teachers encounter is providing feedback or criticism. Concerning this issue, teachers were divided as there are those who prefer politeness to keep students' cultural norms from harm. Then, we have others who see directness and stating things clearly is the only way to guide learners. After that, we find those who see that balancing between the two is helpful as politeness and directness are complementary. This implies that teachers' choices in this matter depend on the situations they face. The core question won the union of all teachers as they insisted that teaching culture either implicitly or explicitly would

certainly develop students' pragmatic skill or fortify their communication skill. For them, cultural context is what reinforces the appropriate and correct use of language in the communicative act and any failure in raising cultural awareness will negatively affect communication. To this end, teachers' responses entail that teachers are highly conscious of the great impact cultural awareness has on pragmatic skill and communication and they are devoting themselves to raise awareness about that and include it by all the means they believe effective.

Conclusion

As the results of the questionnaire showed the great majority of students are certainly familiar with the value of possessing cultural knowledge in enhancing pragmatic skill. Teachers, on the other end, share the same opinion. Based on this, it can be stated that this common ground makes it easier for teachers to include culture in their FLT classes, on one hand. Acknowledging the consistent relationship between both variables, on the other hand, motivates students to receive and benefit from the cultural content provided by teachers. The latter, by consequence, are changing their methods and procedures in order to meet all learners' needs in this concern and produce the appropriate language in the right context.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The theoretical chapters discussed the different notions ranging from culture to prag-matics including communication and its importance in the process of foreign language learning. Yet, the research found that communication itself is exposed to some difficulties either physical, psychological, linguistic or socio-cultural. It offered the different divisions of communicative competence where all of the models presented shared some components but the highlighted and elaborated ones were the socio-linguistic (including socio-cultural) and pragmatic competen-cies.

The research made it clear the development of pragmatic competence, which enables the learner to use and understand appropriately the utterances within any context, can be hin-dered due to pragmatic transfer, variations in cultural values and teacher/teaching materials. The result of these hurdles is either pragma-linguistic or socio-pragmatic failure. The research also concentrated on the main areas that are affected by culture such as politeness and speech acts. The first chapter concluded with the fact that possessing enough cultural knowledge, in addition to others, is one of the significant factors to enhance cultural awareness and thus prag-matic skill. For that, the second chapter explored culture and its vital importance. Throughout this part, research focused on displaying the different approaches and strategies that support the implementation of culture and raising intercultural awareness. It stressed the fact that cultural awareness plays a pivotal role in EFL classes as it helps in promoting different skills including pragmatic skill.

The practical chapter directly explored teachers and students' insights that were with the fact that intercultural awareness fosters pragmatic skill. It proved that teachers and students are quite aware of the relationship between cultural awareness and pragmatic competence. In addition, it showed that most of students who pay attention to the cultural differences in com-munication are likely to become more effective and sensitive communicators, which is essential

in a globalized world. However, those who find themselves lack this knowledge are making efforts to develop it. Both teachers and students settled on the fact that promoting cultural awareness fosters empathy and reduces cultural prejudices, contributing to a more inclusive and harmonious learning environment. Students asserted that teachers, especially those equipped with cultural and pragmatic knowledge, are helping them to improve their linguistic and pragmatic competencies through implementing different methods and using different techniques that are convenient with the language learning goal.

By the chapter's end, the hypothesis that denotes that raising intercultural awareness would promote pragmatic skill was confirmed. Thus, schools and educational institutions may need to revise their curricula to include more comprehensive cultural content. Aligning with global standards both the theoretical and practical chapters were complementary to one another that they covered the gap and successfully answered the research questions.

1. Pedagogical Implications

The current work built its study on the idea that integrating culture is necessary in EFL classrooms to enhance pragmatic skill. Thus, the main outcome is that teachers and students strengthened the truthfulness of this notion. Given the importance of cultural knowledge and pragmatic skill, further suggestions and recommendations are presented below:

1.1. Teachers' Implications

To begin with, Teachers have to work more on integrating culture as a part of the curriculum itself of different courses. This is the work of policy makers, but teachers are the ones responsible to demand and insist on that. In addition, they should develop comprehensive lesson plans incorporating diverse cultural materials and scenarios into language learning curricula to enhance pragmatic skills. Also, teachers should develop specific tools to assess students' pragmatic abilities and cultural understanding regularly in addition to means of evaluation that permit them to know students' level. Using assessment, it is the teachers'

opportunity to give feedback that helps them to adjust their teaching strategies to better meet students' needs.

Moreover, teachers should have cultural competency training to help them master cultural knowledge and develop ways to teach it effectively. In other terms, they must conduct in workshops focusing on pragmatic aspects of language use such as speech acts, politeness strategies and conversational norms within the same culture or across-cultures. In addition, they should increase the use of role-plays activities that stimulate real-life cultural and intercultural interactions which allow students to enhance their pragmatic skill through practicing it in different contexts.

Besides, they should work on discussing controversial topics that work on increasing critical thinking skill and, by consequence, raising pragmatic competence. More important, teachers should set the comfortable environment for students to express themselves and their cultural orientations. Allowing students to compare and contrast different cultural practices and communication styles critically, makes them less anxious and more open to accept others' ideas and quickly adapt with them. Furthermore, they should implement digital tools and resources such as online platforms, apps and virtual exchanges to expose students to diverse cultural contexts and facilitate pragmatic practice. Through teachers' large emphasis on culture and cultural elements, students will recognize the impact of culture on pragmatic skill and communication.

1.2.Students' Implications

It is the also the task of students' themselves to work hard and participate in the process of enhancing their pragmatic competence. One of the steps they need to do is to participate in the seminars or study days that tackle culture or controversial topics in the context. They are advised to participate in study-abroad programs that promote exchange and offer opportunities to make them familiar with different cultural environments. As well, students have to surround

themselves with culture through reading about the target language, watching movies, listening to podcasts and any other means that may help in understanding the different communicative acts and how to act when participating in one. In other terms, learning communication strategies that have their roots in culture and control the pragmatic language use like aspects of politeness, nonverbal cues and others to avoid pragmatic failure.

Briefly, the process of enhancing students' pragmatic skill is an activity that necessitates the active participation of both teachers and students to reach satisfying results.

2. Limitations of the Research

This study faced a number of limitations that slowed the process. Some of them were handled and the others were not. The following were the main difficulties:

- The lack of sources at the level of the library (only four sources concerning one variable were available) and the inability to access some online sources because of the high cost.

- Some teachers were not collaborative and they refused to be part of the interview which affected the representativeness of the sample.

- The struggle to get the required number of students because they did not answer the online questionnaire until we spent 10 days asking them personally one by one. We whether sent them privately the questionnaire selecting them randomly from the promotion group or met them face to face at the level of the department.

- Time constraints: looking for sources and selecting the appropriate ones consumed a lot of time.

- Conducting an experimental study, which was the aim at the beginning, was not possible since the appropriate time to carry out an experiment is long and must be achieved after putting the basis of the theoretical part. Thus, second year master, the appropriate population for this study, will not be available during this time.

- The timing of the training devoted for second year master students, which was conducted in secondary/middle schools, was not suitable and decelerated the process; it is preferable to plan it during third-year program.

3. Recommendations for Further Research

Beyond the topic of this study which investigated perspectives of teachers and students towards the implementation of cultural awareness to enhance pragmatic skill, different additional issues should be tackled in this area to support the findings, add extra missing points or else. Below are some of the preferable suggestions that may help future researchers.

- An experimental study would definitely highlight other different reasons that lead to students' pragmatic failure.

- Future researchers are advised to explore various solutions that enhance pragmatic competence.

- It would be very important to search for suitable and reliable tools to evaluate and assess pragmatic skills since teachers are facing problems in doing so.

- A thorough investigation should be conducted on how academic success or failure is related to pragmatic skills.

- Investigating the diverse suggestions of teaching the target language culture to enhance pragmatics and intercultural communication without exposing students' native culture to any danger or loss.

Through this research, an effort was made to cover almost all the areas related to the key elements which are pragmatic competence and cultural awareness. The main aim of conducting such a research work was to clarify any understanding hindrances and contribute to the wheel of knowledge, with the hope that this modest research would be a solid ground for future researches in this field.

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Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire

Exploring Students and Teachers' Perspectives on Promoting Students' Pragmatic Skill through Raising Cultural Awareness.

The Case of Second Year Master at 8 Mai 1945 Guelma University.

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire that attempts to explore students' views on promoting pragmatic skill through raising cultural awareness. The results of the questionnaire will be analyzed and used for the accomplishment of a Master dissertation; your answers are crucial for the success of this research. The questionnaire is anonymous and your answers remain confidential. Therefore, you are politely invited to answer the following questions either by ticking/circling the appropriate option(s), or by making a full statement.

We truly appreciate your cooperation.

Ms. BOUACHA Fatine Hadil

Ms. BOUKHELOUF Awatif

Department of English

Faculty of Letters and Languages

University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma,

Algeria 2024

Section One: General Information/ Personal Background

1. What is your gender?

Male	
Female	

2. What was your motive behind studying English?

Personal choice	
Administrative choice	
Other	

3. How long have you been studying English?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

4. How do describe level in English?

Very bad	
Bad	
Average	
Good	
Very good	

Section Two: Pragmatic Skill

5. What makes a good communicator?

Linguistic competence	
Adabtability	
Pragmatic competence	
Listening skills	

6. How often do you encounter situations where the intended meaning of a message differs from its literal interpretation?

Never	
Rarely	
Sometimes	
Often	
Usually	
Always	

7. Can you recall a specific instance where or someone you know experienced pragmatic failure (e.g., a misinterpreted joke, a misunderstood request…)

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. what are some common causes of pragmatic failure in communication?

Stereotypes and prejudices	
Politeness	
Contextual factors	
Cultural differences	
Speech Acts	
All of the above	

9. How important do you think understanding pragmatics is for effective communication in various contexts?

Less important	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	More important

10.When giving feedback or criticism how do you balance directness with politeness to maintain effective communication?

Avoiding direct impositions	
Overcoming any possible damage from the Face threatning Acts	
Avoiding threats to the hearer's image	
Avoiding threats to the hearer's freedom of action	

11.How can individuals improve pragmatic competence?

Seeking cultural understanding	
Practice active listening	
Reflect on personal communication	
Role playing and simulation	
Receive feedback	
Others	

Section two: Cultural awareness

11. How can you define culture?

Culture is………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

12. Do you consider yourself culturally aware?

Yes	
No	

13.Justify your answer

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

14. Which factors can hinder raising cultural awareness? Rank the following options accordingly

Lack of cultural knowledge	
Stereotyping	
Lack of exposure	
Language barriers	
Resistance to adapt	

15.How often are you exposed to the target language culture?

Never	
Rarely	
Sometimes	
Often	
Usually	
Always	

16. Do you agree that cultural sensitivity can help to improve pragmatic skill and then promote communication?

Strongly disagree	
Disagree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Agree	
Strongly agree	

17. Do your teachers equip you with enough cultural knowledge?

Yes	
No	

18. If yes, what are the approaches they follow?

Comparative approach	
Topic based approach	
Task based approach	
Multicultural approach	
Monocultural approach	
Others	

19. In your opinion, what role does empathy play in fostering cultural understanding and effective communication?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

20. How do you balance language proficiency goals with the learning of cultural content in your foreign language classes?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

21. Which strategies used by teachers that you find beneficial in improving your cultural knowledge and thus your pragmatic skill?

Culture Capsules	
Culture Asides	
Genuine materials	
Quizzes	
Cultural Assimilators	
Role Plays	
Others	

22. Feel free to add any further suggestions/ comments

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

We appreciate the time devoted answering the questionnaire, Thank you a billion!

Teachers' Interview

Dear teachers,

As our current research is about **Exploring Students and Teachers' Perspectives on Promoting Students' Pragmatic Skill through Raising Cultural Awareness**. We are conducting this interview to check your viewpoints concerning the topic under discussion. Therefore, you are kindly invited to answer the questions in hand as this represents a major part to complete our research. This short interview will be recorded based on your permission, yet your answers will be kept anonymous and their analysis is confidential.

Questions:

1- How long have you been teaching English?

2- How can you explain the role of communication in foreign language learning?

3- What makes good communication?

4- Do you see any relation between pragmatics and culture?

5- During classes, do you try to integrate culture in your teaching process?

6- Could you please provide examples of methods, activities or lessons you have implemented to promote cultural understanding in the classroom?

7- Could you please describe your approach to integrate cultural awareness into your teaching practices?

8- Have you noticed any improvement in students' level specially their pragmatic competence since you integrated culture?

9- How do you assess students' progress in developing both cultural awareness and pragmatic skill?

10- When giving feedback or criticism how do you balance directness with politeness to maintain effective communication?

11- Do you agree that cultural sensitivity can help to improve pragmatic skill and then promote communication?

12- Do you have further suggestions or additional comments?

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix C

Survey Monkey Website

https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/

Teachers' Interview Transcripts

Respondent 01

Q1. it's been 15years, 3years as a part time teacher and 12 years as a full-time teacher.

Q2. Well, the role of communication is essential to the learning process and experience. Communication is crucial, plays a crucial role in language learning. So, of course I think it's a very important role.

Q3. There are many factors. So, first of all, the students' command of language, of the English, which means the vocabulary the students have, fluency, their discussion, the analytical skills, their awareness of the topic they are discussing, as well their familiarity with the topic. These are all important factors. I think we can also relate this to psychological aspect because some students do have the vocabulary, do have the fluency, and we can test this when they are communicating in a familiar safe environment, but once they feel threatened and intimidated this will affect their communication.

Q4. So, I asked you about the word pragmatic you know because this word means many things and you said that, in your context, it's about the use of language in context. So, yes (with a very positive facial expression) I see very strong relationship because as a teacher of literature, I believe that there is a close relationship between pragmatics and culture. So, they both impact each other, so language here impacts culture, because a student who has good command of language is able to appreciate and understand the target culture, and it's also being familiar with a culture helps students benefit from this language and acquire a language in an easy way.

Q5. Yes of course as I said, it's this thing is determined by the nature of course. My course as I said is postcolonial, African, diasporic minorities, multicultural literature so culture is so essential you know. I adopt an interdisciplinary approach to literature which links literature to

culture. So, we teach literature in a cultural context. So, it's impossible to escape this cultural aspect in teaching literature.

Q6. So, the first thing that I rely on and you are familiar with because you have because you have been in my class it is teaching students literary theory. So, literary theory is not just a tool to interpret literature or writing a good literary essays and good dissertations but it's a tool to raise critical thinking of the students and their awareness of the importance of understanding and accepting the other. So, the first thing as I said it iss theory because a theory is this bunch of ideas and concepts that boost students cultural awareness; there are different theories that that students are introduced to like postcolonial theory which is all about culture. We have also cultural studies; we have talked about even some theories in feminism etc., that are so related to culture. In addition to theory, the activities I rely on or I employ in my courses are mainly trying to introduce students to the people that they learn about, that they are taking and absorbing their ideas. For example now, unfortunately we didn't use this with you, but now since we have introduced e-learning, there is a possibility, and I have already used it this year and it was really successful and effective strategy is to get students watch people as I said theorists or writers' interviews or… even videos about their work. By watching the people they are learning about, I'm creating a bond between the student and the person that he is researching and investigating. Now, of course in our courses we are teaching foreign names, foreign concepts, so when you get students to watch these people, hear them speak, learn about them so there is connection and bond between the student and these people and this will help students really appreciate the task at hand like as I said a theory for example or a literary text.

Q7. Yes, I have already said that it's an interdisciplinary approach which is really based on the idea that literature is rooted in and active within different contexts like historical, cultural, social so your experience with me testifies this. So, you see, we have studied novels in African literature and these novels were discussed from different angles. We have seen social problems

for example that these novels are discussing, we have also dealt with the cultural aspect of these novels, the political and even the philosophical aspect because we have tried to connect theory to literature so we tried also to discuss some of the philosophies and theories of philosophy in the literary text that we are studying. So, it's an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach and I think that any study of literature should use and employ this approach because the more you relate literature to this context the more students will be engaged in the course. Yet, if you just focus on aesthetic artistic aspect of literature and the form for example, the students may get bored, but once you use, integrate and emphasize the context this will make them more engaged because they feel that it's about them so the work speaks to them. So, in teaching literature I always look for this experience to feel that the work is speaking to them.

Follow up question: Is our culture included or only the target language culture?

Of course, it is included. I'm speaking about my course which is African literature and as you have noticed in my explanation, I always make this connection between the works we are studying although they are anglophone, sub-Saharan African writers, but since we are also post-colonial subjects, I always make the link between the experience of people in Kinea, in Ghana, in Nigeria, with the experience of Algeria. once I include Algeria, I feel that students are more engaged and attracted to the course because they feel that this could be their experience and this is may be their experience.

Q8. Of course (with confirming facial expression and tone) every year we notice this change in students and as I said this is one of the things that I work on and I really emphasize it's to make sure that literature should not be a separate thing from language acquisition. I always try to make the students aware of the importance of literature and as I said it is always literature related to culture, not just for raising cultural and social awareness but it's also a tool to acquire

language, improve the language skills. Thus, I see there are students who have showed progress. First semester for example they were students who did not have that confidence in their ideas and discussing topics of the course but then, second semester, I started to see this progress and I think this has to do with the nature of the course which as I said it relates and connects many things, language acquisition, culture and of course the literary artistic aspect of literature.

Follow up question: They develop both cultural awareness and pragmatic skill?

Yes, this is what I wanted to say. So, as literature as a course and the approach that I'm using has affected students' cultural awareness and pragmatic skill. But as I said when we say "affected the students" we are not speaking about all the students; we are speaking about the students who have developed this willingness and appreciation of the module because in some cases and unfortunately and you're familiar with this idea some cases there are many students who feel that literature is just a foreign thing okey! Foreign thing, it's not really something for them. As I said, from my experience I noticed that many of these students have changed their view about literature once they are taking third year literature why? Because as I said third year literature is more about their experience as post-colonial subjects. But still, there are some students who showed resistance to this.

Q9.

Q10. Yess, giving feedback. So, giving feedback is such an important task and a crucial, a crucial task for a teacher and student as well because a student benefits from the feedback of the teacher but teachers should be very cautious about this thing because you know as a teacher who has also a background in psychology I know that the way the teacher gives feedback affects the students eee a student may benefit from the feedback if it is conveyed a specific way so what is this specific way. My approach here is that I give students freedom eee to discuss their ideas, I don't interrupt them when they are discussing the idea, once they finish I will give

a kind of indirect feedback okey so that I won't intimidate them because I know exactly it's not really easy for them to speak publicly, to share their ideas especially when we are dealing with some sensitive topics so I try to be very careful and very conscious when giving feedback and I also try to eee to ee I ensured that student understands the feedback that I'm offering him or her because you know sometimes as teachers we have some terms, some ideas students are not familiar with so I make sure that the feedback is well conveyed with a very simple language and as you said here with politeness yes of course politeness I think that both teachers and students should show this politeness is a crucial to the learning eee experience, so it's essential in my class, respect politeness.. because I feel that not because you're a teacher you have the authority and the power to intimidate students, we were students and we were intimidated in so many ways so I'm very careful and cautious about this okey.

Q11. Okey, cultural sensitivity. What do you mean by cultural sensitivity? So, we have already talked about sensitive topics, there are some sensitive topics, and these sensitive topics Do trigger cultural sensitivity. So, what do you mean exactly by cultural sensitivity here? (laughing) is it a concept in linguistics or what?

Intereviewer: It's like cultural awarenees, being awareness. Being aware of your culture and the other culture at the same time

Cultural awareness, okey. Do you agree that cultural sensitivity can help to improve pragmatic skill and promote communication? OFCOURSE I BELIEVE IN THIS BECAUSE AS I SAID The more, you're familiar with the culture, the target culture for example, the more student is able to talk and communicate and discuss ideas because I said for a good communication one of the main factors is students' familiarity with the subject. So, if students are not familiar with the culture okey I believe they cannot really discuss this culture or any topic because our department we're teaching different courses, there is diversity of courses we're talking about

different subjects, so I see you're your program and I am wondering how they can take all these courses, there is diversity there is richness in the program, students are expected to discuss diverse ideas, many ideas about many subjects so I believe that cultural awareness leads student to have a better communication and cultural awareness leads students to be open to speak about a certain sensitive topics so it's just mmm recalling a question I asked Dr. *********, I told her that mm my experience with the students this cultural resistance, we used the word "cultural resistance", I told her I experienced cultural resistance with certain topics, I said I gave the example of teaching feminism for example, I said when I teach feminism, especially in a class of many male students I experienced that cultural resistance, you know…eee so why and this cultural resistance may lead to a failure of communication because students who are resisting these ideas are not really familiar with the topic so when I explain to them the topic when I give them eee when I offer them the opportunity to listen to many ideas, many views, many voices in the feminist school for example they are less resistant and they are open to communicate and talk about this topic so I believe that awareness, cultural awareness is essential to have good communication, without cultural awareness we are going to have ee especially in literature class a kind of cultural resistance and cultural resistance of course will lead to failure of communication.

Interviewer: so if we can say the stereotypes and like previous wrong ideas

Of course, the preconceived ideas of students about certain topics like as I said feminism. So when I said feminism "Ohh it's Ennisswiya النسوية , it's that evil approach that will destroy the society.." So when I … Of course, I agree that there are some voices in feminism that can be really described as evil and destroyers of the society and the world in general, but we cannot really ignore some voices who have really contributed to women's freedom and eee agency and emanicipation. So, once we overcome this culture resistance of students by making them aware of this culture, we have a better communication.

Q12. So, I believe that teachers should make a clear connection between language acquisition and culture because as I said ee some people, we're speaking about preconceived ideas and there is this misbelief that people in English department are just taking the language the way we we study English in the middle school for example or high school so it's just about language, it's just about grammar and vocabulary and … no it's not about this, it is about this and more and to get this you know, here the main purpose of many students is to be able to communicate properly using very good English so in order to reach this aim here you have to rely on many sources. I always ask students to read, to read literature and literature is about culture, okey so to read literature and acquire the culture so that they will have good English when they write so I think the teacher should make this link and should make students aware of the importance of maintaining this link between culture and language skill. Yes that's it do you have further questions (laughing)?

Interviewer: In the same realm of language, they think that language or like linguistic ability is like more important and it is, if we are linguistically able you can communicate easily. But you may face cases where students are linguistically able but they can't put words in the right context; they are misunderstood

Yes of course there is this idea of misunderstanding. So, ee I believe that it' impossible to learn a language without learning about the culture okey? so learning about the culture, being familiar with culture is an essential tool to acquire the language eeee as I said, learning the language through just grammar for example rules, it's to separate detach the language from its context so I believe that this is impossible okey it's going to be very boring process of learning and ineffective okey. So, I always believe that there should be more entertaining process of learning so how entertaining? It's through linking the language to the culture. So, that's why people use music for example, songs, English songs to learn vocabulary, to learn., so what's the music? it's a cultural aspect of this language, so using music, teachers who are specialized in teaching

a language they are also asking students to watch movies, what' a movie? it's a cultural aspect okey! So, in my case I ask them to read literature and literature is also cultural element so there is a close relationship between culture and language. Do you have any further?

Interviewer: I have a comment about cultural resistance. I see that some students are culturally resistant due to the fact that they are afraid to lose their own culture because they don't balance the target language culture with our own culture.

Yess, good, very good, very good idea. So, you know in the question I asked Dr. ****** we talked about this cultural resistance and I said that my question was what are the courses that lead and trigger students' cultural resistance and what are the strategies you employ to overcome this cultural resistance. And my solution and strategy is to try to adapt the topics, the topics that we are discussing and they are topics related to the target language ee yes culture to our context, when I say context I mean Algerian Arab Muslim context. So, it's just the idea of feminism as I said, students are resistant to the idea ee to this course but then I try to adapt this to our context, so I give them, instead of teaching them only one voice which is very radical voice okey that is not congruent with their Arab Muslim culture, I bring them other voices, okey like for example eee not all of them and I don't really agree that mmm we can really call all of them Muslim feminists or using Islamic feminism. There are some less rigid, less strict less radical voices okey and as I said this is kind of as I said to adapt to the context a technique that help students to adapt to the context I feel that there is less resistance when students hear about the ideas of these voices. So, it's necessary to be really aware of cultural differences so we have to be really aware of cultural differences when we are teaching target culture okey the teacher should be cautious and should try always to adapt this course to the needs and context of the students.

Interviewer: this is about adapting not adopting.

It's about ADAPTING, it's more about adapting you know because we have already seen so many words and concepts in African literature and theory about this so when am teaching this , when we appropriate thing when we take things like a language for example like a culture it's not just we take it and ADOPT it as it is; we appropriate but we change and we adapt you see. So, there is this if you remember the course of the issue of language in African language we talked about coping strategies, so we need to cope with cultural differences because you know after all we're in the field of humanities and we are, we have a responsibility and we have a mission to make these students proud of their own culture and help them overcome any kind of crisis of identity so we have to take this into consideration when we are teaching the target language because this may, taking things as they are without adapting them to the context may be really harmful to the students culture and identity.

Respondent 02:

Q1. For 13 years, 11 years at the university.

Q2. Communication is at the heart of foreign language learning because if you notice many individuals want to learn a language, let's say English, want to learn English for the sake of communication okey! not for writing, not for listening but to communicate with others. Yet, we find that people learn grammar of the language but they say "I cannot communicate as if I have not learned the language" so, communication is very important in foreign language learning.

Q3. Good delivery of the message, simple language, clear ideas, that's it.

Q4. Highly related, pragmatics and culture are highly related

Q5. Yes, I do, whenever I find the opportunity to integrate some cultural aspects, I do in any course I teach

Q6. Examples of methods… in fact I have never taught culture directly because I did not teach cultural communication or those courses or modules to culture but I just taught oral expression, written expression, grammar, methodology, linguistics, discourse analysis but each time I try to integrate some activities related to culture, they are not lessons.

In oral expression, we have a lesson in which we describe aspects of the target culture. But, I always add activities related to or activities that reflect the target culture and through these activities I try as much as possible to teach culture or to compare the target culture to the native or the mother culture. For example, in grammar classes we deal with verb tenses, with types of sentences and in these lessons I provide examples, sentences, passages or paragraphs about different aspects of culture. Well, when I say grammar, we have to understand the meaning of the sentence in order to apply rules, right? This way, students are exposed to culture at the same time they're doing their activity at the same time they're learning grammar, okey! so, I integrate culture into grammar classes. The same thing is done in research methodology. I used to teach research methodology, all my examples target some aspects of culture and we always talk about it, as I've already mentioned it is integrated in all courses. This is not to say that the course does not allow me or does not permit of culture, no it can be integrated as long as there are examples you can use examples that target aspects of culture.

Q7. In fact, I prefer, I prefer to follow the comparative approach. For example, I remember once in a grammar class like I guess 6 or 5 years ago, when the example was "do not forget to bring a bottle of wine with you," "A bottle of wine" is not our culture and one of the guys said "she told him to bring a bottle of soda" you see, this is the equivalent; a bottle of wine in the target culture its equivalent in our culture, in the mother culture is "a bottle of soda". Here, students got familiar with this comparative approach, when he saw the example of bottle of wine, automatically he provided the equivalent in our culture. And I highly appreciated his answer though his colleagues were laughing and mocking, but I highly appreciated it, that my

method of teaching, my target and my approach which is to integrate culture in grammar was successful. I reached my objective though students were not aware, I've never said that we are here to integrate culture into grammar, no it was implicitly but successful.

Q8. In a way there is an improvement. There is an improvement but their pragmatic competence… In fact, I have not really seen the improvement or I can say I I cannot remember exactly, but the example I provided moments ago can be proof of improvement but I really cannot give a correct answer to this question…

Interviewer: it cannot be seen maybe because there is a kind of disparity between students' levels

This is one point. Another point is that you know the evaluation, when we evaluate either continuous evaluation I mean "la note TD" or the exam, it targets only the grammar, or the research methodology, or discourse analysis or ... in oral expression we can test this, but as if I had not the opportunity to check the improvement at the level of the pragmatic competence of the students. We can say there is an improvement, based on the prior example, there is an improvement, but as I said I did not have the opportunity to evaluate things that's why we cannot provide decisive answers.

Q9. I cannot really assess because of lack of opportunity. You know, the nature of the module, people always or let's say teachers say "I'm teaching grammar, how am I supposed to talk about culture, I have a rigid syllabus to be covered throughout the year or the semester." So, I consider this as something to be appreciated when I integrate culture in a way or another to content courses right! Culture can be discussed in civilization, in literature, but not in linguistics. In linguistics, we talk about sociolinguistics, we talk about language's dialects, but when talking about language, when illustrating things in language I can integrate aspects of culture so this is I consider it as an achievement by myself in fact, okey, especially in grammar and

research methodology! You do not always find a teacher who mix this with that, who mix culture with another course, it's not an easy task and I have spent like 2 or 3 years trying this project.

Q10. Directness with politeness, in fact I always prefer politeness as strategy to provide feedback in order not to harm the students, in order not to make students feel inferior or embarrassed or to have a negative feeling because a direct comment might hinder the student's initiative, perhaps the student is trying but when I give a direct negative feedback, he might stop his trials. So, I always prefer politeness. If it is positive, we appreciate and we praise and everything is done explicitly, but if it is a negative answer, a negative feedback it has to be done in a sensitive way let's say, sensitive way, consciously yes implicitly. Sometimes I provide the correct answer in another way, or if it is totally a wrong answer, sometimes I say it's not really applicable in our context or I might say this would be a good answer to the next question okey. As a person, regardless of being a teacher, as a person I prefer to be polite as much as I can!

Q11. Cultural sensitivity can help to improve pragmatic skill and then promote communication… if one is culturally aware or has certain cultural competencies, he would easily show pragmatic skills therefore he would reach effective communication. So, I agree, I totally agree. Cultural sensitivity or cultural awareness or cultural competence is highly related to pragmatic skill. How can we be pragmatically skillful? when we know about the culture, the target culture, right! If you do not know about the culture you cannot be pragmatically skillful, if you do not master these skills you can never succeed to communicate effectively, you can communicate with nonnative speakers because all of them do not have that good level of competencies the cultural and the pragmatic, right? Otherwise, I mean with native speakers it would be very difficult to convey a message having a lack of cultural awareness which results in lack of pragmatics. Pragmatic failure by the way, pragmatic failure there is an article written by Nadia Idré

at the university of Bejaia, 2014 I guess, pragmatic failure is purely the result of lack of cultural awareness or cultural competencies let's say

Q12. I cannot really think of any further suggestion, but it's a very interesting topic in fact, it's very interesting topic. Thank you very much.

Respondent 03:

Q1. I have been teaching English for twenty years 16 as a permanent teacher and the others as a part time teacher.

Q2. Of course, it has a major and crucial role since language itself is one means of communication and we cannot imagine communication without language so it is the heart of language learning and language teaching

Q3. Of course, many things and factors make good communication. First, the mastery of language means the linguistic competence is the basic one for good communication in addition to communicative competence because as usually I told you that developing only the skills of language are not enough for good communication. In addition to being correct in your language use while you communicate either orally or in the written form. You also need to be appropriate and you need also to convey your message clearly and fulfil the functions or what we call speech acts relevant to the situation. In addition to the use of para language. We do not ignore the role of body language eye contact body movement gestures and so on. Therefore, it is not just linguistic and communicative competence but also goes beyond to paralanguage if you want and also many other factors may be sharing the same age, the same context, the same culture, the same background and many other ones. However, we need good linguistic competence as well as good communicative competence to be included in effective communication.

Q4. Of course, there is if you want a relevant tied relationship between pragmatics and culture. Because usually whenever we speak about culture it represents different contexts for languages as well as it is one aspect of language and one aspect of communication in fact. Then since pragmatics is the language use in context, so automatically one of the contexts is the cultural context, sharing the same culture or when you communicate with someone who has totally a different culture from yours you need to consider this in any context you are going to engage in and communicate. In addition, it helps in understanding the message clearly and be appropriate if we cannot recognise the cultural factors or cultural contexts so we cannot understand the message. We may understand a very different from what its cultural meaning is exactly. We cannot separate the two from each other.

Q5. Yes, as possible as I can and as possible, the course requires this because depending on the type of knowledge, the syllabus content I teach to students I can determine if it requires integrating some cultural issues from time to time. For example, in our module teaching skills and practices each time I try to provide you with an example that is relevant to our content like a proverb or something similar or whatever. I have had an experience of teaching master two I think this course of culture and foreign language teaching I have taught it one time so it was really necessary to include and each time refer to some cultural issues and aspects yes, either of the foreign language or of the target language.

Q6. Yes, this one depends on the previous one I said it depends to the course but generally I teach linguistic courses where we don't really need to refer back, but it was the case when I taught social linguistics for many times and discourse analysis also for many times for many years. It means each time we try to for example rely on communicative approach, on activities mainly for discourse and culture. It is relevant to the context and each time we denote how culture in the understanding and transmission and reception of the message. Also, the type of the lessons for conversation analysis. The course of conversation analysis also usually requires

to include somehow some cultural lessons and some cultural activities to usually promote cultural understanding. But usually in my teaching I usually advise students to how to say... to contextualise their classroom discourse not to decontextualize from their daily life, their daily culture, social context culture by sometimes as I have said giving some idiomatic expressions. In our context that better explain one point or in the course for example or they just the try to demonstrate or highlight the difference in meaning between one sentence or a proverb in the target language and the native language and so on. Yes... However, generally it depends as I said to the type of the course.

Q7. It is like a comparative approach. I try to include both cultures but for English for example the Chinese culture Vis à Vis English or vis à vis American culture are the culture or in general the African context or situation, within the same country in Algeria for example, how it varies to raise students' awareness usually. Even in linguistics for example when we speak about teaching dialects, language varieties and so on so usually we refer back to some of these instances just to raise students' awareness about cultural differences and cultural richness of either the native context or another context, yes. Also raising their cultural awareness towards the language use. It means we can use the same term the same word, the same linguistic item but each time it is used in a new context it has new meaning and this meaning may refer to a minor culture or a superior culture yes. On the other hand, it varies from one social class to another social class or one social group to another from one maybe geographical setting to another geographical setting, either positively or negatively understood.

Q8. Yeah, usually in fact students really they do not care about context or they do not really think mainly about appropriateness of language use they think that since they know a word this is its dictionary meaning so it's suitable everywhere in any context or for any message and function which is not the case. So, we try our best to improve this cultural awareness and pragmatic competence in fact because we said even if it is not one sub system of language but

usually scholars consider it as the sixth sub system of language in an indirect way. Why? Because if you know how to use the language, how to speak it and so on but you don't know how to communicate via it in different contexts so the lack of this pragmatic competence prevents you from effective communication you can't be understood and then you can't understand others also yes.

Q9. Yes, I cannot answer this maybe for other teachers. But usually, we can maybe at least measure this progress for example when we ask students for example like in exams or any other classroom assignments, students write an essay for example about a given topic. So, the way mainly for such courses I said in the case of teaching discourse or this culture and foreign language teaching here we can know how students or if they are really aware about such cultural differences and them of course we speak about the pragmatic skill otherwise in other courses really, we can't yes. Because culture is not part of the syllabus content, we cannot measure in fact their cultural awareness.

Q10. Of course, by giving constructive feedback, by raising their self-awareness to such cultural issues or toward the pragmatic skill. Also, by raising their consciousness toward how culture contributes in differentiation in meaning for example, we may have the same structures we said but when they are said in two different situations, they may mean very different things. Alternatively, the same expression in our native language or culture may mean totally the opposite in another culture it can be the native culture also yes. Usually, we try to direct using polite words why not supporting this feedback with real life examples highlighting daily life situations for example.

Q11. Of course, of course I highly agree as I have said we need to be highly appropriate in our language use to our context and mainly the cultural one. It can be cultural, it can be religious, but since you speak about culture, culture as we said has a fundamental role in understanding

and promoting effective communication. And one way to be appropriate is to develop pragmatic skill so I highly agree about this one.

Q12. I hope good luck for you. It's a good topic that really needs to be developed and to be implemented really in the educational system in general because we are really suffering from identity loss and cultural loss the new generations they are really far from their cultures and they are far from contextualising their behaviours their actions and reactions in terms of culture. They fail most of the time I think most of people being educated or not they fail to communicate with them because they ignore or don't think at all how such factors contribute either in the well understanding of the message or preventing the receiver from understanding. Or it may raise some how to say deconstructive factors for example just by using a word which maybe refers to the opposite culture so it may conflict, it may be understood as an insult for the other receiver or disrespect of his ethnic group or religion or whatever, since when we say culture we don't only refer to the culture itself. Our culture for example is a part of history it's the fusion of religious, cultural and social background this is what makes culture so culture has different customs, traditions, and so on. So, all of these form what we call culture we can't really specify the term as it denotes because it has different aspects so this is why I hope this issue will be tackled more and more for further researchers or to be integrated in the educational system. Students are melting in the other culture concerning the way they are clothing the speech choice of language items body language which has no relation with our culture. This is why I said culture is very vast to be limited in one aspect or two, the respect of gender, politeness as you have mentioned. We are suffering from gender crisis a man dressing like a woman and vice versa religious crisis religion which is a fundamental part also struggles and it's supposed to shape our behaviours and our culture in fact I highly agree about this one.

Respondent 04:

Q1. For 10 years.

Q2. Communication in second language learning is like the oxygen for language acquisition. It's the tool through which learners' practice, refine, and internalize language skills. It involves not just speaking and listening, but also reading and writing, as they're all intertwined in the learning process.

Q3. Good communication is a blend of clarity, coherence, cultural sensitivity, and engagement. It is not just about grammar and vocabulary; it's about understanding nuances, adapting to different contexts, and being open to diverse perspectives.

Q4. Pragmatics and culture are deeply intertwined. Pragmatics deal with how language is used in context and culture heavily influences these contextual cues. For instance, what's considered polite or appropriate varies greatly across cultures, impacting communication styles and expectations.

Q5. Yes, absolutely I do! Culture is a vital component of language, so it naturally finds its way into my teaching. Whether it's through literature, discussions, or real-life examples, I try to embed cultural elements into every lesson. It not only enhances language learning but also fosters a deeper understanding of the world.

Q6. Sure! For instance, I often incorporate literature from diverse cultures into my syllabus, encouraging students to analyze how language reflects societal norms and values. Additionally, I organize activities like role-plays, debates, or even group work sessions centered on different cultures, providing immersive experiences for my students.

Follow up: is it like a comparison between the two culture?

Not really a comparison but today I include the target language culture, tomorrow the native culture and so on. comparison comes in an indirect way they will do it themselves, sometimes

I do comparison especially between British and American culture. I remember that I once gave my students presentations and I divided them into groups and each group was divided into sub groups and I asked some of them to work on the British culture and the others on the American culture. After presenting their presentations there was a comparison. We talked about if indirectly.

Q7. My approach revolves around fostering empathy, curiosity, and critical thinking. I encourage students to explore cultural differences without judgment, to appreciate the richness of diversity. We discuss cultural artifacts, analyze media from different cultures, and engage in cross-cultural comparisons to broaden their perspectives. It all depends on the module and the nature of the module I am teaching, but this is roughly what we do

Follow up: you mentioned fostering empathy, do you believe that fostering empathy has a role in raising cultural awareness?

Yes, it does have a role and it helps the students accept and learn about this culture. and when this empathizes with the other culture, it does not mean that you forget your own and transform into a person from that culture (the target culture). Empathy has a lot of advantages; you know we can learn from other people. from other people's ways.

Q8. Yes, definitely! Since integrating culture into my teaching, I've observed significant improvements in my students' pragmatic competence. I do see a difference when I teach them first year and especially then two or three times during their career. I can see second year master students that I thought during their first year changed I really see that difference so my students. They're adapt more at navigating diverse social situations, they become more understanding implicit meanings, and adapting their language use accordingly. They also they demonstrate greater cultural awareness and sensitivity in their interactions.

Q9. Assessing students' progress in developing both cultural awareness and pragmatic skill involves a variety of methods. For cultural awareness, I might use reflective essays, cultural presentations as I gave you the example of my classes, or discussions where students demonstrate their understanding of different cultural norms and values. For pragmatic skill, I often incorporate role-plays, situational tasks, or real-life scenarios where students can apply their language in context and demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively. I can add a comment, my groups are usually crowded and this is one of the few positive things I can see because I divide them into sub groups, I will have a variety of examples. So, this one work on this and the other one work on that than we have discussions. it is time consuming we might not be able to do it in one session but it is good that we will have people working on so many things at the same time

Q10. When giving feedback or criticism, I aim to strike a balance between directness and politeness to maintain effective communication. I provide constructive feedback in a respectful manner, focusing on specific areas for improvement while also acknowledging students' efforts. I emphasize the importance of clear communication and cultural sensitivity, encouraging students to reflect on their language use and consider different perspectives. So, I do encourage my students to look from different perspectives and give them examples. This approach fosters a supportive learning environment where students feel motivated to improve while also feeling valued and respected.

Follow up: so you do not directly criticize them

No, I say this is good you did well, I understood your point but I am afraid this is not really the case, what do you think about this and that, sometimes I say oh yeah that is an interesting way to think about that. Or sometimes you may say directly nice try but you were wrong when something is clearly wrong. For example, when it is a grammatical rule or something I can tell

that's wrong. But for cultural content and concerning the ways we think I cannot say that it is wrong.

Q11. Absolutely, I wholeheartedly agree. Cultural sensitivity plays a crucial role in improving pragmatic skills and promoting effective communication. Understanding cultural nuances and context is essential for interpreting and producing language in a manner that is appropriate and meaningful within a given cultural setting.

When students are culturally sensitive, they are better equipped to recognize and navigate the subtle cues and social norms that shape communication. This awareness enables them to adapt their language use accordingly, which is essential for successful communication, especially in multicultural or cross-cultural contexts.

Q12. The only comment that I have this is an interesting topic, and I wish you all the luck for it.

Respondent 05:

Q1. I am teaching English since 2008 so this my 16th year of teaching English. For the four first years I was just a part time teacher and then I became a permanent teacher

Q2. In fact, communication is what we are doing in foreign language learning. We are teaching people how to communicate. It is the main purpose of language learning. It is the goal, the objective.

Q3. The basis for communication is understanding, people need to understand each other, to decode the messages exchanged between each other. If the role of communication beyond understanding, it may be for example correcting misconceptions okay. If you have a wrong idea about the topic we are discussing. So, the role of communication is to correct that idea. May be another crucial role of communication is exchanging knowledge. So, I teach you a new

information, knowledge, or anew skill and you teach me a new information or a skill. Therefore, what makes a good communication the very basic good communication is understanding. In the very advanced role of communication is exchanging knowledge and skills. So, what makes a good communication maybe we speak about the use of correct vocabulary, that I am not using a word to mean something while my idea is another thing, the appropriate use of vocabulary, also the correctness and the accuracy of my grammar I am not confusing you by speaking about something in the future while I conjugate the verb in the past for example. The clarity of the pronunciation I am not supposed to be a native like but at least there is a level of clarity to communicate with the others. In addition, the voice is important I am not speaking too low or too high. We call this to be articulate when we use English. And I expect the audience or the receiver to have the ability to understand what I say because if I am a good speaker of English but the person I am talking to doesn't understand English or is not or he can, I have a problem with my students that they understand but they are not focused. if the listener doesn't listen, doesn't concentrate, doesn't try to understand then my message will not be received. So, a good communication is efforts from the speaker and the listener.

Q4. Culture is let's say the space in which pragmatics is performed and it is culture that decides whether I am using the right of the wrong pragmatics. Because for example in some culture speaking in a low voice is an indicator of weakness or shyness, or lack of self-confidence. While in another culture it is sign of respect, it is a sign of a moral or a well-educated girl or a girl from a good family. So, it is the culture that decides the appropriate use of language.

Q5. I think I do especially if you speak about the foreign culture. And in my case, I think I integrate both the native culture because I speak about our context in Algeria. In addition, I compare it with the foreign culture. Therefore, yes, I do

Q6. To answer this question, I tell you it depends on the module I teach, because I cannot tell you yes, I do give my students activities, and I pretend that I am holding this mission of integrating culture. In some modules for instance if I am teaching oral expression I have more freedom and more space to introduce culture, and to give activities and tasks that include culture. But in my module for example advanced reading or research methodology, which is what I teach this year, I cannot find really a big relevance to culture in the tasks I give to my students or in the knowledge I give them inside the classroom. So, it depends on the module.

Q7. I am not using the comparative approach consciously okay. I am in a foreign culture classroom supposedly, but I cannot speak as if I do not belong to different community and a different culture. So, I find myself unconsciously making this comparison. It is not something that I plan to do, it is something that happens because the context in which I am teaching obliges me to do. When I teach a specific module like research methodology, I do not have an approach. When I teach module that targets culture than of course I have an approach and generally it is um I don't know if it is called the comparative approach , it is to mix between the two cultures, our native culture and the foreign culture, and to compare between for example I speak about the nature of human being. When I say whether you live in Algeria or you live in America human needs are the same. The way we satisfy our needs differs between one society and another. I find myself always in a state of comparison.

Q8. Of course, I am a foreign language teacher in an Arabic country if we can say or a north African county I cannot tell you that I am capable of evaluating my students pragmatic skill, because we are not really put in a situation in which we test the cultural awareness or the pragmatic skill. I am Algerian dealing with Algerians and the way we communicate together is communicating a l'Algerienne. We are integrating together just Algerians and as far as I am concerned as a person, I do not think my students are talking to me in an inappropriate manner. May be these students if they move to another culture in which they will face the foreign

culture. Maybe they will not put the cultural knowledge we taught them here in use. So, the answer to your question I was not put in a real-life situation that enables me to test my students' cultural awareness. I cannot say they are aware or they are not aware and another remark. I do not think that cultural awareness and pragmatic use is related only to me as a teacher because. I think that students outside the classroom are receiving more data from movies, series; music that teaches them about the foreign culture maybe they will benefit from this data in a real-life situation maybe not nobody knows.

Q9. Look, our students and I am always optimistic I always look at the full side of the cup. So, students in Algeria are aware of the difference of cultures and they are aware of the norms of the others and the lifestyle of the other. Therefore, I said yes, they are aware. Now whether they have tolerance and acceptance I think this differs from one individual to another because sometimes (and you have been my students) I throw an example and sometimes it is an awkward example and I notice that not everybody is okay and not everybody is not okay. And maybe students because I am the teacher do not show me or do not tell me their real opinion about what I said. Concerning progress in awareness, I think there is a level of it they know! Whether they tolerate this is again something we cannot test. For me when I talk about taboo topics, I notice resistance from most of the students even those who do not resist that in my face they will gossip, they will talk behind me. Awareness yes tolerance not sure.

Q10. I was your teacher and I know that I am the kind of teacher who is direct. I say things and I even have colleagues to tell me why talk to students about this topic or the other they do not understand you. They judge you, even teachers judge me, and there are teachers who meet students and tell them to be careful. Do not follow or listen to her ideas. Maybe you know that you are not okay with what I said but at least you know that I exist, acknowledging my existence is fine for me. Therefore, I am with the direct way.

Q11. of course, this is what I was talking about I want people to be culturally sensitive, to see

Q12. I can tell you that this kind of topics touches me because it creates kind of existential crisis for me. As a teacher, I think my role is to guide people, is to correct misconceptions, to raise people's curiosity. Moreover, while doing this job my own way I find problems. Therefore, any ways it is a nice topic to discuss wish you all the best.

Respondent 06:

Q1. Over 15 years, I think.

Q2. Therefore, communication is central to foreign language learning because the use of language is about communication. Therefore, communication improves of course language learning

Q3. Practice, good mastery of grammar, vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions can help communication in English

Q4. I think yes, there is a link between pragmatics and culture

Q5. It is often necessary because culture is necessary in language acquisition, they are inseparable language, and culture are interrelated in many ways so we should integrate culture in the learning process.

Q6. Ok usually the use of films, audio types, and projections. In literature explaining some cultural differences through teaching novels and other pieces

Q7. I focus on both cultures and I highlight the differences. It is a comparative approach to promote cultural awareness among students

Q8. I think yes, there should be improvement by integrating culture in the teaching process

Q9. Overall good

Q10. Usually, we prefer politeness over directness because English especially as a language is characterised by polite forms. Politeness is prioritised over directness.

Q11. Of course, yes because as I explained because of the situational shifting if we know about culture, we will use more appropriate language so it is important

Q12. Actually, no good luck.

Respondent 07:

Q1. Teaching English for six years.

Q2. Of course, communication is what makes language and culture and skills explicit. If you do not communicate, you cannot show either your development in your skills, your ability to understand, your speaking skills. So, you can master all the skills, but without showing throughout communication this means nothing. So, I believe that communication equals foreign language learning, clear!

Q3. Of course, we have so many, so many components of good communication. It's not only the language, nowadays the language becomes something that goes without saying, i.e., it's not unimportant but we have so many more important components such as the culture especially in the field of foreign language teaching and learning because if you don't know the target culture, you can be put in an unsuitable situation. Maybe if you are in a situation in the target culture, for example, country and you master the language but you don't master the culture so, people can't understand you, so many misunderstandings will occur, maybe you can't pass through the cultural barriers. Also, it's a great obstacle if you don't know the target culture. So, of course if you want to infer the meaning, you need culture. So, we can summarize everything in language and culture are what makes good communication. Even the body language, it depends on the culture. So, generally, language is kind of tool, the culture is kind of how to use this tool, it's the guideline. But language is just a tool and alone it means nothing in good

communication; the message is not well transmitted to the listeners or people who are communicating with.

Q4. Of course, culture is the source of pragmatics. So, in order to understand the meanings, the pragmatics of the language, we need culture to understand it.

Q5. Well… yes. Previously I was working on intercultural knowledge in my PhD research. So, I taught and integrated culture for 3 years I believe with my students. Now because I teach methodology it has no relation with it, but yes, I used to do so. But not only the target culture, I used to introduce my students to so many different cultures. [**Interviewer:** yes we were present in many conferences online and were somehow showing our culture and exposed to other culture] Yes, yes here by this exposure you will know that your culture is not the only and the correct one, there are so many others different but we tolerate this difference. That's it, how you communicate is through tolerance. So, yes, I used to integrate cultural cues in my teaching process and not only the British or the American cultures but other cultures and at the same time trying to share our cultures to others.

Q6. So, to be honest, the methods or the activities I implemented is technology in general. Different technological tools, being accounts, being websites, being platforms, so I used different tools. For instance, in the classroom, I can use data show to show the cultures, the other cultures, at the same time I can use messenger, I used messenger to know different teachers from different cultures to get their students engage with mine. I used Zoom for the students' meeting, for the cultural exchange. I used Telegram to communicate with other teachers, I used the WhatsApp, I used so many social media if we can say accounts and tools to do so. So, technology in general, that's why my topic is technology-based instruction in general. All the tools that I can see that they are useful I used them to expose my students to the other culture and at the same time to share our culture with others.

Q7. So, the cultural awareness I believe that we can't develop either cultural awareness nor intercultural communication if you don't train our students or help them to enrich their intercultural knowledge; they can't tolerate, they can't be aware, they can't communicate interculturally if they don't have the knowledge, the knowledge about what? About the cultural cues or components of the others. So, I believe that cultural knowledge is the basic; when we know the culture, you may develop positive attitudes, you may have this curiosity to know more, you will be more aware clear! You will understand the different components of the different cultures, you will understand that your culture is not the only because believing that you are the only unique, the only culture in the world, this pushes directly to racism, you refuse any other different culture, that's why we always compare ours and the other. At the same time, do not lose our identity, because focusing a lot on other's culture this may lead us to lose our identity, at the same time we need to know this to develop kind of empathy and tolerance with the other different cultures. [**Interviewer:** also knowing that all cultures are equal and no culture is superior than the other] Of course, of course, different but equal. That's it.

Q8. To be honest, not all the students, but yes, I can say yes because in the discussions I can notice that there is a kind of development, kind of being somehow deep, deep their thinking, critical they provide the various examples that you can't know if you don't really know this culture. So, of course yes, I noticed the progress for some of the students not all of the students of course.

Q9. So, to give you honest answer, I can say that, if by pragmatic skill you mean that they can infer and analyze and criticize the meaning, yes, I can say yes clear! Because during discussion I can notice that deepness in their answers. By awareness, being culturally aware, yes, they are culturally aware.

Q10. I manage the two, the two together because politeness is important, directness is important too. Politeness alone not effective at all, it makes it not serious. At the same time, directness alone makes it boring or something not motivational at all, see! so both are important.

Q11. Highly agree of course and strongly agree

Q12. So, what I can say as a comment is that we work with chat GPT during our era or period because of the so speedy if you say development of social media, chat GPT, AI, not social media let's say the AI especially, it's important to train our students how be critical thinkers, how to be aware of so many things because as an example that may help you in your topic, for instance, if we take the chat GPT as example. If we work with Chat GPT in practical scientific maybe I dunno something like (1+1=2), it may be fine. If you work with it in things which are more if we can say it kills creativity that's okey but which is more dangerous in AI in general, AI tools, is the doctrine, the ideology. I mean, if you are working with it in civilization or literature talking about ideologies, reasons etc., it is like programmed by people with a certain doctrine. So, you will be kind of manipulated, manipulating you indirectly and you feel your-self "oooh it's good for me, it's easy, it's … I dunno." So, raising the students' awareness about, because hata AI is part of culture means, all the technology imposed itself as part of culture because culture is everything. So, when they become aware, for instance talking about in our case here talking about the American culture, we all know their ideas… etc., if you know so, through focusing on the cultural aspects, components, awareness etc., so, students will be able to know that these are the ideologies of the Americans that they want to spread to the world, I'm different, I know, I have the cultural knowledge I'm not to be manipulated by their ideas. Yes, first if you ask Chat GPT about the Palestinian case nowadays, it will provide you with a totally different version of truth, for example, and this is the difference between a knowl-

edgeable student and ignorant student is the awareness. So, that's why I say that it's very important to focus on developing learners' cultural and intercultural awareness and of course pragmatics because culture is the source of how to interpret the meanings.

Respondent 08:

Q1. It's more than 30 years.

Q2. Yeah, you know like communication is an essential part of EFL as a language interference. So, communication or interaction between teacher and student or between students with each other contains parts of the culture they express through the language they use. So, communication is very important because the students or the learners use the language not as a language as code but as a language which contains content that expresses the culture of their living, in a way their daily life.

Q3. Well, we cannot precise means or ways in which good communication proceeds because we have different environments, different milieus, different cultures, different IQ's for students themselves, so it depends on the learner and the communicator by result. So, a learner and his motivation to communicate in addition to hinderances that prevent him from communicating with others, that means, this is the psychological in a way element of his personality so these all contribute to the mmm determination of the learner to communicate. So, communication or a good communication depends on these environments.

Interviewer: so, it's not only about the linguistic competence or the linguistic side of language.

Of course, of course. So, in a way, competency in the language does not only concern the grammatical acquisition or the. So, I said linguistic competence is not sufficient for a learner or a communicator to make a good communication or to express his ideas in a way adequately, unless, that means it is combined with other skills okey! so I go back to your previous question

that a good communicator should have kind of special skills okey! related to his cultural background and his linguistic background.

Q4. Well, pragmatics it means that a learner should have the ability to reason rationally and logically. This is in a way the intellectual capacity of a learner, of course when he communicates, he uses culture so culture doesn't prevent any person from thinking logically. It is in a way combination of integrity, ethics, the cultural competence combined with the linguistic competence; in fact, they go hand in hand

Q5. Of course (opening his eyes widely to add more emphasis). So, generally the language carries with it culture. In my case, that is civilization, we always use the cultural content whether it is in history, politics or whatever, into the language so our aim or our main objective in teaching the language it is through the CBA that means, this is not in a way Competency Based, it is Culturally Based teaching

Q6. Generally, it's project-based in a way learning so the students are encouraged to communicate through group work or project work and generally this contains communication and interaction between the students. This is the main in a way approach that we use in civilization

Q7.

Q8. Yea of course. So, generally, this helps students become more motivated because they feel in a way more free to express themselves within the group, they also interact with mates and receive feedback, so, when they receive feedback they just can assess themselves or evaluate themselves through the different in a way reactions of their mates. So here it means they will develop their own capacity of or intellectual capacity and then they can reason differently from when they started at the beginning.

Q9. Well, generally, it's through their feedback so the assessment it's not really limited to a certain specific activities or a certain kind of activities but it is the feedback which provides

this assessment mainly their interaction I said with there with mates , and their opinions , when they express their opinions so we can notice that whether they were in a way able to make a difference in their capacity of thinking or just they were in a way just like memorizing or just repeating themselves or something like that.

Q10. Well generally it depends on the teacher so that a kind of psycho-pedagogy so psycho-pedagogy is the essential element in the teacher's career. So, a teacher should in a way maintain that balance to keep his students motivated and at the same time to direct them to their mistakes and so on. So, generally, a teacher should be aware about how to use his language, his criticism to not, it means it's just to try to direct students into that means the direct way of thinking, how they do their activities and so on but through a polite in a way form more than constructive, it should be in a way more aware okey! more conscious because it's not constructive it means that you provide feedback which is positive, but this is not sufficient, a teacher should not always be positive okey! So, when I say not always positive, that doesn't mean he will be in a way punishing students no, so he should at least be balanced politeness and positive criticism, so it's not only, it's not only positive criticism

Q11. First, I'd like to know what's cultural sensitivity? that means what do you mean by cultural sensitivity?

Interviewer: cultural sensitivity or cultural awareness is being aware of your culture and the target language culture so that you can like make the difference and acknowledge both cultures and know the limits of them.

So the term sensitivity is not biased, so it's just in a way general term for awareness, so because when we say sensitivity it's more about bias okey! [**Interviewer:** no, it's only about under-standing and awareness] Yeah. So, cultural awareness doesn't hinder understanding of a lan-

guage. Generally, there is combination between your own culture and the target language culture and we can use both of them to understand different linguistic situations. So, we can use our own culture okey! to understand in a way the local culture, the situations in our country, at the same time we can use the target culture as an example to understand for example different language combinations like idioms, pragmatic understanding, the the mmm in a way the linguistic bath of another language so the learner can use the target culture. BUT, to understand situations in our country for example, in our situation we use our own culture, examples from our own culture. This doesn't mean that there should be opposition or a clash between the two, they can be balanced or integrated okey!

Interviewer: so, you agree that cultural sensitivity helps in improving pragmatic skill?

Of course, yeah...

Q12. I think this is very interesting, that means to deal with the topic of culture from a pragmatic in a way critic because this is in a way critic in the idea of how students or learners think using the culture of the target language or the culture of their own, in a way, milieu. So, it's generally very in a way attractive to tackle this issue because there is a kind of a controversial in a way debate about which culture to use when teaching the second language. So, whether it is, I mean, the original culture, the authentic, the local, we can say the local culture, or the target language culture. Most of the people agree that a combination of both is adequate okey!

Respondent 09:

Q1. I have been teaching English for 14 years, 3 years as part time teacher and eleven years as full-time teacher

Q2. Look, I consider communication as a paramount, you know a must, it's more than important it's the primary, the most important role while teaching foreign languages. When we teach or we learn a foreign language, the ultimate role is communication. We all, whether

teachers or learners, strive to develop the communicative skills cause that's to say to communicate effectively with native speakers of the target language through that language of course. So, it's more than important; training learners who know the grammatical rules or the structural system or and who cannot communicate effectively unfortunately means that it's a failure or a non-successful training, okey! it's the main aim of foreign language teaching and learning.

Q3. What makes good communication … so, we do not speak about good communication or bad communication, I rather prefer effective communication and ineffective communication. So, what makes effective communication or successful, if you want, communication? it's the knowledge of the cultural elements that shape or that make the target language you know. Of course, it's a must to know the structural system, the grammatical rule, the syntactic system etc. but, what is, what matters most is the knowledge of everyday life, norms, habits, practices, what do they like, what do they dislike, what are their values… in order to avoid a lot of, you know, communicative constraints and problems you know! It's important also to know mmm their values, their norms, it's important, to know all what is related to culture, okey! everyday life aspects of communication. Yes, I wanted to talk about them to have an idea as foreign language learners about their norms in terms of gestures, in terms of facial expressions, what they like, what they dislike etc. and to find the right position in order to communicate effectively without of course denying our own culture, as foreign language speakers of course.

Interviewer: maybe we can like, like effective communication can tolerate kinda the linguistic mistakes and grammatical mistakes but not the cultural ones.

Yes, look what matters in communication, by definition what is communication? By definition, in linguistics, communication is to send and receive a clear comprehensive message. Now, what matters is to send a message which can be decoded by the other and at the same time to decode the other's message, grammatical problems, structural mistakes can be, you know, can

be ignored or can be tolerated this is the appropriate word, can be tolerated if the communication is effective and successful okey, now you can produce wonderful language, structurally speaking, a good language with no problems, with no structural mistakes or errors, but if (emphasizing it) it doesn't convey clear comprehensive message, so this language is ineffective for communication okey! and you have we have seen the basic example of Chomsky's example I think, that "colorful ideas are carless" you know, structurally speaking, this example, this well-known example, is grammatically speaking correct, structurally speaking correct, we have nothing to do to say about it, but unfortunately it conveys no message. So, matters in communication, in successful communication, is to communicate effectively, to send and receive, code and decode clear comprehensive messages, and it's more, you know, the reasoning or it's more the American who look at thing, it's the American school who favors or that favors communication or effective communication at the expanse of the grammatical rules or structural system. This, does not mean that the structural system is not important, yes it's important especially for foreign language learners and foreign language teachers because since we are specialized in a given language, we have to master at least it's structural system.

Q4. Ooh yes, there is a strong relationship between pragmatics and culture. You know, pragmatics is the highest level of communication, or the highest level of language if you want to organize the parts of language in a pyramid, we will posit language at the highest pragmatics sorry at the highest level and pragmatics is I think the study of language in context YESS, taking into consideration, deixis, gestures, cultural elements of the target language etc. so, how can we deny the relationship between pragmatics and culture? Knowing the culture can help us succeed at the level of pragmatics. That's to say, so the aim of pragmatics is communication, you know, successful communication and to succeed in communication we have to know the culture of the target language, I think.

Q5. Honestly, it depends on the module. There are some modules that do not allow me you to place culture or to teach culture. For example, I teach or I taught linguistics for first year learners. So, the module is theoretical and the unique way to introduce culture to my learners was through the examples you know, for example, we have an example "John drunk whiskey quietly." Instead of changing John by, I dunno, Mohamed, and whiskey by Soda, so, I prefer to keep John and whiskey as they are, so, it's a part of culture, you know, it's one aspect of the target culture. So, the unique way to teach culture in theoretical modules is through examples. Now, we can teach culture in technical modules like, you know, civilization, literature but it's not my specialty. However, when I teach master two students, I try to introduce some elements of different cultures and not only the target culture, why? Because the aim of this module is to develop the learners' intercultural communicative competence.

Q6. Example, exercises, sometimes we use homework we give them a cultural situation and we ask them to look for the explanation of the misunderstanding. All these techniques can help teachers to raise learners' cultural awareness and to develop their cultural understanding and their cultural knowledge.

Q7. So, my approach is always the same, you know there are different approaches that we have seen together in the classroom, but the best I think, according to me and it's my point of view you know, it's the comparative approach; to go always through this process of comparison between the target culture, the learners' mother culture. Doing things in this way helps the learners to realize their uniqueness and to recognize others' differences. So, we give importance to the learner, when we go through the comparative approach, we tell, implicitly, we tell the learners that he matters or she matters; they are important with their culture, with their norms, traditions, values etc., religion, etc. and at the same time you tell them the others are as important as you, so you have to develop a kind of openness, acceptance of difference, etc.

Q8. Look, as I have said previously, I try to integrate culture with master two students. What I notice each and every year, so I have been teaching this module for four or five years I think, and I notice the difference. What I notice, by the end of the year, I notice that my learners have developed a kind of tolerance and a kind of openness. They do really realize that in order to exist in harmony in this globalize world, they have to be openminded, and they realize also by open-mindedness we do not mean denial of what we are but a kind of acceptance of otherness. This is what I notice between the beginning and the end of the year. I notice too that my learners start learning more about their own culture.

Interviewer: I am a case Mrs.; I had a kind of resistance that decreased this year

Yes, this year with the exposure to the module of intercultural... that's good, that's great (ha-haha).

Q9. Yess, look, we don't have time to make a pedagogical assessment honestly. So, I assess things through, you know, questions and through observation. You know, I observe a lot, I do not say things but I observe a lot; the behaviours of my learners, the ideas, how do they change their minds between the beginning of the year and the end of the year, how do they start accepting some examples and somethings that they found offending at the beginning of the year. So, it's more with ... through questions or through observation.

Q10. It depends on the kind of feedback we give, okey! So, as a teacher I try always to respect my learners and by respecting my learners, I respect all my learners not only master two students, but in this context in relation to culture, I try to respect the cultural norms and values that I know or that I know to a certain extent, let me say because am a part of the society. So, I try to respect their norms and I try to not hurt or to not challenge their red limits.

Q11. Of course, sure sure. The more we are aware of the target culture, the more we adjust our communication respecting this cultural norms and values which are foreign to us but when we

know them, with time, we adapt them we do not adopt them, so it helps as to improve pragmatic skill and to promote communication, effective communication of course.

Q12. I think that I hope or I wish, I hope that culture will take the lion's share in teaching foreign languages in Algeria, or in teaching English in the department of English, at least. I hope my colleagues will realize the importance of culture in their classes, the importance of both cultures, whether the target culture or the mother culture. Also, I hope to find, to be trained as a teacher and we, me and my colleagues, to be trained in this field of cultural knowledge, interculturalism to develop, we ourselves, I strive to develop my intercultural communicative competence and that's all.

Interviewer: you taught us a point that culture is the fifth skill and I totally agree.

YES, it's the fifth skill in foreign language learning and teaching but unfortunately, it's not given its due importance in the department of English, why? It's not a question of knowledge, no, it's question of awareness; not all teachers are aware of the importance of culture, unfortunately (said sadly with a falling tone)

Respondent 10:

Q1. For 14 years, so far yes

Q2. It's very important. Communication means interaction, means give and take, act and react, it should be used in a such context; learning a foreign language does not sustain only speaking the fours kills okey? the four skills will be practiced, through what? Through communication

Q3. Interaction, mainly with native speakers, and not necessarily native speakers. Today we have even foreign learners who are better than native speakers in terms not only of fluency, it terms of as you said cultural awareness, academic performance.

Q4. Yes, there is a relation; it means awareness of a culture or a cultural context helps you to deal with certain situations okey! especially in linguistics situations. For example, for us as foreign language teachers, for example if we have for example spent time abroad in native speaking communities, of course it helps us, okey? we may provide different courses to our students okey! it's important, but it's not really important, I mean it's not really necessary okey! you can have a foreign language teacher who can provide more cultural awareness to his students and his students can perform better okey! relying on the content he's providing, okey!

Q5. Aah yes, but not to a very large extent okey! We used to, especially in teaching for example oral expression, we need to discuss certain cultures especially when talking about idioms, proverbs, you need to define, there are certain terms which are not used in foreign language learning okey! you can integrate culture okey? while teaching literature, yes I integrate culture since I need to discuss, before discussing a certain literary piece, I need to integrate the context, okey! the country, the author's biography, this is culture! If the author is British, is American, is Scottish, I need to integrate his biography. So, culture should not be detached from teaching a language, or a foreign language, but to certain extents especially nowadays. Our students today are concerned with more…how to say…more practical language. Sometimes they feel not interested to the cultural origin of that world or of that incident etc.

Q6. Methods!! I usually ask questions; ask questions about the background that my students may hold about a certain thing, about an author, about a story, about a title… okey! and they usually ask about mmm I think one of the main tools or the main things that may relate my students to the content, the cultural aspects or the cultural bodies that may contact my students to my content that I'm teaching are the movies, cinema, I think this is the most important cultural element that I might integrate in my course. So, I ask them about any title they have for example concerning slavery okey, there is a very famous movie which is a historical movie called "The Amistad" okey! I usually ask about the title before discussing it. For example, an

Afro-American novel okey! so I start with questions with checking with the background. You said methods, activities. Activities, if we had much time it is better to use multimedia as I said, movies, plays, Shakespearian plays. It's better to watch, and sometimes I feel obliged to perform one of the incidents of the novel to attract my students to the story or to the text. You said, methods, activities or lessons. Lesson here it's concerning the articles, the books, the titles that I can use from the other culture… okey? to promote cultural understanding, yes, I'm promoting, I think I'm promoting cultural understanding when I discuss for example, I had just a course here in Lord of the Flies, for example, by Wiiliam Golding, I discuss something called "Evil". In William Golding's works, I find myself obliged to discuss the notion of "Evil" according to the Christian book because William Golding has been a Christian writer; you see here, so, I'm promoting a certain cultural awareness, but with a limited scale, okey!

Interviewer: this limited scale, is it because our environment or else?

Sometime the students themselves have restrictions; cannot understand more, cannot believemore, cannot understand the authors perspectives. So, I found myself limited with what? With the curriculum, with the content, okey! It's not an open course. So, the cultural awareness here, the conclusion, is that cultural awareness is used to: help us in teaching; we are no more promoting it for further objectives because sometimes there are students who do not really accept, though they are foreign language learners, but they do not really accept everything. This a problem especially in literature course, okey! I had for example the feminist novel "The Bell", I cannot promote a cultural awareness about something called "homosexuality", you see! though it is overwhelming the west, it's part of a culture now, even the literature now; it develops such themes. But you cannot, you cannot develop such cultural awareness. So, cultural awareness itself should be promoted according to certain scales, okey! according to what the language helps the student to do with in the future. So, you study for example this cultural part of your content and you say: is this going to help my students in the future or? If my students

doesn't need to know it…(she clearly delivered the message before she finished her sentence)… I'll be selective. However, it has been different years ago, years ago we could speak about the western culture openly, today we're not especially regarding the recent events, political events, cultural events, you can see that the culture it's not growing different thanks to internet, to globalization; we have students here with American minds, with western lifestyle, okey! and they can accept even odd thing from the other culture and this doesn't help us, you see? so, promoting cultural awareness is just, as you said here, for pragmatic reasons, what helps you.

Q7. I don't prefer to use the term assimilation, I don't prefer to use the term balance, but I try to find to bridge between both culture so that I make my student feel himself at ease with the other culture, with American culture for example especially I'm teaching American literature, I'm specialized in American literature. I really prefer to discuss for example postmodernism, I discuss the postmodern culture, I discuss the consumer society to my students in America, in high technology, and I try to find somehow a reflection in our culture; I try to bridge, and of course I have my comments and judgments; sometimes I attack the other culture for example, I try to find the conflict between bot cultures especially when it comes to spirituality, to religion, is it okey? sometime I tell them something about the other culture but then I say: "be careful, this not our belief." For example, when I talked about the Christian book I say: "it's not written in our Quran," for example "it is said in the Christian book this way, but in our Holy Quran is different", I need to clarify the difference because students, even master students are not aware sometimes, they mix things. So, I find myself obliged to expose both parts of the culture; of course, I'm not exposing the whole cultures as bodies, I'm just picking, selecting parts of the cultures which help me know my discourse, is it okey! but I find myself that I am obliged to discuss both cultures at the same time.

Q8. Yes, there are students, I don't want to flatter myself for, there are students who said, especially master students, they usually say Ms., we started to understand literature because there are students who did not really understand the other culture, especially from first year. Normally you're teaching… I'm not commenting upon my colleagues or something like that, but it's about the method since you asked about the method. Shakespearian drama, Romeo and Juliet should not be taught as a text! It's better to ask you, especially you teach the balcony scene for example, it should be performed, it should be exposed! Shakespearian drama, 16th century literature okey! So, it's important to discuss it. Shakespearian drama is very important, so far people are still working on Shakespearian drama, okey! he's the genius of literature, of British literature. So, there are students who find themselves, once they know about the value of a certain writer, in a certain culture, in a certain society, they really give importance to the work in front of them, however; when you just expose a work and you say "how many themes do we have in the book? Aah he's a British writer" (mimicking a bored voice) and you stop, of course they won't give any importance, they do not really consider the value of such work, they just take it as another lesson to study. So, integrating cultural awareness is important (in a provoked tone and manner). Of course, I'm not enlarging the value of the culture okey! we're not glorifying the western culture okey! I'm not glorifying it at ALL and you know me! I just discus it okey! just to know, as it is said "من تعلّم لغة قوم أمن شرهم"(whoever learns a nation's language, he is safe from their evil) you need just to know about the other in order to face it, in order to understand the information he sends to you okey! It's a very complicated cultural awareness, it's very complicated; you need to know about the culture and you need to protect yourself from the other culture okey? and it's very difficult in literature okey!

Q9. How should I asses students' progress?... it's very difficult, it's very difficult I think…How? Through, for example, through presentations, I can feel that, I can feel that anguish about the culture. There are students who are very aware of the context for example of a

literary work, when I start asking about the work, they can provide more answers okey! so, you feel that progress of evaluating, not only literary work, but the cultural background. However, others who stop at the text, they're not really aware of the culture and you cannot foster so because you feel it's too late since you read the book and you did not connect with any part of it, cultural part of it. So, what should I DO? Should I teach you from the very beginning? You see it depends on the students, it's according to the varieties that you meet in class, and we have a very low very low reconsideration of the cultural awareness in literary work, or in any other academic assessment.

Q10. When giving feedback, I should be direct and sometimes I'm not polite(laughing), my directness makes me not polite, okey! Sometimes! and sometimes I feel the student himself is not really aware about that cultural part, I need to be polite especially when it comes to talk about religion, I need to be... For example, teaching "The Bell", I found difficult, every year, I face problem because I'm not sure, I'm not certain about the perspective or the perception of the whole class, we still have varieties as I said, okey? So, I should be polite, I should provide introductions, POLITE introductions, borrowing from our culture, from our religion just to give just a small idea about the other culture, the western culture, you? Just to say few words, I need to give more, larger or bigger introduction, you see? and it's very difficult (lowering her voice).

Q11. Of course, oF course. The awareness of the culture, of course, it promotes, it promotes the communication, it promotes the pragmatic skill. Here, pragmatic skill in our course, pragmatic skill means how to prepare future teacher, we are preparing you be future teachers, to be exposers for example, speakers okey? open speakers, you see here, this is the main pragmatic skills and to be aware of the other culture helps you in writing articles, in making seminars, etc. This is I think what is meant by pragmatic skill, not only everyday use, you cannot use… you cannot talk about cultural awareness or cultural perspective outside of this classroom, with

people for example with anyone, no, you should choose your audience. So, your pragmatic skills okey, ordain you, or oblige you to choose a certain trajectory of your cultural awareness

Q12. So, through my discussion with you I found that there should be balance between cultural awareness and pragmatic skills; as much as it grows the other one grows (acting with her hands) but they should be balanced; you should not overwhelm yourself with cultural aware-ness, you should not overwhelm yourself with pragmatism because sometimes English is just used in teaching, sometimes it's just used in jobs okey, it's not really used everywhere, so you should not really be aware with the culture, with all the aspects of the western culture okey! This it, I think I've said it all!

Respondent 11:

Q1. I have been teaching for 9 years.

Q2. As far as communication is concerned, I can say that we really teach foreign languages in order to reach that primary aim which is communication, so that to make our foreign language learner able to communicate by the use of foreign language and through the communication skills we can deduce the level of fluency and accuracy of our learners.

Q3. I will restate once again, fluency and accuracy, mmm a well command of vocabulary, respecting grammar rules and a well organization of the spoken ideas.

Q4. Yes, I can say that there is a relationship between pragmatics and culture.

Q5. Yes, it's very beneficial to integrate culture in the EFL teaching process.

Q6. Concerning the example of activities and lessons, I can mention is the lesson of proverbs and idioms which means comparing the use of proverbs and idioms between the Algerian cul-ture and the English culture. Yes, that's it. And I want to add that mm sometimes you have modules in which you have mm a fixed syllabus that you must follow, and there is no more

space to add some cultural aspects to your lesson, but there are other modules in which you can find mm enough space, enough time to explain cultural aspects, cultural manifestations or whatever like in the oral expression sessions.

Q7. As far as the teaching approach is concerned, I would focus on the point of the diversification of activities; the more you focus on different activities, the better learning outcomes you would achieve.

Q8. I can say yes, we can reach improvement.

Q9. I can say that it is problem solving based assessment or context-based assessment, what I mean by that is assessment is would depend on putting the learners on various and different context and trying to see how learners are going to react and how they are going to solve their problems, how they are going to communicate in order to achieve their desired goals.

Q10. I would learner finish all what he has to say, and it means that I don't make interruptions to him and after he will finish, I can spot that he has a mistake within his words or within his conversation and I try to encourage him to reflect and to find the mistake by himself. And mmm if he would not succeed, I try to correct it mmm in a correct way as you are pointing to.

Q11. Yes, I agree.

Q12. So, good luck and all the best In'Shaa'Allah.

Respondent 12:

Q1. 10 years

Q2. It is very important for all foreign language learners

Q3. A good mastery of the language in addition to knowledge of its cultural framework.

Q4. A firm relationship.

Q5. Of course. It is highly recommended to include it.

Q6. Watching movies and documentaries, suggesting related literature, or even providing straight forward cultural information.

Q7. I often explicitly emphasize the importance of cultural knowledge during the classes.

Q8. Yes, cultural knowledge tends to get them more engaged and motivated to learn the language.

Q9. Some students show faster progress because they have previous interests in pop cultures.

Q10. Cultural taboos should be handled with delicacy.

Q11. I think it can either improve or impair them; it depends on the instructors methods and the learners awareness.

Q12. No!

Résumé

L'un des principaux objectifs du FLT est de parvenir à une communication efficace qui englobe à la fois les aspects linguistiques et communicatifs. Cependant, les apprenants d'anglais comme langue étrangère peuvent souffrir d'échecs de communication principalement dus à la déficience pragmatique. Ce problème devenant de plus en plus récurrent, des tentatives ont été faites pour améliorer cette compétence. Par conséquent, la connaissance culturelle a été considérée comme une solution, c'est-à-dire qu'elle permet de sensibiliser les étudiants à la culture en les familiarisant avec différents aspects culturels. Cette dernière contribuerait à améliorer l'utilisation de la langue en contexte. Cette étude vise donc à explorer l'influence de la sensibilisation culturelle sur l'amélioration des compétences pragmatiques des étudiants. L'étude se concentre sur la question de savoir si les objectifs de l'intégration de la culture dans le FLT ont été atteints du point de vue des enseignants et des élèves. À cet égard, et sur la base de l'hypothèse selon laquelle si la sensibilisation culturelle des élèves est renforcée, leurs compétences pragmatiques seront améliorées, la recherche utilise une méthode descriptive analytique avec deux différents outils de collecte de données. Un questionnaire a été administré à 103 étudiants en deuxième année de master au département de langue anglaise de l'université de Guelma, accompagné d'un entretien avec 12 enseignants. L'objectif était d'étudier les points de vue des étudiants et des enseignants sur l'efficacité de l'intégration de la culture dans les cours d'anglais langue étrangère afin de former des étudiants compétents sur le plan pragmatique. Les résultats ont prouvé la véracité de l'hypothèse selon laquelle la sensibilisation culturelle favorise les compétences pragmatiques, ce que les étudiants et les enseignants ont affirmé. De plus, ils ont insisté sur l'impact important de la culture et de la sensibilisation culturelle sur le processus d'apprentissage dans son ensemble et sur la compétence pragmatique en particulier.

Les mots clés : Communication, compétence pragmatique, la sensibilisation interculturelle, la culture, les étudiants de Langue Anglaise comme Langue Etrangère, les enseignants.

ملخص

يُعتبر من بين الأهداف الأساسية في مجال تعليم اللغة الأجنبية تحقيق التواصل الفعال الذي يشمل الجانب اللغوي والتواصلي، غير أنّ طلّاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية قد يعانون من صعوبات في التواصل والذي يرجع أساسا إلى نقص في الملكة التداولية، وبما أنّ هذه المشكلة أصبحت أكثر انتشارًا بين جموع الطلبة فقد كان هناك العديد من المحاولات من أجل تحسين هذه المهارة. ولهذا تمّ التركيز على المعرفة الثقافية كحل؛ أيّ رفع مستوى الوعي الثقافي من خلال جعل الطلاب على دراية بالجوانب الثقافية والذي بدوره يساهم في تحسين استخدام اللغة في سياقها. ومن ثمّ تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف دور الوعي الثقافي في تعزيز المهارة التداولية لدى الطلاب وتركز على التدقيق فيما إذا كانت أهداف دمج الثقافة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية قد تحققت بناءً على وجهة نظر الأساتذة والطلبة. وبهذا الصدد انطلاقا من الفرضية التي تنص بأنّه إذا تم رفع الوعي الثقافي لدى الطلاب سينتج عنه تعزيز مهارتهم التداولية، استخدم البحث منهجا وصفيا تحليليا معتمدا على أداتين مختلفتين لجمع البيانات، وقد تم اجراء استبيان يضم 103 طالب من السنة الثانية ماستر بجامعة قالمة من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية مصحوبا بمقابلة مع 12 أستاذا وذلك لاستقصاء آرائهم حول مدى فعالية إدراج الثقافة في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية لتكوين طلبة ذوو كفاءة تداولية. نتائج البحث المستخلصة تبرهن صحة الفرضية التي تظهر أنّ الوعي الثقافي يعزز المهارة التداولية ويؤكد كلا من الطلبة والأساتذة على حد سواء على ذلك، بل ويصرّون على التأثير الكبير للثقافة والوعي الثقافي في عملية التعليم ككل والكفاءة التداولية على وجه الخصوص.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التواصل، المهارة التداولية، الوعي بين الثقافات، الثقافة، الكفاءة التداولية، طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، أساتذة.