



The Role of Culture in Foreign Language Acquisition

Al-Hussein Saleem Mohsen[•]

Khadeejah Ali Kareem^{*}

Abstract

Language is a basic tool for communication. It expresses feelings, emotions, needs, thoughts, etc. Culture is the actual life of a particular group of people. This research aims at defining language and culture, and it examines the relationship between them as well as the important role that culture plays in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Libya. This study is made up of two parts; theoretical and practical. The theoretical part sheds light on the relation between language and culture and on how to incorporate culture in English language course-books. The practical part includes two sections; the first is an analysis of the cultural content of the course-books used in the secondary level in Libya while the second takes care of

• – Assistant Professor of Translation at Al-Asmariya Islamic University, Libya

*** – BA in English Language**

collecting data from the target population; i.e. the students who have already finished the secondary school and are currently in the first semester at Al-Asmariya Islamic University, Libya. The targeted students belong to six faculties. Questionnaire was the tool used for collecting data for this study. The data collected was analysed statistically. The results showed that culture plays a significant role in acquiring language. Generally, there were negligible effects of both gender and school on language acquisition. Briefly, the students in the faculties of Medicine, Dentistry, and Arts had higher scores than those of their colleagues in other faculties. Furthermore, the results indicated that the highest score was 89% while the lowest was 23%. Whereas 94% of respondents had scores greater than 40%. Anyhow, the researchers argue for the necessity of organising training courses for the teachers of English in the secondary level as well as supplying the necessary teaching aids for language classes, so that the cultural content can be taught more effectively.

Keywords:

acquisition

content

culture

language

teaching

دور الثقافة في اكتساب اللغة الأجنبية

الخلاصة

اللغة أداة أساسية للتواصل، وهي تعبر عن المشاعر والعواطف والحاجات والأفكار وغير ذلك. الثقافة هي الحياة الحقيقية لمجموعة معينة من البشر. وهذا البحث يهدف إلى تعريف اللغة والثقافة، ويفحص العلاقة بينهما وكذلك الدور المهم الذي تلعبه الثقافة في تدريس وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية باعتبارها لغة أجنبية. تتكون هذه الدراسة من قسمين؛ نظري وعملي. النظري يغطي العلاقة بين اللغة والثقافة وكيف يمكن دمج الثقافة في مقررات اللغة الإنجليزية. يشمل القسم العملي جانبين، الأول: تحليل للمحتوى الثقافي للمقررات المستعملة في المرحلة الثانوية في ليبيا، بينما يهتم الثاني بجمع البيانات عن العينة المستهدفة في الدراسة، أي الذين أكملوا دراستهم الثانوية وهم الآن (حين إعداد هذا الدراسة) طلاب بالفصل الأول من الدراسة الجامعية بالجامعة الإسلامية الأسمرية (ليبيا). الطلاب المستهدفون ينتمون إلى ست كليات. أداة جمع البيانات في هذه الدراسة هي الاستبيان. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها إحصائياً، وقد بينت النتائج أن الثقافة تلعب دوراً هاماً في اكتساب اللغة. وعموماً، فإن النتائج تبين عدم أهمية كل من جنس الطالب والمدرسة في اكتساب اللغة. وباختصار، فإن الطلاب في كليات الطب البشري وطب الأسنان والآداب قد سجلوا مستويات أعلى، في اكتساب المحتوى الثقافي، من باقي زملائهم بالكليات الأخرى. إضافة إلى ذلك، تبين النتائج أن المستوى الأعلى قد بلغ 89% بينما كان أدنى مستوى هو 23%، وفي نفس الوقت، فإن 94% من المشاركين في الدراسة قد سجلوا مستويات أعلى من 40%. وكيفما كان الأمر، فإن الباحثين يؤكدان على ضرورة تنظيم دورات

تدريبية لمدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية وكذلك توفير الأدوات التدريسية المساعدة في دروس اللغة، وهكذا يمكن تدريس المحتوى الثقافي بفاعلية أكثر.

1.1. Background

This research studies how English as a foreign language is acquired through culture. Nowadays, culture plays a very important role in language teaching. Culture can help students acquire language easily if they find the cultural content interesting. It also motivates learners to learn English more rapidly. This research sheds light on the definitions of language and culture, and it also examines the relationship between language and culture as well as it shows how much important to incorporate culture into foreign language teaching.

Currently, English is the most widely spoken language in the world (Chuodhury, 2014, p. 1). However, the teaching of English as a foreign language, (FL), in Libya has increased more than it was at any other time. After the American raid against the home of Gaddafi in Bab Al-Azizia in Tripoli in 1986, the Libyan education system faced a political crisis due to the decision made by the Secretary (Ministry) of Education to stop the teaching of foreign languages; viz. English and French. Hence, for 10 years

later, the teaching of English language was banned in the school level as well as the university. As a consequence of this decision, the Libyan students faced a serious problem in acquiring language as well as learning English in the stages that precede the university level, for the language of instruction in some faculties is English, e.g. the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Pharmacy.

Thus, for not using English in the public, the students lost their motivation to consider the main determinant of a foreign or second language learning achievement. Schander and his colleagues (Schander, Balma & Massa, 2013, p. 409) assert that a "motivation is one of the main determinants of second or foreign language learning achievement". De Bot, Lowie, and Verspoor (2005, p. 72.) claim that "teachers, learners and researchers will all agree that a high motivation and a positive attitude towards a second language and its community help second language learning".

In addition to the low level of motivation and the use of mother tongue in the school teaching, the students of the secondary school cannot deal easily with the cultural content

in their course books of English language due to the negative attitude that was created by their environment towards those cultures. The students did not also have the necessary background of those contents. Besides, without learning meaningful communicative contexts, student cannot acquire an FL. Hsu (2006, p. 3) asserts that "without learning English in meaningful communicative contexts, learners can rarely acquire the target language completely".

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The research sheds light on why the Libyan students in the secondary level cannot get the cultural contents in a better way. Consequently, it discusses why they understand the content that belongs to their Arabic or Islamic cultures more than they do with cultural content that belongs to other regions such as India, China, etc.

1.3. Aims of This Study

1. Libyan students in the secondary level can get the cultural contents well.
2. Libyan students understand the cultural content that belongs to their Arabic or Islamic region more than they do with cultural content that belongs to other regions such as India, or China, etc.

1.4. Literature Review

1.4.1 Language as a Human Phenomenon

To begin with, language is a social mirror which reflects the activities of different groups of people by using language. Chomsky (2006, p. 67) believes that "language can truly serve as a mirror of mind" which reflects the human thoughts, feelings, and experiences that we can gather in the term *culture* which is a social activity. In addition, language is considered as one of the most important tools for human communication as well as it helps to make a social relationship between people. Kramsch (2008, p. 85) describes language as a guide to "social reality".

In a sense, Salzmann (as cited in Elmes, 2013, p. 12) defines language as "a key to the cultural past of a society". Elmes (2013, p. 12) defines language as "a key to the cultural present in its ability to express what it is (has been) thought, believed, and understood by its members." Language is a tool of communication which is used only by man. Mohsen (2013, p. 68) explains that "language in itself is a human phenomenon that only relates to human kind". Upon these discussions, it can be concluded that language

is only used by human in contrast to non-human that has not language to communicate.

However, language is a tool for communication between people, to express feelings, thoughts and opinions, and to exchange knowledge and experience between them by using words. Chuodhury (2014, p. 1) defines language as "a means of expression. We express our feelings, emotions, thoughts, needs, desires, etc. in words, symbols, and gesture which is considered as language." Language shapes the way we think. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopaedic Dictionary (1992) defines language as "a system of sounds, patterns, etc. used by humans to communicate thoughts and feelings." The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2003) defines language as a system of "the words, their pronunciation, and the methods of combining them used and understood by a community".

1.5. Language Skills

To acquire any language, there are four basic language skills; i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing that a learner needs for complete communication. Hsu (2006, p. 3) asserts that "communication skills are essential for both language teachers and learners."

Those skills are related to each other in two ways; the mode of communication (written or oral), or the direction of communication (receiving or producing). Thus, the students cannot ignore any skill of them and they should focus on every one of them to acquire an FL as well as to use it in a good way. Schleppegrell and Bowman (1986, p.1) assert that "all four language skills are stressed equally".

1.5.1. Listening Comprehension Skill

Language that was understood leads to student language acquisition, but if not, it is just a *noise*. The ability of understanding a spoken foreign language is a skill that does not happen automatically but it must be taught in along and continuous process. Peterson (as cited in Celce–Murcia 2001, p. 87) demonstrates that "listening is a primary channel for language input and acquisition". Listening is considered as a main resource to acquire and learn language. According to Nunan (as cited in Sadegh and Bahadori, 2014, p. 47), "listening is the basic skill in language learning, without listening skill, learners will never learn to communicate effectively". Actually, Listening is one of the four natural language skills that should be cared by teachers in the classroom.

1.5.2. Speaking Skill

Speaking is the most basic way of communicating with others through speech. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2009), speaking is "the action of conveying information or expressing ones', thoughts and feelings in spoken languages." Speaking is a process of producing language by using specific symbols. Florez (1999,

p. 1) states that "speaking is an interactive process, which consists of three main stages: producing, receiving and processing information." Speaking is a productive skill. In Nunan's words (2003, p. 48) "speaking is the productive oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterance to convey meaning."

1.5.3. Reading Skill

In recent years, there has been increased focus on the teaching of reading skill (Celce–Murcia, 2001, p. 153). Reading is not only making sounds to the written words; but it requires understanding what is written. So, reading skill is both understanding and making sounds to written word. Lopez (2012) defines reading as "a cognitive process of decoding symbols to derive meaning from text (as in reading a book or reading music)." McDonough and Shaw (1993, p. 101) comment that reading as "a skill is clearly one of the most important skills". Thus, teachers should focus on this skill.

1.5.4. Writing Skill

Writing is the process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form. It is a kind of communication

that uses symbols to share information. In addition, it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way. So, it is an activity of production of letters, punctuation and spaces in a structured way to present thoughts without using sounds. However, writing is a medium of human communication that represents language through the inscription or recording of signs and symbols. Writing is usually the fourth language skill.

1.5.5. Culture Skill

In teaching a foreign language, some teachers refer to culture as a separate skill. Culture, as a fifth skill, emphasizes the learner's ability to perceive, to understand, and to accept cultural relativity. Culture skill shows the ability of learners to deal well with others who share the same culture as well as those who have a different culture. To develop the culture skill needs to understand cultural variations. Hence, the development of understanding of any culture helps to build cultural awareness to communicate successfully with people from other cultures.

Nowadays, the teaching of culture skills is regarded as a part of language teaching and culture is considered as

a fifth language skill that comes after the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. This consideration relates to two important reasons. The first reason is that the English language plays an international role and the other is globalisation. (Microsoft Encarta, 2004).

1.6. The Relationship Between Culture and Language

Nowadays, the relationship between language and culture is one of the most important aspects to study language. Kramsch (2003) clarifies the relationship between language and culture as:

Language is the principle means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways. Language is the prerequisite of the accumulation and transmission of other cultural traits. Such fundamental aspects of human society as organized political life, legal systems, religion and science are inconceivable without that most basic and human of tools, a linguistic system of communication. (p. 67)

In some context, it is used with culture to make a successful communication. Peterson and Coltrane (as cited

in Fleet, p.7) assert that "in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behaviour." It can be said that language is a social mirror and culture is social activities, so language should be understood as a mirror of culture of the society. Thanasoulas (2001, p. 7) argues "language is a social institution, both shaping and shaped by society at large or in particular the cultural niches." Kramsch (2014, p. 3) asserts that "language is a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value." Thus, language reflects culture and is affected and shaped by it. Fantini (as cited in Norhana, 1997, p. 4) adds that "language reflects and affects culture forming a *dynamic relation* or *intrinsic link*".

Nida (1998) points out that many linguists seek the relationship between language and culture.

Language and culture are two symbolic systems. Everything we say in language has meanings, designative or associative, denotative or connotative. Every language form we use has meanings, carries meaning that are not in the same sense because it is associated with culture and culture is more extensive than language. (p. 29)

For example, words like *rose* or *rosemary* refer to real objects that can be seen and touched that grow in the gardens. Their definitions, in the dictionary, are denotative. In contrast, these words have different meanings that are more than just what plants they refer to. Their meanings can be drawn from their connotations: a *rose* might be associated with love, passion, and beauty; *rosemary* might be associated with the fragrance of summer and preservation of dried herbs (Kramsch, 2014, p. 16). Hence, sometimes, people from different cultures refer to different things by using the same word. For instance, in the American culture, the word *quality* means *it works*. In Korea, the word *quality* means *it's brand new*. Whereas in Japan, it means *it's perfect-'zero defects'*. Japanese culture emphasizes the importance of striving for perfection.

However, language can reflect what culture people relate to. Jaing (2009, p. 146) claims that "the language people are speaking is culturally conditioned." Kramsch (2014, p. 3) asserts that "language symbolizes cultural reality". Mohammed (2015) comments that "understanding language is a kind of understanding life itself." So, anyone can understand the life of others by understanding their

language. Fantini (2006) claims that "language reflects and affects culture forming a dynamic relation or intrinsic link." A lot of researchers claim that a specific language is a mirror of specific culture. Brown (2000, p. 186) also supports this idea in which "language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of language; the two are inside each other and they cannot be separated from each other without losing the significance of either language and culture." In other words, language and culture are inseparable.

Furthermore, the relationship between language and culture has been focused on by linguists, psychologists, philosophers and anthropologists, etc. One of the philosophical views examines this relation that "language and culture make a living organism; language is flesh, and culture is blood. Without culture, language would be dead; without language, culture would have not shape" (Jaing, 2000, p. 328). Consequently, language is body, and culture is soul. Without culture, language is nearly useless; without language, culture would not be possible. There is also a pragmatic discussion that holds the view that "communication is like transportation: language is the vehicle, and culture is traffic light." (Jaing, 2000, p. 329)

Language makes cultural communications as well as culture promotes which, when, what and to whom language communicates.

Added to this, there is an interactive relation between language and culture, the one of them cannot exist without the other as well as they are so closed. Nowadays, the role of culture in a foreign language teaching has become increasingly widespread. Chuodhury (2014, p. 1) explains that "culture finds its expression in language; so, learning a new language without familiarity with its culture remains incomplete." Hendon (as cited in Fleet, p.5) states that "culture should be taught when we have student." For that, language should be taught concurrently with its culture and vice versa.

Finally, Mohsen (2013, p. 70) highlights that "students must be kept interested in the classroom of language; for both the language itself and the culture expressed in that language." However, culture also helps students to be more motivated to learn language as well as it gives them the correct way of the language use. Hsu (2006, pp. 3 – 4) reinforces that "to learn language well, learners have to be taught the culture context and the ideologies of the target

language". In Peck's words (as cited in Fleet, p. 6) "without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete".

It is so clear from the above discussion that language and culture are so correlative, and they cannot be taught in isolation of each other. Therefore, the understanding of the relationship between language and culture is so important to the language learner, user, and to all who do care about language's instruction.

2.1. What Culture is

Mohsen (2013, p. 68) discusses that "culture is a controversial term". There is a lot of argumentation about this term; accordingly, the term culture has different definitions. It is difficult to say exactly what culture is. Hsu (2006, p. 18) argues that "the concept of culture is complex simply because it essentially covers everything related to humanity". Bhattacharya (2006, p. 23) asserts that culture is "the total way of life of people".

Hornby (2010) defines the term *culture* as "the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group; etc." The term also covers "a country, group, etc. with its own beliefs, etc." (Hornby, 2010). Then, culture is everything related to the specific group of people in a particular country. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2008) defines culture as "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of racial, religious, or social groups; also: the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time". That means that the term culture is a group of behaviours, beliefs, habits and activities

of man that reflect how the life of a particular country in a specific stage or time is.

In fact, the term culture is defined in many ways. Seymour (n.d., p. 100) defines culture as "a membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space, and history, and common imaginings". Thus, it can be said that culture is a mental or artistic activities that indicate a particular society, a category of people who live in the same place, or a particular stage of their life. Lederach (1995, p. 9) expresses that "culture is the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing and responding to the social realities around them". According to Hofstede (as cited in Hsu, 2006, p. 17), "culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another". This means that culture is a mind's programme that can distinguish the differences between the categories of people and others.

In Damen's words (1987, p. 367), culture is "learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day-to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's

primary adaptive mechanism." Peck (as cited in Fleet, p. 6) describes culture as "accepted and patterned ways of behaviour of given people." Po (2006, p. 17) examines that "the function and interactions that happen in a daily life of human societies are all determined as a property of culture." Consequently, culture is how mankind live in a daily life. Moreover, Kramsch (2014, p. 10) concludes that "culture is always the result of human intervention in the biological processes of nature".

In addition, culture is focused not only by linguists and anthropologists but also other behavioural scientist do care about it. The pioneer English anthropologist Edward B. Taylor (as cited in Chuodhury, 2014, p. 2) defines culture as "complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." As though, culture is lifestyles of human beings.

2.2. Characteristics of Culture

All cultures have five distinctive characteristics: it is learned, shared, based on symbols, integrated, and dynamic.

2.2.1. Culture is Learned

Culture is neither innate nor biological. People are born without culture. They acquire it unconsciously. They learn it from families, peers, institutions, and media. Hence, culture is taught by society and environment. People learn how to eat, how to drink, how to cook, and how to wear, etc. For example, in the Islamic society, Muslims learn how to pray to Allah. No one is born with the sense of culture, but it is learnt throughout life.

2.2.2 Culture is Shared

Every culture is shared by a group of people. In the same community, people share the same common behaviour, beliefs, values, lifestyle, and the way they communicate. In addition, their history, language, literature, habits, and tradition are the same. For example, all people who live in the United States share the English language, may eat the same kind of foods, and celebrate the same

holidays, etc. like Christmas is always on December 25th (Mohsen and Daw, 2010, p. 14).

2.2.3. Culture is Based in Symbols

A symbol is anything that is used to indicate something else. Symbol is a tool of communication. All cultures use symbols to communicate and pass on ideas and beliefs to other members of society. People who share culture can communicate by using symbols. For example, in America, thumbs-up is a sign of "okay" and index finger is a sign of agreement (as cited in Schmitz, 2012, p. 197). In class of school, when a student wants to take a permission to leave or to say something, she/he puts her/his finger of the right hand on the middle of the left hand.

2.2.4. Culture is Integrated

All Cultures are integrated with new aspects by each other. Culture may be integrated with new thoughts, technologies, products, clothes of another culture. For example, Canada is a bilingual country that has a combination of two cultures, the English and the French. That is why Canada has parallel school systems.

2.2.5. Culture is Dynamic

No culture remains changeless. Cultures change over time and are not static. Beliefs, foods, and everything of culture change of the passing of time. This change may happen because of cultures influence on each other. When people travel, they will be influenced by the culture where they travel. For instance, traditionally in some places of the world, men go to work to earn for their family, while women stay at home to take care of children and to cook, etc. Today, these roles have changed. Women work away from home, while men take care of the kids. However, the rate of change of culture varies from society to society.

2.3. Elements of Culture

According to its definition, culture is a way of life. Thus, culture comprises different elements that are very necessary in a society, such as language, symbol, literature, religion, customs, etc. Every nation has its own culture, and every culture varies from one another. Nevertheless, all cultures share some elements, e.g. language. As a case, English language is spoken in different countries, e.g. UK, USA, Australia, south Africa, etc., but these nations do not have the same culture.

The components of culture can be divided into two categories. The first are the verbal components which refer to spoken and written message to receive and send information, thought, ideas, etc. e.g. spoken-language or written language, and the other covers the non-verbal components which refer to every connection by using wordless cues, e.g. posture, gesture, and artefacts, etc. such as emblems which are gestures that have specific meanings. In the United States, a thumbs-up, means "I need a ride" or "OK!". Every culture has variant elements that make it to be different from others. (Schmitz, 2012, p. 197)

However, language is one of the most important verbal-component of culture. The cognitive linguist Langacker (as cited in Sharfian and Palmer, 2007, p. 1) describes language as "an essential instrument and component of culture, whose reflection". Rivers (1981, pp. 315 – 316) discusses the relation between language and culture, and he defines culture as "that training which tends to develop the higher faculties, the imagination, the sense of beauty and the intellectual comprehension." He thinks that language is taught in the context of its culture. So, language is used to be as a poster of culture.

2.4. Cultural Awareness

One of the main purposes of teaching culture is to raise the cultural awareness of the students towards different topics and issues in the world. Cultural awareness is (Stephanie & Giovanna, 2005, p. 1) "a foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from us and becoming aware of our cultural value, beliefs and perception". When people have to interact with people from other cultures who behave, think, and speak in a different way; cultural awareness is very important to deal with other cultures and to communicate successfully with people from other cultures. So, in second language teaching, culture awareness is a process of understanding another culture in its context.

2.5. Cultural Content

Cultural content is the subject matter that students are exposed to in their educational journey. Snow (as cited in Celce–Murcia, 2001, pp. 316 – 317) defines content as "the use of subject matter for foreign language teaching purposes". Thus, cultural content is a cultural material that should be included in the text–books to help students to be motivated in their foreign language learning.

There are many types of content to introduce cultural material, such as pictures, maps, diagrams, statistics, graphs, music, poetry, literature, etc. e.g. a picture of human-body helps students to understand some vocabularies for the names of body organs easily as well as to acquire them quickly, such as, eyes, hair, hands, etc.

2.6. The Importance of Cultural Content in Language Course-books

The integral relationship between language and cultures leads to the importance of teaching culture in foreign language course-books. The good cultural content will help students to be motivated; so, for that reason the course-books should include a meaningful material. McKay (as cited in Kilickaya, 2004, p. 4) asserts that the use of cultural content in classroom will foster learner motivation. Thus, culture plays an important role in material to create learner interest toward contents of the target language. According to Stuart and Nocona (as cited in Kilickaya, 2004, p. 3), "learning about the lived culture of actual target language speakers as well as about one's own culture requires tools that assist language learners in negotiating meaning and understanding the communicative and cultural texts in which

linguistic
are used."

codes

Kilickaya (2004, p. 3) believes that the cultural content is a key to effective teaching. In other words, appropriate cultural contents help students to keep their interest toward teaching as well as to increase their understanding. In addition, students should have some knowledge of the culture of the language they study to help them to acquire the target language more effectively.

2.7. Benefits of Teaching Culture

There are many benefits of teaching culture asserted by many scholars such as Nemni, Clouston, Tomalin, and Stempleski (as cited in Thanasoulas, 2010, pp. 12 – 13). The benefits of teaching culture can be summarized as following:

1. It helps students to increase their awareness of cultural behaviour of people in the target culture.
2. It helps students to arise their awareness about social variable that affects the behaviour of people.
3. It helps students to behave in a suitable way in the target culture as well as to develop their communication skills.
4. It develops students' awareness of using words and phrase as well as to build up a range of their vocabulary.
5. It motivates students to keep their interest to learn the target language.
6. It helps students to avoid stereotype related to the target culture.

7. It increases students' knowledge of the target culture and compare between their own and the target culture.
8. It reinforces the curiosity of students about the target culture as well as to render a study of the target language meaningfully.

2.8. The History of Teaching Culture

It is recognised in language teaching that learners need not only grammatical knowledge or skills, but also the ability to use the language socially and culturally. In the past, Clouston (as cited in Thanasoulas, 2010, p. 4) notes that "people study a foreign language to study its literature."

In 1918, the first recognition of the need of teaching culture is emphasized by a report in British Journal, "the need for better knowledge of a country and its people as parts of second language education" (as cited in Xiao-yan, 2008, p. 49). In 1950s, 1960s, teaching geography and history as a part of language learning is emphasized. In addition, the investigation about the connection between language and culture is concerned by some works as Hymes's (1964) *Language in Culture and Society*. There are some scholars of intercultural communication, for example Hall (1959),

Brooks (1975) and Nostrand (1974) who discuss how physical and emotional needs can make a foreign culture more accessible to the language learners (Kramsch, 1993, p. 224). In 1970s, the consideration of sociolinguists leads to the importance of the situational context of foreign language. The role of culture in the foreign language material is reinforced by a great scholars (as cited in Thanasoulas, 2010, p. 4), Seelye (1974) and Lafayette (1975). Moreover, Brooks (as cited in Thanasoulas, 2010, p. 5) emphasizes "the necessity of indicated culture not only for study literature but also for language learning."

It is until 1980s, that the need of teaching culture in language teaching is concerned, despite all the discussions on the relationship between language and culture which has been cleared for ages. Moreover, the appearance of culture in second or foreign language teaching and learning is focused on the effects of body language and eye contacts. For example, Demon's work (1987) discusses the culture's influence on interactions and communications (Hinkle, 2013). By the end of 1980s, and 1990s, the teaching of culture in language teaching is asserted by many linguists, such as, Kramsch (1993, p. 8) who states "culture becomes

the very core of language teaching." Breen (as cited in, Kramsch, 1993, p. 182) suggests that "the learner will re-define any text against his own priorities, precisely because he is a learner."

3.0 Data Collection Procedure

3.1. Introduction

Collecting the data for this study was done through a questionnaire as well as the analysis of the cultural content of the course-books of secondary level. The target population of study was the students who had passed the secondary level and were in the 1st semester at the university when this study was conducted. The students concerned in the study have already finished their secondary school and they are now students at the university. They were university students in different faculties. The ages of the members of this society were around 18.

The sample was selected randomly. The researchers distributed 105 copies of the questionnaire randomly to students in six faculties at Al-Asmariya Islamic University. The process of distributing and collecting back the responses took more than one month. The number of copies handed to the participants was 105; 89 were returned back while 16

were lost. 7 responses were ignored. The number of the participants was 55 female and 27 males. The students were all Libyan and their ages were about 18. Fig. 3 below illustrates the number of female versus male.

SN	Faculties	N.
1	The Faculty of Arts	22
2	The Faculty of Science	8
3	The Faculty of Human Science	15
4	The Faculty of Medicine	15
5	The Faculty of Engineering	13
6	The Faculty of Dentistry	9
	Total	82

Table No. 1
Respondents Current Study Field

3.2 Presentation and Analysis of Data

Analyzing the data collected includes the discussing of the score of the sub-questions (SQ) included in each main question separately, and calculating the accumulative score for each question in percentage. Then, the accumulative score for the main questions will be compared. The analysis also includes the study of the detailed answer. Finally, the effect of gender and the current study field as well as secondary school of respondents are also examined.

3.2.1. General Analysis of the Main Questions

1. First Question: "Arrange the letters to form a word"

This question included eight names of countries that are long and short words to examine the knowledge of respondents and their ability to remember the right words of these countries. Table No. 2 below shows the collected answers for each word and the final evaluation of the answers of the sub-questions.

MQ (1)									
S Q	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Av.
%	71.	95.	93.	84.	97.	96.	80.	87.	88.
	95	12	90	15	56	34	49	80	41

Table No. 2
The Collected Answers for Each Word and Final
Evaluation of SQs
Answers of Q. 1

This question focused on examining the ability of the students to reorder the scattered letters of words. Their performance was very high; i.e. 88.41%, which means that they have a good ability to memorise the spelling of words without any difficulty.

2. Second Question: "Underline unrelated word out of the four given words and explain why"

Question 2 consists of four words which three of them are related to each other in a different relation, and the last one is unrelated to them; so the participants were asked to

underline this word and tell the reason. The result of underlining each unrelated word is written in Table No. 3.

MQ (2)									
S Q	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Av.
%	57.	45.	64.	50.	40.	20.	33.	40.	43.
	93	12	02	00	24	73	54	24	98

Table No. 3

The Results of Right Answer in Q. 2

The average shown in Table No. 2 shows that the responses of the students for the sub-questions were 43.98% which reflect a poor understanding of the relations between the words in each group. The groups contained four words; which three of them indicate things that are related to each other in some way, e.g. Pluto, Sun, Uranus, and Venus. Sun is a star, while the other three are planets.

3. Third Question: "True and False statements"

The statements were selected to ask the participants to write either true or false depending on their understanding of the statement. The statements were selected carefully to cover an adequate part of the syllables of the three course-

books. The result of understanding the true or false statement is shown in Table No. 4.

MQ (3)									
S Q	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Av.
%	70.	93.	93.	81.	30.	76.	85.	48.	72.
	73	90	90	71	49	83	37	78	71

Table No. 4

The Right Answers of the Sub-questions of Q. 3

This question tested the understanding of the respondents of some facts, for instance; the longest river in the world: River Nile, Mississippi or Euphrates. The average percentage of correct answers for the sub-questions of the third question was 72.71% which is not too much high. The question tests the ability of the students to decide if the answer given is true or false.

4. Fourth Question: "True or False!"

The sub-questions include one right answer and two wrong ones. The participants were asked to select the right answer. The questions were selected to cover an appropriate area of the cultural content of the secondary

course-books. The percentage of choosing the right answer is illustrated in Table No. 5.

MQ (4)									
S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Av.
Q									
%	63.	41.	89.	52.	40.	71.	96.	84.	67.
	41	46	02	44	24	95	34	15	38

Table No. 5

The Right Answers for Q. 4

This question checked the knowledge of the students about some facts, e.g. if the following sentence is correct or false: "Radar is an electronic eye that help the safety of planes." The correct responses were not high enough. They represented only 67.38%.

5. Fifth Question: "Matching"

This question consisted of two columns. The left column included eight words that are related to eight statements in the right column. Students were asked to match the words to the related statements. The result of correct matching is shown in Table No. 6.

MQ (5)									
S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Av.
Q									
%	84.	81.	41.	91.	85.	71.	48.	76.	72.
	15	71	46	46	37	95	78	83	71

Table No. 6

The Result of Right Answer in Q. 5

The average response to this question was 72.71%. It needs that the student should understand the expressions so that he/she can match the two parts of the sentences correctly. The students had a good ability in choosing the right answer for the multiple-choice questions.

6. Sixth Question: "Filling the missed letters"

In the last question, eight famous words were given with missed vowel letters; so, the participants were asked to fill the appropriate vowel letters to complete the words. The result of filling the correct missed letter is shown in Table No. 7.

MQ (6)									
S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Av.
Q									
%	60.	35.	1.2	79.	32.	35.	36.	71.	44.
	98	37	2	27	93	37	95	95	20

Table No. 7

The Right Results of Q. 6 (Filling the Missed Vowel Letters)

The vowel letters in the words presented were taken out, so the students must insert the correct vowel letters, but, as shown in the above table, their responses were weak. The percentages indicate that the students did not have real mastery of vowel letters in words.

An example of the words presented in the question is the word (Leptis Magna), but the vowel letters were removed. The students were asked to fill in the correct answers, the average of the correct answers is only 44.20% as shown in Table No.7.

3.2.2. Right answers average for the main Questions

Table No. 8 shows the right answer average for the six questions (the result of the questionnaire.)

MQ	1	2	3	4	5	6	Av.
%	88.41	43.98	72.71	67.38	72.71	44.20	61.91

Table No. 8

Right Answers Average for the Main Questions

Table No. 8 summarises the results of the six main questions of the questionnaire. The main average is only 61.91% which reflects a kind of general weakness among the students and it indicates that their acquisition of the language is not too high.

3.2.3. Analysis of Responses Vs. Gender

Table No. 9 below shows the effects of gender on the responses.

Gender	MQ 1	MQ 2	MQ 3	MQ 4	MQ 5	MQ 6	Av.
Male	92.13	48.61	67.18	71.76	72.69	38.88	62.83
Female	86.59	41.70	75.45	65.23	72.73	46.82	61.46

Table No. 9
The Responses Vs. Gender

Table No. 9 illustrates the responses of the students, according to their gender, for the questions of questionnaire. The differences between the responses made by male students and female were not high. The responses made by male and female were very close; 62.83 % and 61.46% respectively, which means that the performance of both the male and females students was quietly similar to each other.

3.2.4. Analysis of the Responses Vs. the Current Study Field

Table No. 10 shows the responses according to the current study field.

Faculty	MQ 1	MQ 2	MQ 3	MQ 4	MQ 5	MQ 6	Av.
Arts	92.50	49.72	82.95	70.45	84.66	48.86	68.34
Human Sciences	79.17	32.50	75.83	51.67	57.18	57.50	55.24
Medicine	91.67	54.58	70.00	79.17	84.17	83.33	67.50
Science	93.06	36.81	62.50	58.33	59.72	38.88	55.16
Engineering	84.62	32.69	61.54	69.23	50.00	15.38	49.45
Dentistry	90.63	56.25	73.44	82.81	98.44	60.93	74.11

Table No. 10

The Effects of Current Study Field on Responses

Table No. 10 displays the responses of the students according to their faculties, the highest average was scored by the students of the Faculty of Dentistry and Mouth Surgery while the lowest was made by the students of the Faculty of Engineering; i.e.. 49.45%. In general, the averages indicate a low level of performance in English as a foreign language.

3.2.5. Analysis of the Responses vs. School

About 13 participants did not mention their secondary school. However, the respondents whose schools were known have come from 17 schools. Many schools have one or two participants that cannot reflect a clear background for the school to be compared with others. Hence, the researchers decided to choose only three schools that have more than eight participants to study the effect of school on responses. Table No. 11 shows the average of the right answers for respondents from the selected schools.

School	MQ 1	MQ 2	MQ 3	MQ 4	MQ 5	MQ 6	Av.
Al-Zahra'a	89.84	41.41	82.81	67.97	67.97	41.41	61.80
Al-Shaima'a	87.50	43.75	79.55	64.77	75.00	68.50	65.26
Al-Markazia	90.63	50.78	82.81	71.88	90.63	43.75	68.75

Table No. 11

Comparison Between Responses from Different Secondary Schools

The performance at the level of schools is not as high as it must be, it is around 65% which means that there must be a different policy for teaching English as a foreign language at school.

4.0 Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Results

1. The average of the right answers in the questionnaire was 61.91% which means that culture has a significant role in the teaching of foreign language.
2. The data analysis showed that the effect of gender was negligible.
3. The comparison between the respondents scores from the different secondary schools showed that the difference in the score average was not significant.

4. The comparison of the score of respondents in different faculties showed that the students of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry, and Arts made a score higher than that made by the students of other faculties.
5. It is known that the students who achieved higher scores in their secondary level have a big chance to attend the faculties of Medicine and Dentistry.
6. The students who are in the Faculty of Arts are mostly from English Language Department. So, they may have a strong desire to learn English.
7. The results revealed` that the most average scores was between 50% and 70%. In addition, 94% of respondents scored greater than 40 %.
8. The results revealed that the highest score was 89 % percent while the lowest one was 23%. According to a careful review of data, the respondent with the lowest score was found to be female Qourina School in Benghazi. This explains why the score was the lowest.
9. The results showed that students can deal with the cultural contents that belong to their local and regional

culture more easily than they do with the cultural contents that belong to foreign cultures.

4.2. Conclusion

Kramersch (2000, p. 4) states that "language is culture and voice" which means that language is not only sounds but also a cultural communication. With regard to the practical results of this study, it can be noted that language cannot be taught independently of its culture. In addition, the cultural content plays a great role to help language learners acquire a target language.

Moreover, culture has a great deal to develop not only language learner skills but also his/her communicative skill. Hence, culture is a necessary component of language teaching. For that, the cultural content should be an integral part of teaching a foreign language.

4.3. Recommendations

Upon the results made through the analysis of both the questionnaire and the cultural content of the course-books in the secondary level, the researchers recommend the following:

1. The cultural content in the course-book plays an important role in the teaching of English as a foreign language; so, care should be taken in choosing the cultural content.
2. Developing the teaching atmosphere means to provide the necessary teaching aids, such as pictures, videos, etc.
3. Improving the level of English language teachers by sending them on internal and external training courses.
4. Preparing the teacher-book in a way that helps teachers use the cultural content properly.
5. There should be a different policy for teaching foreign languages school, so that there should be a specific concentration on acquiring language in different forms; reading, writing, and comprehending. Acquiring the

cultural content is also very important for the student as it adds to his/her knowledge of the world.

References

1. Abdullah, Norhana. (1990.) Cultural Elements in a Malaysian English Language Textbook. Malaysia: Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia, Bandar Baru Nilai, Negeri Sembilan. Retrieved from http://ddms.usim.edu.my/bitstream/handle/123456789/713/CULTURAL%20ELEMENTS%20IN%20MALAYSIAN%20ENGLISH%20LANGUAGE%20TEXTBOOKS%20-%20MY_CASELT.pdf?sequence=1.
2. Bagheri, Mohamad Sadegh & Bahadori, Mohamad Mahdi. (2014.) *The Effect of Providing Background Knowledge and Previewing Questions on Improving Listening Comprehension of EFL Learners* in Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods. Retrieved from <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-3439447671/the-effect-of-providing-background-knowledge-and-previewing>.
3. Bhattacharya, Srinibas. (2006.) Foundation of Education. New Delhi (India): Atlantic Publishers & Distributors

4. Brown, H.D. (2000.) Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. London (UK): Longman. Person Education Limited.
5. Celce-Murcia, Marianne. (Ed.) (2001.) Teaching English as a second or Foreign Language. Boston (USA): Heinle & Heinle Thomson Learning.
6. Chomsky, Noam. (2006.) Language and Mind. New York (USA): Cambridge University Press.
7. Choudhury, Rahim Uddin. (2014.) *The Role of Culture in Teaching and Learning of English as a Foreign Language* in Express, an International Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Research. ISSN: 2348 – 2052, Vol. 1, Issue 4, April 2014. Jazan (KSA): Jazan University. Retrieved from http://express-journal.com/pdf/april14issue4/theroleofcultureinelt_rahimuddin.pdf.
8. Crowther, Jonathan. (1992.) Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary. Oxford (UK): Oxford University Press.
9. De Bot, K., Lowie, W., and Verspoor, M. (2005). Second Language Acquisition, an Advanced Resource Book. London (UK): Routledge.
10. Damen, L. (1987.) Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension on the Language Classroom. Reading. MA (USA): Addison-Wesley.

11. Elmes, David. (2013.) *The Relationship between Language and Culture*. Kanoya (Turkey): National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya International Exchange and Language Education Center. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.nifs-k.ac.jp/HPBU/annals/an46/46-11.pdf>.
12. Fantini, Alvino E. (2006.) *Assessment Tools of Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Brattleboro, VT 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.experiment.org/documents/AppendixF.pdf>
13. Fleet, Marilyn. (n.d.) *The Role of Culture in Second or Foreign language Teaching*. Orleans, Ontario. Memorial university of New Foundland.
14. Florez, MaryAnn Cunningham. (1997.) *Improving Adult English Language Learners' Speaking Skills*. Washington (USA): National Center for ESL Literacy Education.
15. Hendon, U.S. (1980.) *Introducing Culture in the High School Foreign Language Class* in Foreign Language Annals. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
16. Hornby, A.S. (2010.) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford (UK): Oxford University Press.

17. Hsu, Po-Yen. (2006.) *Call, Culture & EFL Acquisition*. USA: Indian University of Pennsylvania.
18. Jiang, Wenying. (2000.) *The Relationship between Culture and Language* in The Internet EIT Journal, 54(4.) New York (USA): Oxford University Press.
19. Jaing, Yongmei. (2009.) *On the Integration of Culture into EFL Teaching* in Asian Culture and History Journal, (No. 1, 2009.)
20. Kilickaya, F. (2004.) *Authentic materials and culture content in EFL classrooms* in The Internet ELT Journal, 10(7.) New York (USA): Oxford University Press.
21. Kramsch, Claire. (1993.) *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. New York (USA): Oxford University Press.
22. Kramsch, Claire. (2000.) *Language, Culture and Voice in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language* in Feature Article. (US.)
23. Kramsch, Claire. (2003.) *Language and Culture*. Shanghai (China): Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
24. Kramsch, Claire. (2008.) *Language and Culture*. New York (USA): Oxford University Press.
25. Lederach, J.P. (1995). *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*. New York (USA): Syracuse University Press.

26. Leventman, Seymour. (ed.) (n.d.) *Teaching Poe as Popular Culture in Mexico in American Popular Culture: Historical and Pedagogical Perspectives*. By Margaret Lee Zoreda. USA: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
27. Mohammed, Baqir Jasim. (2015.) in (English Language Department, Zliten, Faculty of Arts). Retrieved July 14, 2015, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/english.language.department/permalink/1013109985379867/?comment_id=1013111725379693&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R1%22%7D.
28. Mohsen, Al-Hussein. (2013.) *Language and Culture in the School Courses of English* in Humanities and Applied Science Journal. No. 22 / 2013. Zliten (Libya): The Faculty of Arts and Sciences in Zliten, Al-Mergib University.
29. Mohsen, Ghada & Daw, Entisar. (2010.) *The Cultural Content of English Language Course Book; a graduate research*. Zliten (Libya): Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Unpublished Work.
30. Nunan, David. (2004.) *Language Teaching*. Hong Kong: Cambridge University Press.
31. Pickthall, M. M. (2008.) *The meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*. Birmingham, (UK.) Islamic Dawah Centre International.

32. Quappe, Stephanie & Cantatore, Giovanna. (2005.) *What is Cultural Awareness, anyway? How do I build it?* In Curiosity.com. Retrieved from <http://www.culturocity.com/pdfs/What%20is%20Cultural%20Awareness.pdf>.
33. Schander. Claudia., Blanca M. Balma & Agustin A. Massa. (2013.) *The Joy of Art in the Efl Classroom* in European Scientific Journal December 2013 /SPECIAL/ edition vol.2 ISSN: 1857 – 7881 (Print) e – ISSN 1857–7431. Cordoba (Argentina): Universidad Nacional de Cordoba.
34. Schleppegrell, Mary & Bowman, Brenda. (1986.) *ESP: Teaching English for Specific Purpose*. Washington, D.C. The Center for Applied Linguistics.
35. Schmitz, Andy. (2012) *Types of Nonverbal Communication in A Primer on Communication Studies*. Retrieved from <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/a-primer-on-communication-studies/s04-02-types-of-nonverbal-communication.html>.
36. Sharifian, Farzad and Palmer, Gary B. (2007.) *Applied Cultural Linguistics*. Amsterdam: Philadelphia. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
37. Thanasoulas, Dimitrios. (2001.) *Language and Culture-a Thesis*. Retrieved from

http://www.developingteachers.com/articles_tchtraining/culture3_dimitrios.htm.

38. Xiao-yan, WANG. (2008.) *Reflection on the Notion of Culture Teaching in US-China Foreign Language*. Jan. 2008, Volume 6, No.1 (Serial No.52). USA. Retrieved from
<http://www.airitilibrary.com/Publication/alDetailedMesh?docid=15398080-200801-6-1-49-53-a>.
39. Youssef, Awad Mohamed. (2012.) *The Role of Motivation and Attitude in Introduction and Learning of English as a Foreign Language in Libyan High School*. Malaysia: University Sains Malaysia.