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**Teaching Culture to EFL Learners through British/American 20th  
Century Short Stories: The Case of First Year Master Students of  
English at Abdelhafid Bousouf Mila University Centre**

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*Heythem's Dedication*

*Special thanks to the Almighty ALLAH For all the blessings in my life and for*

*Giving me a deeper understanding of everything throughout this process*

*And my life as a whole.*

*I dedicate this work to my grandparents HADA and DJAMILA.*

*To My parents, NOUREDDINE and WARDA.*

*Thank you for your support and for your constant prayers,*

*For your patience and most of all for your care.*

*To my brother, IBRAHIM thank you for your support and your care.*

*To my lovely sisters AYA and MERIEM.*

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## **Abstract**

Many students and teachers learn/teach short stories without paying big attention the culture within them. This lack of attention to culture is thought to be the reason behind the difficulty of communicating in the English language. The present research aims to investigate the effectiveness of teaching short stories to students to enhance their cultural knowledge. We hypothesize that teaching short stories does help students acquire cultural knowledge. To achieve this purpose, an experiment was conducted and a questionnaire was administered to the first-year Master students of English at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center-Mila. The experimental group had regular sessions in which they were taught short stories. The experiment was followed by a questionnaire to strengthen the reliability and validity of the results; the two research tools enabled the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. In fact, the questionnaire aimed mainly to know the participants' impressions about their experience of learning culture. After the analysis of the data gathered and the interpretation of results, we were able to confirm the hypothesis we laid at the very outset: learners can, to a large extent, acquire British/American culture via teaching British/American short stories. However, the results remain ungeneralizable for the sample of the study was very limited in number. In spite of this inadequacy, the research ended up with supplying some pedagogical recommendations for both foreign language teachers and learners, and directions for future research.

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## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Background of the Study**

The field of language and culture tries to explain in what extent language is a system of signs that allows humans to communicate easily, and how it requires knowing some shared values, attitudes, customs and traditions within one society. Unfortunately, these elements extend on a big area of language, that makes it impossible to learn a language without knowing these things that are considered inseparable from the language. Short stories, as a genre of literature, IS a rich material to be used as a tool to teach culture to EFL Learners. This society characteristics led us – as English language researchers – to investigate the effectiveness of knowing culture for English as Foreign Language Students. Unfortunately, today's students of English are being taught short stories using the traditional method in literature module session with its basic focus on linguistics that only deals with grammar and vocabulary aspects with paying less attention to cultural elements within contents.

### **2. The Aim of the Research**

The present research attempts to investigate the effectiveness of teaching English language culture to EFL learners through British and American short stories. This research endeavours to give students a better chance for the sake of learning about the culture.

### **3. Research Question**

Can students acquire cultural elements if they are taught British/American short stories?

#### **4. Research Hypothesis**

We hypothesize that if learners are taught British/American short stories they would acquire cultural elements in a better way.

#### **5. Methodology**

For the sake of gathering sample evidence to test the aforementioned hypothesis within this research paradigm, both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection are adopted. First, we conducted an experiment –following quasi-experimental design, to test the hypothesis. Two similar groups were involved: one was experimental and the other was a control one. In order to investigate the effectiveness of the independent variable (teaching culture), the experimental group received a treatment in their culture and language module class all of them were during the morning period in a classical classroom with tables and board. These sessions lasted for six weeks, in which the participants had studied three short stories in which they discussed cultural aspects and putting the main goal of the sessions on it, whereas, the control group participants continued having their normal six sessions with no focus on culture.

The experiment was followed by conducting a questionnaire that is given only to the experimental group participants. It is devoted to gathering qualitative data about the students' attitudes and impressions about the extent to which the experience of studying culture through short stories was beneficial.

#### **6. Structure of the Dissertation**

The present dissertation is made up of two main parts: a theoretical part which represents the literature review, and a practical one in which research data is collected and analysed. These two parts include two chapters for the theoretical and one only one for the practical that is contains two section one for the experiment and another for the questionnaire. Chapter one reviewed about culture in general and how it can be used as a tool for teaching.

Also, the characteristics and the relationship between culture and teaching were at the core of the chapter. Chapter two reviews the American and British short stories, its origins, components characteristic and its relation to culture. In chapter three, the methodology through which this study was carried out is thoroughly outlined in its very beginning followed by the. The research design, participants, instructional treatment and evaluation were described. Finally, the chapter ended with a discussion of the issues of research validity and reliability. In the last chapter, the results obtained from the two research tools are reviewed in a couple of sections (experiment and questionnaire) are analyzed and discussed so as to test the hypothesis of the study. This discussion is followed by a representation of some research implications and recommendations.

## CHAPTER ONE: CULTURE

### Introduction

The origin of the word culture is commonly assumed to be the Latin noun "culture", from the verb "colere" which means to cultivate. Muensterberger, W. (1954) said that the word culture was established in English by Tylor in 1871. He had borrowed the word culture from German, where, at that time, this term became well recognized.

Most of the Western languages including Spanish and Russian follow the usage of German and American English culture. The word culture had been accepted by the Dutch as Jan Huizinga says: "the word has long since been accepted by the Dutch, the Scandinavian and the Slavonic languages, while in Spain, Italy and America it has also achieved full standing". The term culture began to appear in the English language in the late eighteenth century; after that, the term culture entered a number of other disciplines such as "industry", "democracy", "class" and "art". The word culture is developed and gained a response, at the time, thanks to the impact of the industrial revolution in England.

Culture refers to the distinctive "genius" of a particular group of people. It is also the description of the common condition of all people; each community has its own form of a "culture".

### 1.1 Definition of Culture

Culture is a difficult term to define because it covers all the aspects of the human life. Taylor (1871) maintained that "culture or civilization [...] is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Philosophers, anthropologists and social scientists over the centuries have interpreted it in several ways, i.e. many of these definitions embody a

conception of culture as something detached from behaviour and action. In 1952, the American anthropologists tried to identify the various uses of the term in academic studies and found 164 distinct meanings (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952).

One of the famous definitions is the one by Kroeber (1948, p.44) who points out that "The mass of learned and transmitted motor reaction, habits, techniques, ideas, and values – and the behaviour they induce ----- is what constitutes culture. Culture is the special and exclusive product of men, and it is their distinctive quality in the cosmos".

It is worth noting that culture can be understood differently by different people. In the anthropological sense, culture is defined as the way people live (Chastain, 1988, p. 302). Trinovitch (1980, p. 550) defined culture as:

"An all-inclusive system which incorporates the biological and technical behaviour of human beings with their verbal and non-verbal systems of expressive behaviour starting from birth, and this "all-inclusive system" is acquired as the native culture. This process, which can be referred to as "socialization", prepares the individual for the linguistically and non-linguistically accepted patterns of the society in which he/she lives".

According to Brown (1994, p.170):"culture is a deeply ingrained part of the very fibre of our being, but language –the means for communication among members of a culture- is the most visible and available expression of that culture". Brown added further that people's views about the world their identity and their own systems of thinking acting, feeling, and communicating can be disrupted by a change from one culture to another.

Similarly, Tang (1999) propounds the view that culture is language and language is culture. He suggests that to speak a language well, one has to be able to think in that language. Language is the soul of the country and people who speak it. Language and culture are inextricably linked, and as such we might think about moving away from questions about the



inclusion or exclusion of culture in foreign language curriculum to issues of deliberate immersion versus non-deliberate exposure to it. In a word, culture is a way of life. Brown (1994, p. 163) contended that:

It is the context within which we exist, think, feel and relate to others. In other terms, it is the 'glue' that binds a group of people together. It can be defined as a blueprint that guides the behaviour of people in the community and is incubated in family life. Besides, it governs our behaviour in groups, makes us sensitive to matters of status and helps us know what others expect of us and what will happen if we do not live up to their expectations. Thus, culture helps in knowing how far we can go as individuals and what our responsibility is in the group.

So, we can say that culture is the complete system of life a group of people acquire and share; this system comprises patterns of behaviour, values, norms, attitudes, assumptions, and all aspects of lifestyles. Furthermore, Rogers and Steinfatt (1999) points out that culture refers to the whole way of life of people and it includes not only forms of behaviour, values and beliefs but also material objects such as their dressing style and what do their colors represent.

## **1.2 The Relationship between Language and Culture**

Language and culture are two terms which are closely connected to the human life. The study of the connection between the two has gained the attention of scholars in different fields. Language and culture are two terms which go hand in hand; each of them can influence the other: language can transmit culture and culture can shape language. Wardhaugh (2002) summarizes the views of various scholars about the relationship between language and culture as follows:

(a) language determines thought and culture: Sapir-Worf hypothesis (Sapir, 1929).

- (b) language influences thought and culture.
- (c) culture influences people's language.
- (d) language and culture influence each other.
- (e) language and culture do not correlate with each other.

It should be emphasized that culture of a community cannot be studied without shedding light on the native language spoken by that community. Witherspoon (1980, p. 2) advocates that language and culture are highly interrelated and proposed that “cultures cannot be studied without attention to the native language spoken within them; language cannot be studied in isolation from the cultures in which they are spoken.”

Since individuals exchange information and capabilities (natural abilities and skills) with each other, they need to have that tool of communication in order to interact. To do so, people from different cultural backgrounds need to know the boundaries that should not be transcended while communicating. Children get accustomed to the norms as they grow up in a particular group; thus, culture is acquired.

Goodenough (1981) asserts that culture in a society is whatever a person has to know or believe in so that to operate in a manner accepted by the other members. Fuller and Wardhaugh (2014) noted that culture is socially acquired. It is the “know-how” that a person must possess to get through the task of daily living; only for a few does it require knowledge of some music, literature and arts (Fuller & Wardhaugh, 2014).

Furthermore, the relationships between language and culture can be manifested in a variety of ways: linguistic structure, change in behaviour, or change in societal norms. Those changes occur because of the linguistic interaction between people, from different societies, who may differ in ethnicity, race and gender. Fuller and Wardhaugh (2014) explained the

mutual influence between language and culture. First, the social structure may either shape or determine the linguistic structure and/or behaviour. Second, the linguistic structure and/or behaviour may either influence or determine social structure or worldview. This last idea is propounded by the Whorfian hypothesis. Such a view lies behind certain proposed language reforms: if we change the language, we can change social behaviour. Third, the influence is bi-directional: language and society may influence each other. Certain language forms might change because of changes in societal norms. Fourth, it is assumed that there is no relationship at all between linguistic structure and social structure and that each is independent of the other.

### **1.3 Key Elements of Culture**

Culture is mainly concerned with 3 key elements each of them is considered as a marker for the culture of a given society

#### **1.3.1 Beliefs**

According to Merriam Webster dictionary (2018), To believe in someone or something is to be in a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing. Every society has its own beliefs and attitudes about people, objects, ideas, etc. These beliefs are related to the individual's religious or political beliefs for, example: belief in God, belief in democracy, belief in chance, etc. Rogers and Steinfatt (1999, P. 81) argue that: “beliefs are an individual’s representations of the outside world. Beliefs serve as the storage system for the content of our past experiences, including thoughts, memories, and interpretations of events, beliefs are shaped by the individual’s culture”.

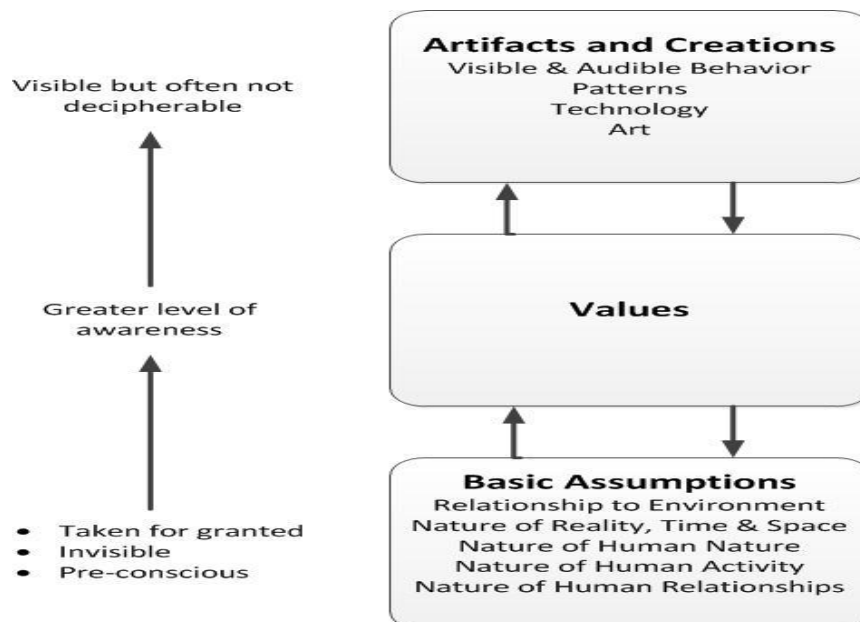
### 1.3.2 Attitudes

Attitudes are an internal event , so it is impossible to be seen from outside because attitudes are emotional and mental states generated as responses to actions made by a specific person(s) as Nordlund (,2009 P.4) explains it. Attitudes are feelings or opinions about something or someone or a way of behaving. Overall, they are emotions and feelings made by people in order to express their views and react to specific actions by showing their emotions and feelings in front of people. Attitudes and beliefs indicate behavioural intentions, tendencies for a person to respond to events, ideas, and people in particular ways (Rogers &Steinfatt 1999).

### 1.3.3Values

Values are the ideas about the right and wrong that shapes individual's behaviour. Values influence decisions; the actions we take are mainly based on our values; hence, they help us understand reality. Thus, they are significant and meaningful in our lives. Rogers and Steinfatt (1999) state that values are what people, who belong to the same culture, regard strongly as good or bad. Cultural values stand as the criteria according to which one can judge the actions made by people -whether those actions are good or bad. These values shape culture and, automatically, society.

Respecting the elders, being kind to the young, telling the truth, showing tolerance, etc. are all examples of values that society members ought to share and spread. The table below explains the main things that people are supposed to deal with in the society; people must respect these values in order not to transform the limits and hurts others unconsciously, that is what this table represents. The following figure is presented by Spencer and Franklin (2012, P.4)



**Figure 1:** The Levels of Culture & their Interaction (a Minor adaptation of Schein 1984, p. 4)

## 1.4 The Importance of Teaching Culture

Culture and language are two concepts which are very related to each other because teaching culture is an essential part of teaching English as a foreign language. Therefore, there is a very important component that may help the acquisition of a foreign language which is called intercultural competence (ICC). According to Li Sun (2013, p. 372), communicative competence is “the ability to achieve certain communicative aims by various possible linguistic or non-linguistic means. Furthermore, language and culture are interconnected to each other, one complete the other one”. Sun describes language as the primary vehicle by which a culture emanates its beliefs, values, and norms. Similarly, language is influenced by culture, “if there is no culture, the language will be like water without a source or a tree without roots” (Sun, 2013, p. 371). Thus, for him, the connection between language and culture is very strong because when trying to learn a foreign language, students have to learn the customs and traditions of the speech community that speaks that language in order to be more competent for communication with its native speakers (Sun, 2013, p. 371).

## 1.5 Culture Shock

The term culture shock was introduced for the first time in 1958 describing the anxiety produced when a person moves from one culture to another one, i.e. to a new environment. The term reveals a focus on a specific situation which someone finds himself/ herself; it is the situation when h/she ignores the norms of the expected behaviour because they are different from the norms of his own local culture. H/she does not know what the appropriate re/action to does. A person might master the foreign language in terms of its vocabulary items and syntactic structures but remains unaware of its cultural standards which leads to a culture shock when travelling to the place where that culture/language reign.

Kalervo Oberg is an anthropologist who has applied the term of the culture shock to all people who travel abroad into new cultures. He defines culture shock as "da malady and an occupational disease of many people who have been suddenly transplanted abroad" (1960, p.142). Culture shock is an action or experience that may happen when someone moves and/or travels to another cultural environment which is different from that of his own. It is also the description of feelings of one experience after leaving the home that he/she belongs to. Rogers and Steinfitt (1999) pointed out that culture shock is "the traumatic experience that an individual may encounter when entering a different culture" (p. 212). Oberg also describes culture shock as "the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (1960, p.142).

All people ignore the importance of symbols and signs that they mostly use in their daily life in the sort of language, gestures, norms, customs and traditions. As a consequence, when someone travels to another country he/ she recognizes their importance. Many of other researchers define culture shock as: "A form of anxiety which results from the

misunderstanding of commonly perceived and understood signs and symbols of social interaction"(Adler, 1973, p. 531).

## **Conclusion**

To conclude with, the aim of this chapter was to clarify the notion of culture and its elements and characteristics to avoid any ambiguities as the term is defined differently by several scholars and followed by the relationship between culture and language and the importance of teaching culture. This chapter at the very end explains the importance of culture in education and language learning followed by the explanation of culture shock suffered by the majority of foreign language learners.

## CHAPTER TWO: SHORT STORIES

### Introduction

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, a new type of writing -apart from novels- appeared giving birth to a new style of writing that took place in the magazines and newspapers in the form of short stories. The short story as a genre of literature has its own characteristics of being unique and separated from other types of writing although its definition was a subject of debate among specialists in the field. In addition to that, this chapter will reveal the close relationship between short stories (as works of literature) and culture. The chapter will end up by tackling the wide use of the short story as a cultural raw material in the English language classroom.

### 2.1 Definition of the Short Story

The short story has become an increasingly important literary genre since the mid-nineteenth century. During the last years of that century, there was much debate and confusion surrounding the nature of the short story. The term 'short story' implies a plotted narrated genre of literature, which is, in fact, a modern equivalent of the folktale. Paul (2009) says that:

The neologism of the 'short story' signifies a redefinition of literature towards the end of the nineteenth century; how it is produced, received and consumed. Consequently, the making of the short story acts as an index to the invention of modern fiction and its relationship to changing social, economic and cultural contexts (p. 1).

In fact, there is an agreement on the origin of the short stories as it is the oral story-telling tradition. Perhaps the oldest form of the short story is the anecdote which was popular in the Roman Empire. José (2009) published a paper about "the short-short story" \_as he names it\_ in the field of genre theory where he declares that the short story is a polemical genre, that is also known as Flash Fiction, Sudden Fiction, Micro Fiction, Micro-Story,



Postcard, Blaster, Snapper, Mini Fiction, Fast Fiction, Skinny Fiction, and Quick Fiction. José (2009) thinks that:

The short story has not received much academic consideration so far. Since the short-short story is a hybrid genre, which mixes poetic condensation with the fictional narrative language of the novel, it seems to be deeply enmeshed in the fading away of generic boundaries (p.1).

The 'short story' is also identified in terms of the number of words it contains. Charles (2014, p.1) states that respectable American publications set 5000 words as the upper limit. For TriQuarterly, a not-for-profit American literary magazine that is published twice a year at Northwestern University, the limit has become 3500 words only. Quite similarly, in the UK, most publications refer to a maximum of 4000 words.

## 2.2 Short Story vs Novel

To distinct the short story from the novel seven or eight requisites must be met according to Fred (1923, p.293-294): originality, unity, compression, the brilliance of style, action, form, substance, and fantasy.

- a) **Originality:** the short stories demand an originality which we do not look for in a novel because nature, history and the evolution are what makes this distinction.
- b) **Unity:** A short story deals with a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or series of emotions called forth by a single situation.
- c) **Compression:** Compression is the minimizing the length of the story in terms of events and excluding some style phenomena one can notice them in the novel, i.e. compression is not merely in the telling of the story, but also in the style of the writer.
- d) **The brilliance of Style:** The short story should have brevity and brilliance, and the style must be direct and vigorous.

- e) **Action:** In a short story something always happens. In novels there are many gaps in where there is no vividness of events. In a short story there must be something done.
- f) **Form:** The writer of short stories must have the sense of form, the construction must be logical, adequate, harmonious.
- g) **Substance:** the subject of the short story is of more importance yet. What you have to tell is considered in need of more interest.
- h) **Fantasy:** If the writer of short stories has a touch of Fantasy, i.e. if fantasy is widely used within a short story it is so much better.

### 2.3 American short story

To have a deep understanding of the starting point of the American short story, it is necessary to look at the new remarkable changes in the ideology taking place in the era of the third and the fourth decades of the nineteenth century. In fact, the beginning of the short story can be traced back to the works of such writers as Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne in the US. Tim (2008, P.6) states that: "Critics have pointed to American writers of the 1830s and 1840s as the point of origin for new thinking on short fiction, considering the emergent talents of Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville as the decisive factors".

A revolution by such writers was a desire to reach a new thinking to form an independent American short story characterized by its component traditions. Martin (2006, p. 6) states that a writer like Edgar Allan Poe turned to magazine publication as the best means of creating both a literature and a reading public and this was during the economic Depression of 1837 that he began to see the magazine instead of the book as the appropriate expression of American culture.

Many people ask a question wonder about the reason behind the choice of the magazine by Poe. In a response to this question, Martin (2006), in his book *Edgar Allan Poe's*

*writing*, wrote to a prospective sponsor that: " I perceived that the whole energetic, busy spirit of the age tended wholly to the Magazine literature – to the curt, the terse, the well-timed, and the readily diffused, in preference to the old forms of the verbose, the ponderous and the inaccessible" (P.6).

## **2.4 British short story**

The nineteenth century witnessed the birth of short story, a modern form of literature, in the British peninsula. Nowhere is the beginning of the short story in Britain mentioned. Perhaps, its birth came in the form of many writers' works that share common characteristics and often are influenced by the American ones. Tim (2008, P.6) notes that: "There are several contending historical moments, [...] Wendell Harris argues for the arrival of the true short story in the 1880s and 1890s' with the works of Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, and H.G. Wells".

## **2.5 Importance of short stories in teaching culture**

Today, foreign language teachers aim not only at teaching students how to speak, read, listen and write in English, but also to develop cultural understanding and social skills. Literature has a vital role in English teaching. According to Ann (2014, p.12), literature is a great source of understanding and discussing social and cultural issues. Stevens (2014, as cited in Simensen, 1998, p. 64) says that: "We have moved from a strict focus on language – grammar and translation in the early 1900s, to a communicative approach from the mid-1970s, where it was seen as important to study language in a meaningful context".

It is clear that with the emergence of the communicative approaches to language teaching and learning, literature was given a more central place. It has become important to provide students with authentic language, and literary texts are considered so. Furthermore, Stevens ( 2014, p.11) notes that the view towards language has changed to include, in addition to the linguistic aspects, the social and functional ones in that they play a fundamental role in

communication. The short story as a literary genre is seen as a good tool in language education by providing students with an opportunity to be exposed to authentic language contexts.

## **1.6 Components of the short story**

In analyzing a short story, there are six elements that the reader should look for. All stories begin with a seed of an idea. Departing from that point, the author can plan his story around these elements.

**1.6.1 Setting:** Setting refers to the place(s) and time(s) in which the actions in the story occur.

**1.6.2 Plot:** By plot is meant the sequence of events which constitutes the story. Each event occurs because of something that precedes it. The turning point in which the story reaches its highest dramatic intensity is called climax and there is also the foreshadowing – clues of hints which prepare the reader for future action or events. The plot starts with an introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and ends up with a resolution-though sometimes the end is just left open.

It is worth mentioning that the resolution implies a dramatic through line. Four dramatic thought lines along which a short story can be developed are possible. They are as follows: (1) The main character succeeds, (2) The main character is defeated, (3) The main character abandons his/her goal, and (4) The main character's goal is undefined.

Generally speaking, a plot revolves around a conflict. There are five types of conflicts that can be found in a short story. They are stated as follows: relational conflict, situational conflict, inner conflict, paranormal conflict, and cosmic conflict.

**1.6.3 Point of view:** The point of view is the camera angle from which the writer presents the story. In the first-person point of view, *It* is used, and the narrator is typically a character involved in the story. In the second person, *you* "is" used in an effort to make the reader a

character. In third-person point of view, the narrator is a voice external to the story using "he" or "she" in relating events.

**1.6.4 Scenes:** The term scenes is a reference to the parts of the story in which the writer's attention is tightly focused on a particular point in the progression of events. Sensory detail is key, here, so that readers feel that they see, hear, feel, taste, and smell all that they would if actually witnessing the actions presented.

**1.6.5 Dialogue:** The written approximation of the speech occurring between two characters or more is called dialogue.

**1.6.6 Theme:** The theme is the insight or concern that the writer hopes to convey the story.

**1.6.7 Character:** Any character may face an external conflict – it happens outside the character –or an internal one – it happens inside the character i.e., character vs. himself/herself. In a story, there are two primary characters called the protagonist and the antagonist.

The protagonist is the main character and it is not safe to call him the hero because the main character is not always heroic. Simply, he/she is the person with which the story is most concerned.

The antagonist does not have to be a human being; in some stories, nature is the antagonist. The main character has to face nature and hopes that he survives. Some characters do not change in a story: these characters are called flat. The characters that change or grow are called round.

## **1.7 Short stories and culture**

Anyone who has ever tried to acquire a foreign language knows that it is a very hard task. Literary works are considered to contain all aspects of language because of the wide variety of language use within it and, generally, they are understood in a multiplicity of ways. Literature is a body of written or oral works, such as short stories, novels, poems, or plays that

use words to stimulate the imagination and provoke the reader with a unique vision of life. Rezaee & Farahian, (2011, p. 247) pinpoint that: "... Some of these factors are cognitive, others are effective, still, others are social, some others are biological and the rest is personal" (as cited in Brown, 2007, pp. 2-3). Rezaee and Farahian (2011, as cited in Brown, 2000, P. 247) added further that, previously, it was believed that: "to learn a second language successfully, one has only to get the linguistic competence in that language."

## **2.8 The role of the short story in language teaching**

The short story as a literary genre can be regarded as a rich source of authentic materials. According to (José, 1947), Literature projects two features in its use of language:

- Language in use: that is the use of the language conventions by those who master it.
- The aesthetic (or the artistic) representation of the spoken language which is meant to represent language within a certain cultural context.

## **2.9 Using Literature to Teach Culture in the English Classroom**

It would be pointed out that foreign language learners, nowadays, are not limited to contact with speakers of the target language and the country where it is spoken; more and more, they are involved in situations where they are lost between different languages and cultures where they have to interpret the world from different points of view.

In the United States, the National Foreign Language Centre (NFLC) at Washington defined four basic missions for language teaching/learning in higher education. According to Coperías (2002), one of these missions is called the general education mission and it is meant for developing the cultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, universal perspectives and grasping of different modes of understanding reality, and giving insight into the language working and logic systems.

It is also worth mentioning the idea that the process of intercultural communication is a function of the skills. Students bring cultural notions to the interaction as the use of the

language is an interactional process that can be done only by mastering skills of choosing context in one's language. According to Cruz (2010, p.7 as cited in Byram & Michael, 2001), these skills can be divided into two categories:

- Skills of interpretation and establishing relationships between aspects of the two cultures which involves the ability to analyze data from one's own and from another country.
- Skills of discovery and interaction that involve the discovery of new data and the interaction with other speakers.

At last, clearly, the role of culture in ELT is crucial since it can stand as a spot of difference between speakers, who might be outsiders, and speakers, who can understand the meaning beneath the words in specific contexts.

Cruz (2010, p. 8) mentions that (as cited in Samovar, Porter & Jain, 1981, p. 24):

Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted ... Culture ... is the foundation of communication (p. 24).

## **Conclusion**

Last but not least, the short story appears to be an effective genre when used as a source of cultural knowledge to be taught to EFL learners. This chapter presented the definition of culture and its characteristics and components while mentioning the points of view of many scholars about the delimiting the genre borders, tracing the development of the term itself and expounding the conditions of its emergence both in USA and Britain. The famous writers and their publications in special political, social and economic conditions

played a very important factor in shaping the modern short story, as a new genre of literature, and putting an end to the classical oral telling. The last part of this chapter was devoted to the role of the short story when using it as a material imbued with so many cultural elements to teach English as a foreign language.



## **CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK**

### **Introduction**

The current chapter attempts to present the methodology and procedures followed in this research along with the analyses. This study aims at investigating the effectiveness of short stories in helping students acquire the culture of EFL. A quasi-experiment is conducted with master students of English at the University Center of Mila in the module of Language and Culture over a six week period. A pre-test and a post-test have been taken, before and after the teaching sessions, in order to explore the development of the learners' awareness of the cultural markers that appear in the short stories which are the content of the course they attended during the intervention. It is worth mentioning that the experiment is followed by a questionnaire to review the students' attitudes about the experiment.

### **3.1 Participants**

As noted earlier, the present study is conducted in the Department of Foreign Languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre-Mila. Our target population constitutes of 26 first-year master students of English who are chosen because they are deemed to be the most aware about the culture of the English language. Beginners have generally many language problems let alone culture. The sample is, to some extent, homogeneous in gender and age, which ranges from 22 to 25. The participants are divided into an experimental group and a control group with 13 students in each.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The present research aims to establish a cause-effect relationship between two research variables, an independent variable that is teaching culture and a dependent variable which is the cultural awareness ; consequently, the study subscribes under the mixed method through which both quantitative and a qualitative data were collected using an experiment and a questionnaire. The sample is divided into an experimental group which was exposed to some

treatment that was preceded and followed by a set of assessment procedures in a normal educational research setting (the classroom), and a control group which, by contrast, did not receive any treatment. It had a normal Culture session with no emphasis on short stories. This research was conducted at a university setting, in a classical classroom.

### 3.3 Data collection tools

Because the present study sets out to investigate the effectiveness of teaching culture through short stories, two data collection tools were chosen: a test and a questionnaire. Basically, the choice of these data collection tools is determined by the nature of the research questions and hypotheses.

For the experiment, the students were first tested before and after they studying a given short story. Six sessions were allotted to teach three short stories two of which are American. The first one is entitled *The Chaser* by the American famous writer John Collier and was first published in December 1940. The second short story is *A cat in the rain* written by Ernest Hemingway; it was first published in 1925. The third is British and entitled *The Wish* by the famous writer *Roald Dahl* which was first published in *Someone Like You* (1953). Concerning the control group pre-test short stories, one is the *killers by Ernest Hemingway* published in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1927, the second one is another *Hemingway's* work published in his 1923 in the book *Three Stories and Ten Poems* while the last one is *At Christmas Time by Anton Chekhov*.

The *three* short stories are chosen on a basis of their length from 4 to 6 pages maximum because these stories can be read in about 20 minutes because the long ones would take a long time to be read and discussed in the class. Concerning the language, it very easy with a rare incomprehensible terminology.

The whole experiment was followed by a questionnaire in order to know the participant's views and impressions about short stories and culture. The questionnaire is a list

of 13 items about the impressions of the students about the short stories and after their opinion about learning culture through short stories.

### **3.3.1 Description of the Experimental Procedure**

**3.3.1.1 The pre-test:** The pre-test is a set of 12 items in form of questions about 12 cultural markers that appear in any of the three selected short stories that is given to each group (see appendix). Every session started with a test which was given to both experimental and control groups; then, the results were cross-compared.

**3.3.1.2 The Treatment:** To investigate the effectiveness of exposing students to three British/American short stories on acquiring English and American culture, two sessions were devoted to teaching each short story and comparisons were made between the pre-test and the post-test results to measure the students' progress. Firstly, a twenty minutes pre-test is distributed aimed to know the knowledge of students before reading the short story. Secondly, printed short stories were given to be read silently then loudly and then finally discuss and explain the short story and its difficult terms. The debate used to end up with some questions about comprehension such as: the theme, the main characters, the setting, the writer, to name. As previously stated, only the experimental group was concerned with this second stage of receiving a special treatment that is their exposure to some debate about culture and revealing everything about culture can be found in any of the three short stories; the control group had ordinary sessions of the culture of language module. Thirdly, twenty minutes were left at the end of each session for the post-test. Finally, a data analysis was done in the form of comparison between the marks of the pre-test and the marks of the post-test.

**3.3.1.3 The post-test:** the post-test is identical to the pre-test in terms of content and is administered to see whether or not students learned the cultural knowledge embedded in the selected short-stories (see appendix).

### **3.3.2 Description of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was given only to the participants from the experimental group to gather information about the students' attitudes and impressions about the extent to which the experience of studying culture through short stories was beneficial. The questionnaire comprises 13 items divided into three sections.

The first section focuses on the participants' opinion about learning culture when learning a foreign language. The second one seeks to know how often they read short stories and what they learn from them. The third section contains questions about the intervention of the experience of being exposed to short stories on learning culture.

### **3.4 Analysis of Results**

The purpose of this section is to analyze and interpret the results that we obtained from the experiment with the help of using tables and figures. This is because the data gathered throughout the stages of this research requires the use of some statistical tools, a statistical package and a t-test, a statistical test to report means, medians, standard deviations, etc. for the ultimate purpose of giving meaning to the meaningless test scores we got.

#### **3.4.1 Pre-test Results of the Experimental Group**

The table below represents the pre-test scores of the experimental group in the three short stories. The majority of students are beneath the overage mark 6 with an exception in the first short story in which the majority of the students have got the average, with only 4 students who are beneath.

The table represents also pre-test mean, median, mode, and SD results in the control group. From the table the mean, the median and the mode are nearly equal in the first and the second short stories with a value  $\approx 4$ . Concerning the third short story, the mean and the median are  $\approx 5$  with a lower mode that equals 3. Moreover, the SD is varied among the three short stories.

The first short-story			The second short-story			The third short-story		
Pre	$\bar{X}$	$(xi-\bar{x})^2$	Pre	$\bar{X}$	$(xi-\bar{x})^2$	Pre	$\bar{X}$	$(xi-\bar{x})^2$
3	-2.92	8.52	2	-2.46	6.05	2	-2.92	8.52
5	-0.92	0.84	3	-1.46	2.13	4	-0.92	0.84
5	-0.92	0.84	4	-0.46	0.21	4	-0.92	0.84
5	-0.92	0.84	4	-0.46	0.21	4	-0.92	0.84
6	0.08	0.64	4	-0.46	0.21	4	-0.92	0.84
6	0.08	0.64	5	0.54	0.29	5	0.08	0.0064
6	0.08	0.64	5	0.54	0.29	5	0.08	0.0064
6	0.08	0.64	5	0.54	0.29	6	1.08	1.16
6	0.08	0.64	5	0.54	0.29	6	1.08	1.16
7	1.08	11.66	5	0.54	0.29	6	1.08	1.16
7	1.08	11.66	5	0.54	0.29	6	1.08	1.16
7	1.08	11.66	5	0.54	0.29	6	1.08	1.16
8	2.08	4.32	6	1.54	2.37	6	1.08	1.16
<b>T</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>53.54</b>	<b>56</b>		<b>13.21</b>	<b>58</b>		<b>18.85</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>5.92</b>	mean	<b>4.46</b>		mean	<b>4.92</b>		
<b>median</b>	<b>6</b>	median	<b>5</b>		median	<b>5</b>		
<b>Mode</b>	<b>6</b>	mode	<b>5</b>		mode	<b>5</b>		
<b>SD</b>	<b>1.25</b>	SD	<b>1.05</b>		SD	<b>6</b>		

**Table 1: Pre-test results of the experimental group**

### 3.4.2 Pre-tests results of the control group

Table 2 represents the level of the students of the control group before the beginning of the experiment. The majority of the students have faced a problem in answering the tests questions. The table shows approximately similar marks between the pre-test results through all the three short stories. More importantly, it shows the limited cultural knowledge of the

students in the fact that can be revealed by the mean, median, mode, and the standard deviation. For the mean, mode and median, it is clear that the all of them are beneath the average mark 6. Additionally, there are distinctions in the standard deviations: 1.38 in the first short story, 0.95 in the second one and 2.03 in the third.

The first short-story			The second short-story			The third short-story		
Pre	$\bar{X}$	$(xi-\bar{x})^2$	Pre	$\bar{X}$	$(xi-\bar{x})^2$	Pre	$\bar{X}$	$(xi-\bar{x})^2$
3	-1.38	1.90	4	-0.5	0.25	3	-2.15	4.62
4	-0.38	0.14	5	0.5	0.25	4	-1.15	1.32
5	0.62	0.38	5	0.5	0.25	5	-0.15	0.02
5	0.62	0.38	6	1.5	2.25	3	-2.15	4.62
6	1.62	2.62	5	0.5	0.25	4	-1.15	1.32
4	-0.38	0.14	4	-0.5	0.25	10	4.85	23.52
4	-0.38	0.14	3	-1.5	2.25	7	1.85	3.42
3	-1.38	1.90	4	-0.5	0.25	7	1.85	3.42
6	1.62	2.62	6	1.5	2.25	6	0.85	0.72
7	2.62	6.86	5	0.5	0.25	4	-1.15	1.32
4	-0.38	0.14	3	-1.5	2.25	5	-0.15	0.02
4	-0.38	0.14	4	-0.5	0.25	6	0.85	0.72
2	-2.38	5.66	4.5	00	00	3	-2.15	4.62
<b>T57</b>		<b>23.02</b>	<b>58.5</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>67</b>		<b>49.66</b>
mean	<b>4.38</b>	mean	<b>4.5</b>	mean	<b>5.15</b>			
median	<b>4</b>	median	<b>4.5</b>	median	<b>5</b>			
mode	<b>4</b>	mode	<b>4</b>	mode	<b>3</b>			
SD	<b>1.38</b>	SD	<b>0.95</b>	SD	<b>2.03</b>			

**Table 2: Pre-test results of the control group**

### 3.4.3 Post-test results of the experimental group

From the table below it appears that the students have got high marks after having special teaching culture sessions. The mean in the three short stories in addition to the median and the mode range between 7 and 11. Also, the least mark on the table is 6, the average and the marks of the last test, which about the last short story, are the best in comparison to the previous. It is noticeable that the more we move forward in the experiment, the better results are achieved by the students in the culture tests. The mean of the first post-test is 8.53, the second is 9.15 while that of the third is 10.23.

The first short-story			The second short-story			The third short-story		
Post-test 1	$\bar{Y}$	$(Y_i - \bar{Y})^2$	Post-test 2	$\bar{Y}$	$(Y_i - \bar{Y})^2$	Post-test 3	$\bar{Y}$	$(Y_i - \bar{Y})^2$
6	-2.53	6.4	7	-2.15	4.62	7	-3.23	10.43
6	-2.53	6.4	7	-2.15	4.62	9	-1.23	1.51
7	-1.53	2.34	9	-0.15	0.02	10	-0.23	0.05
7	-1.53	2.34	9	-0.15	0.02	10	-0.23	0.05
7	-1.53	2.34	9	-0.15	0.02	10	-0.23	0.05
7	-1.53	2.34	9	-0.15	0.02	10	-0.23	0.05
9	0.47	0.22	9	-0.15	0.02	11	0.77	0.59
9	0.47	0.22	10	0.85	0.72	11	0.77	0.59
9	0.47	0.22	10	0.85	0.72	11	0.77	0.59
10	1.47	2.16	10	0.85	0.72	11	0.77	0.59
10	1.47	2.16	10	0.85	0.72	11	0.77	0.59
12	3.47	12.04	10	0.85	0.72	11	0.77	0.59
12	3.47	12.04	10	0.85	0.72	11	0.77	0.59
<b>T 89</b>		<b>51.22</b>	<b>119</b>		<b>13.66</b>	<b>133</b>		<b>16.27</b>
<b>mean</b>	<b>8.53</b>		<b>mean</b>	<b>9.15</b>		<b>mean</b>	<b>10.23</b>	

<b>median</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>median</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>median</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>mode</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>mode</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>mode</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SD</b>	<b>2.06</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1.16</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1.16</b>

**Table 3: Post-test results of the experimental group**

### 3.4.4 Post-tests results of the control group

The following table represents the scores achieved by the control group in the post-test. The majority of the students have got marks below the average obtaining different scores that range mainly from 3 to 5 out of 12 with few exceptions that reached or exceeded the average: 6 in the first post-test; another 6 in the second post-test and some good marks in the last post-test that are 6, 7.5, 8 and 10.

Furthermore, the means, the modes and the standard deviations across the three post-tests are totally close for each other which reflects that the three of them are homogenous and replicate that the level of students and difficulty are near to each other.

It is worth mentioning that the standard deviation of each post-test is noticeably distinct from the other. In the first short story, it is 1.12; in the second, it is only 0.59; and in the third, it is 1.84.

The first short-story			The second short-story			The third short-story		
Post-test 1	$\bar{Y}$	$(Y_i - \bar{Y})^2$	Post-test 2	$\bar{Y}$	$(Y_i - \bar{Y})^2$	Post-test 3	$\bar{Y}$	$(Y_i - \bar{Y})^2$
3	-1.15	1.32	4	-0.69	0.47	4	-1.57	2.46
4	-0.15	0.02	5	0.31	0.09	5	-0.57	0.32
4	-0.15	0.02	4	-0.69	0.47	4	-1.57	2.46
5	0.85	0.72	5	0.31	0.09	4	-1.57	2.46
3.5	-0.65	0.42	5	0.31	0.09	8	2.43	5.90
4	-0.15	0.02	4.5	-0.19	0.03	10	4.43	19.62
2	-2.15	-4.62	4	-0.69	0.47	6	0.43	0.18
5	0.85	0.72	5	0.31	0.09	7.5	1.93	3.72
5.5	1.35	1.82	6	1.31	1.71	5	-0.57	0.32
4	-0.15	0.02	5	0.31	0.09	5	-0.57	0.32



6	1.85	3.42	4	-0.69	0.47	5	-0.57	0.32
5	0.85	0.72	4.5	-0.19	0.03	5	-0.57	0.32
3	-1.15	1.32	5	0.31	0.09	4	-1.57	2.46
<b>T 54</b>		<b>10.54</b>	<b>61</b>		<b>4.19</b>	<b>72.5</b>		<b>40.86</b>
<b>Mean</b>	4.15		<b>mean</b>	4.69		<b>mean</b>	5.57	
<b>median</b>	4		<b>median</b>	5		<b>median</b>	5	
<b>Mode</b>	4		<b>mode</b>	5		<b>mode</b>	5	
<b>SD</b>	1.12		<b>SD</b>	0.59		<b>SD</b>	1.84	

**Table 4: Post-test results of the control group**

### 3.4.5 Cross comparative Evaluation of Results

#### 3.4.5.1 Comparison of the Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements

It can be indicated that the results of the pre-test and post-test for each short story are approximately the same whether concerning the means, modes, medians, and even standard deviations and variance. It is possible to say that this group achieved no progress throughout six weeks in terms of the amount of the cultural knowledge it is supposed to gain.

The short story	The mean		The median		The mode		SD		variance	
	Pre	post	Pre	Post	pre	Post	pre	post	pre	post
<b>The first</b>	4.38	4.15	4	4	4	4	1.38	1.12	1.92	1.26
<b>The second</b>	4.5	4.69	4.5	5	4	5	0.95	0.59	0.91	0.35
<b>The third</b>	5.15	5.57	5	5	3	5	2.03	1.84	4.14	3.41

**Table 5: A comparison between the pre-test and the post-test achievement in the control group.**

### 3.4.5.2 Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test

#### Achievements

The following table represents the noticeable differences between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group. The distinctions in the means, medians, and modes indicate that there is an improvement in terms of the student's acquisition of British and American cultural elements. This progress can be attributed to the intervention i.e. special instruction during the period of the experiment. Yet, this hypothesis cannot be confirmed unless a t-value through the paired sample t-test is calculated.

The short-story	The mean		The median		The mode		SD		variance	
	Pre	post	Pre	Post	pre	Post	pre	post	pre	post
<b>The first</b>	5.92	8.53	6	9	6	7	1.25	2.06	1.57	4.26
<b>The second</b>	4.46	9.15	5	9	5	10	1.05	1.06	1.10	1.14
<b>The third</b>	4.92	10.23	5	11	6	11	1.25	1.16	1.57	1.35

**Table 6: A comparison between the achievements of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test.**

### 3.4.5.3 Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test and the Control Group Pre-test

#### Achievements

The table below shows that the means, the medians and the modes of both the experimental and control groups in the pre-test are approximately the same. We can deduce that all the participants, in this experiment, share, more or less, an equal amount of the British/American cultural knowledge.

The short-story	The mean		The median		The mode		SD	
	EXP	CON	EXP	CON	EXP	CON	EXP	CON
The first	5.92	4.38	6	4	6	4	1.25	1.38
The second	4.46	4.5	5	4.5	5	4	1.05	0.95
The third	4.92	5.15	5	5	6	3	1.25	2.03

**Table 7: A comparison between pre-test results of the experiment group and the pre-test results of the control group**

#### **3.4.5.4 Comparison of the Experimental Group Post-test and the Control Group Post-test Achievements**

From what the table shows about the marks of the post-test of the two groups, we can say that there are huge differences between them, which means that there is a progress achieved by the students in the experimental group in terms of knowledge of foreign cultural elements.

The short story	The mean		The median		The mode		SD	
	EXP	CON	EXP	CON	EXP	CON	EXP	CON
<b>The first</b>	8.53	4.15	9	4	7	4	2.06	1.12
<b>The second</b>	9.15	4.69	9	5	10	5	1.06	0.59
<b>The third</b>	10.2	5.57	11	5	11	5	1.16	1.84

3

**Table 8: A comparison between post-test of the experimental group and the post-test of the control group**

### 3.5 Statistical Tools

#### 3.5.1 The t-value through the paired sample t-test

In this research, it inevitable to calculate the probability of chance within the obtained results by comparing the two means of the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group. The following figures contain all data needed to do the statistics for the paired sample t-test and the independent t- test.

PRE-TEST		POST-TEST		X-Y	(X-Y) <sup>2</sup>
	X		Y		
<b>A</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>6.66</b>	<b>-4.33</b>	<b>18.74</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>7.33</b>	<b>-3.33</b>	<b>11.08</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>8.66</b>	<b>-4.33</b>	<b>18.74</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>8.66</b>	<b>-4.33</b>	<b>18.74</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>4.66</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>8.66</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>5.33</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>8.66</b>	<b>-3.33</b>	<b>11.08</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>5.33</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>9.66</b>	<b>-4.33</b>	<b>18.74</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>5.66</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-4.33</b>	<b>18.74</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>5.66</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-4.33</b>	<b>18.74</b>

<b>J</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>10.33</b>	<b>-4.33</b>	<b>18.74</b>
<b>K</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>10.33</b>	<b>-4.33</b>	<b>18.74</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>6.66</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-4.33</b>	<b>18.74</b>
<b>Sum</b>	<b>66.29</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>120.95</b>	<b>-54.63</b>	<b>231.82</b>

**Table 9: post-test average list of the control and experimental group**

### **The T-test Computation**

In order to calculate the t-test value, we relied on the descriptive statistics for both groups. It is worth repeating that the computation of this test will help to discover the effect of the independent variable over the dependent variable. Hence, the t-test will compare the two groups' means with referring to the deviation, which is the standard deviation or the deviation of the scores from the mean. So, will be using the independent t-test. The following table calculated by SPSS software reveals the differences between the two Means of both pre-test and post-test with revealing of the SD and standard error Mean.

A general examination of the experimental group pre-test results reveals that the mean of the whole group is (M=5.09) and the standard deviation (SD= 1.14). The results denote that the pre-test results show a development in students' cultural knowledgeability comparing to the mean score in the post-test. Also, the results that the majority of the student's scores are 5 to 6 with only two marks have got 3 and 4.66. Concerning the post-test, the results can be summarized as follows (M= 9.30), and (SD=1.33). The results of students in the post-test 11 students have got 8.66 or more reaching 11 maximum with only two marks. Finally, results are cannot be revealed statistically only by calculating t-test.

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test marks	5.0992	13	1.14960	0.31884
	Post-test marks	9.3038	13	1.33853	0.37124

**Table 10: paired sample statistics of mean SD and Standard Error Mean**

$\Sigma D$ : Sum of the differences (Sum of X-Y) = (-54.63)

$\Sigma D^2$ : Sum of the squared differences = (231.82)

$(\Sigma D)^2$ : Sum of the differences squared = (2984.43)

N: 13

df = N - 1 = 13 - 1 = 12

$$t = \frac{(\Sigma D)/N}{\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma D^2 - \frac{(\Sigma D)^2}{N}}{(N-1)(N)}}$$

t = -42

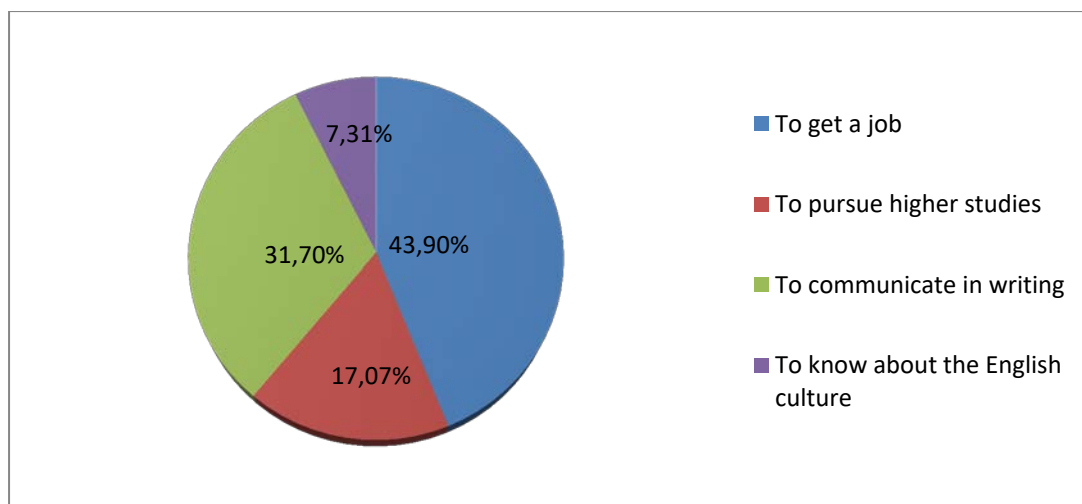
### 3.6 Analysis of the Results of the Students' Questionnaire

#### 3.6.1 Analysis of the First Section: General Information about the Participants

##### Q1/ What is your purpose in learning English?

In addition to asking about gender and age for the sake of gathering general information about the participants, students were asked about their purpose of studying English and their views about the importance of knowing the native speaker's culture.

The figure below shows the results gathered.

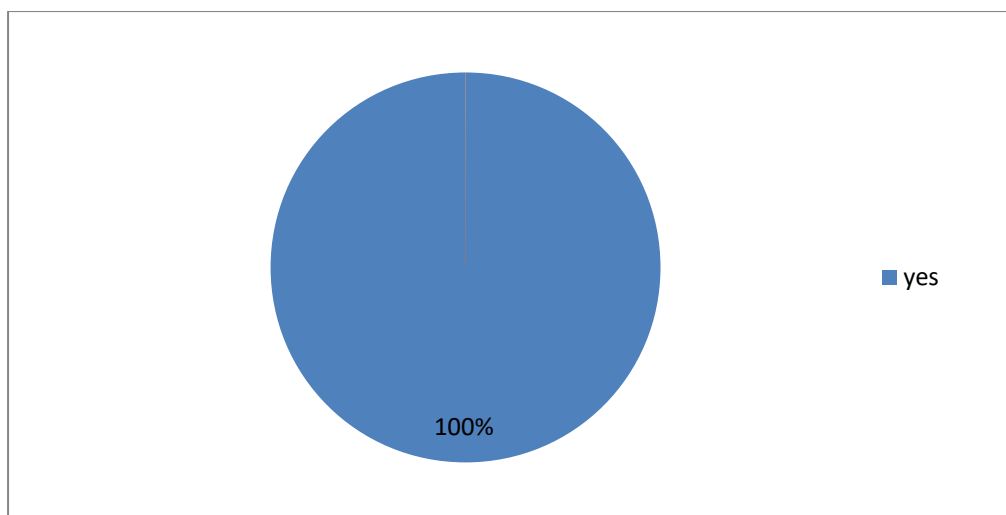


**Figure 2: The students' purpose of learning English**

From the pie chart above, we find that 43.9% of the students are learning English to get a job, 31.7% of them chose to study English for communication purposes while a merely lower percentage of 17.07% expressed their wish to pursue higher studies. Surprisingly, only very few of them (7.31%) want to know about the English culture. What can be deduced is that at the beginning of their studies of English they had negative views about learning English for the sake of knowing culture.

**Q2/ When learning a foreign language, do you think that it is essential to know the culture of its native speakers?**

This question is concerned with whether or not participants think that it is important to know the culture of a FL. The following figure shows that all the students believe in its importance. This means that they are aware of the fact that any negligence of culture would lead to misunderstanding in communication in the FL be it in the written or oral mode.

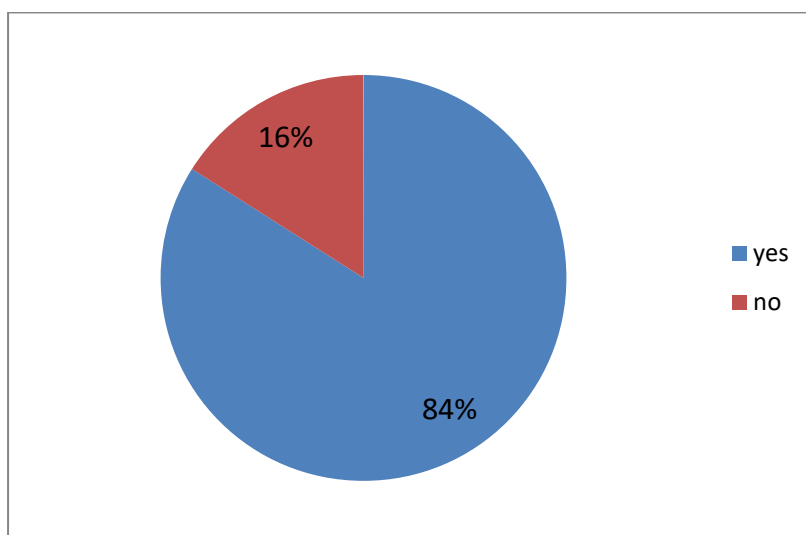


**Figure 3: the importance of knowing about the culture of the native speakers**

### 3.6.2 Analysis of the Second Section: Short Stories

#### Q 3/ Do you read short stories?

The figure below represents that a percentage of 84% of the students tend to read short stories while 16% do not read short stories at all. Since that the majority of them read short stories, they might gain some cultural knowledge from them although this could happen unconsciously.

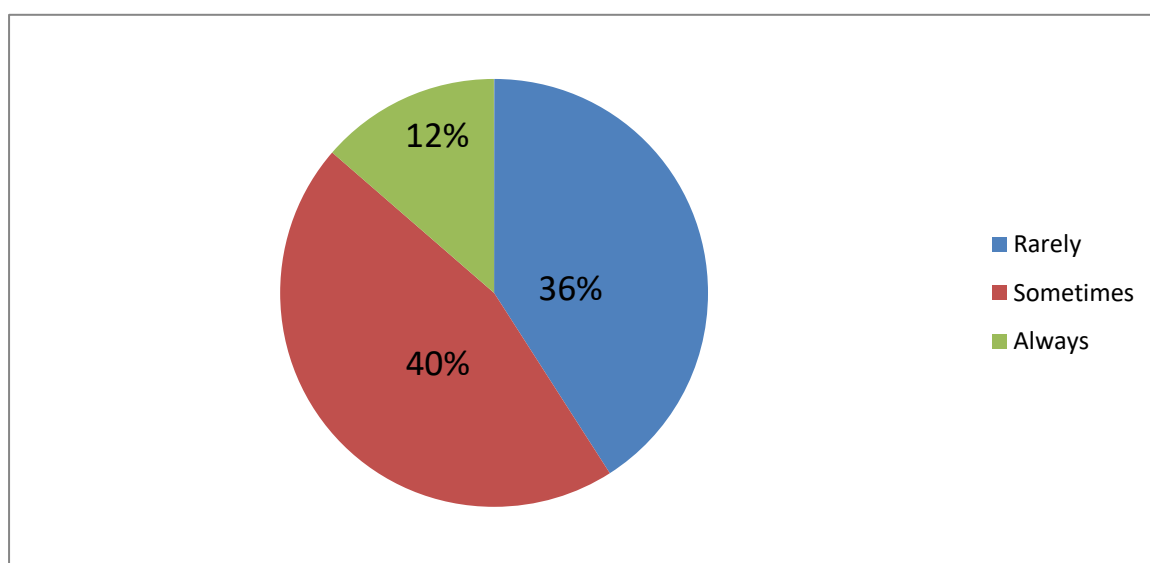


**Figure 4: reading short stories.**



**Q 4/ If yes, how often?**

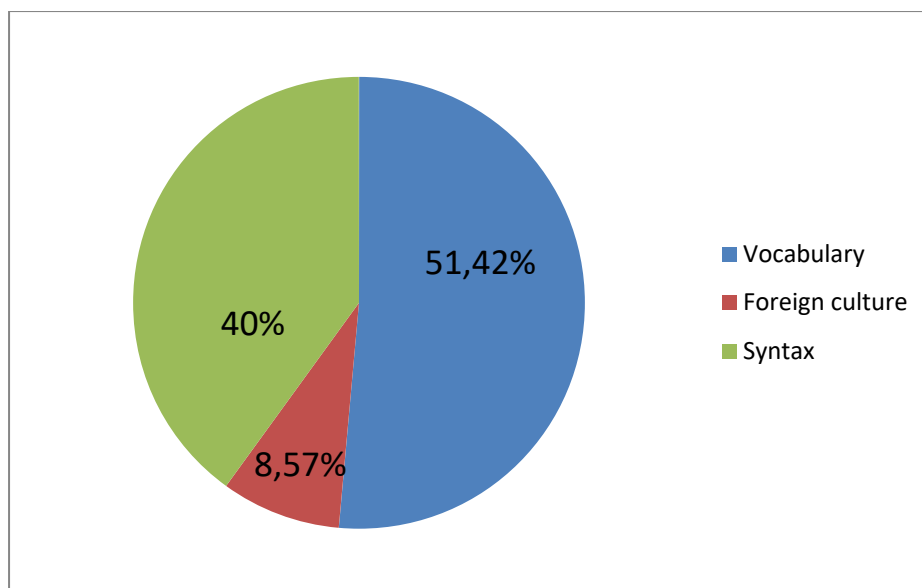
There is a percentage of 40% of the students who read short stories sometimes, whereas 36% of them rarely read short stories. Only 12% of the students always read short stories. So, we can say that the majority of the students are not interested in reading short stories and the reasons behind that fall behind the scope of the current study. Yet, this may result in less exposure to the FL, hence, less opportunities to know about the foreign culture.



**Figure 5: representation of how often students read short stories**

**Q 5/ What do you mainly learn when reading them?**

More than a half of the students (51.42%) learn mainly vocabulary from reading a short story with 40% of the students who learn principally syntax while only 8.58% of them learn essentially the foreign culture. This means that students are not interested in or are unaware of acquiring the foreign culture when reading a short story. This lack of interest can be noticed also in the results of the pre-tests that are confirmed by the results of the post-test scores of the control group.

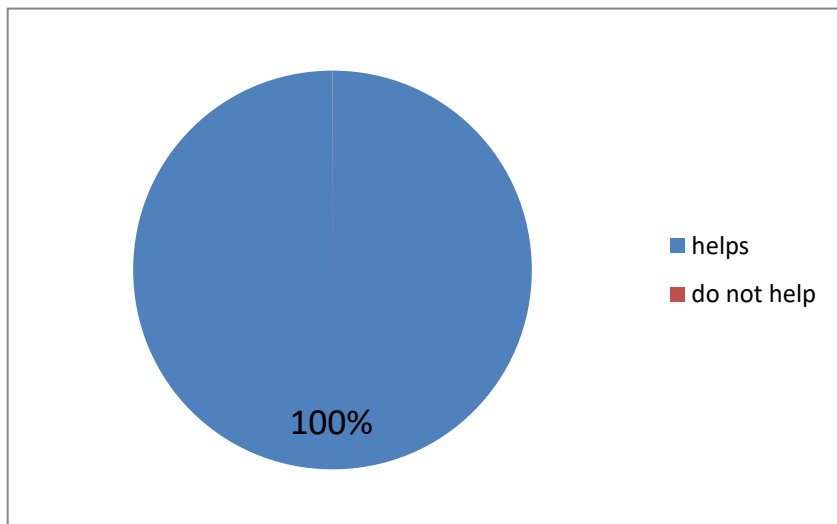


**Figure 6: A representation of what mainly students learn when reading short stories.**

### **3.6.3 Analysis of the Third Section: *Short Stories and the Acquisition of Culture***

**Q 6/ After having six sessions of learning culture through short stories, to which extent do you think that reading short stories can enhance one's cultural knowledge?**

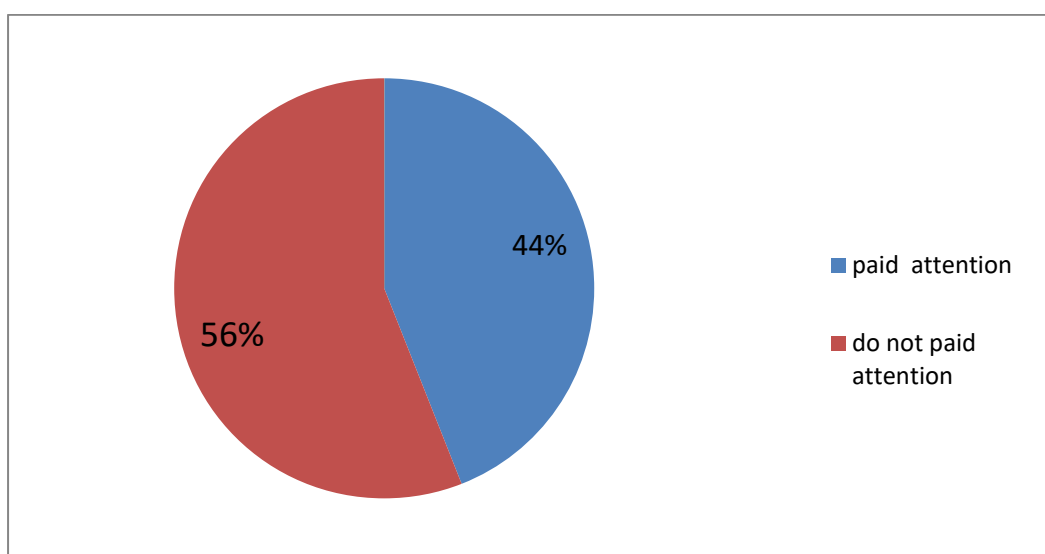
This question aimed to see the respondents' views after participating in the experiment. All of them (100%) think that reading short stories can enhance one's cultural knowledge. This overall vote is a result of discovering the effect of learning short stories to learn culture that makes language comprehensible and can be used to enrich their cultural awareness.



**Figure 7: reading short stories enhance cultural knowledge**

**Q 7/ Before those sessions, have you paid attention to culture when reading a short story?**

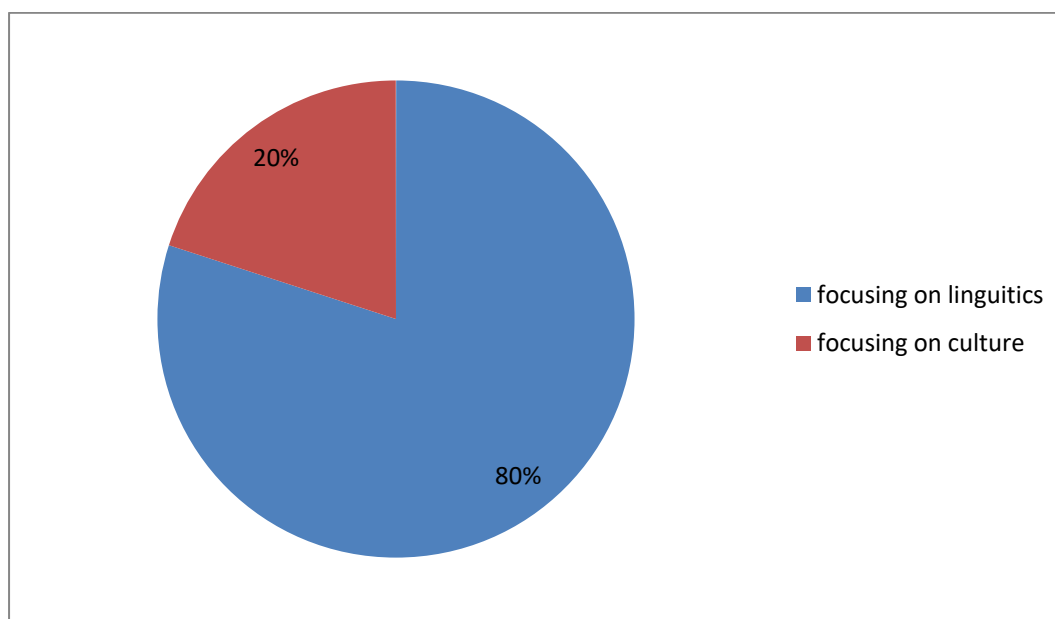
This question is about whether students used to pay attention to culture when reading a short story. The answers do not lead to a decisive conclusion with 56% of the participants who did not pay any attention to culture when reading a short story and 44% who used to pay attention to culture when reading a short story. These results are a good indicator of the poor results students have got when testing them about some cultural markers despite spending more than 3 years studying English at the university.



**Figure 8: paying attention to culture when reading a short story**

**Q 8/ Is it interesting to focus on culture instead of focusing on the linguistic aspects when reading a short story?**

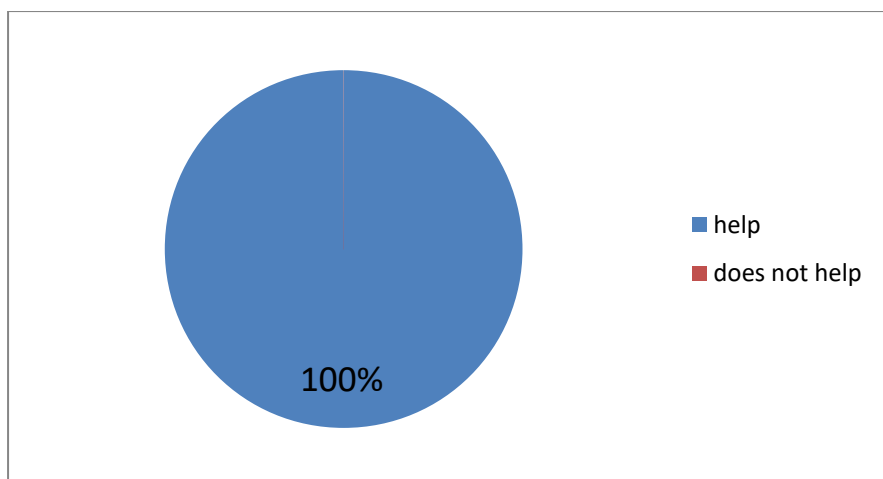
This question was about the students' interests about focusing on the linguistic aspect rather focusing on the cultural aspect. The results show that the majority of the students with a rate of 84% focus on the cultural aspect instead of linguistic aspect which was ticked by only 16% of the participants.



**Figure 9: focus on linguistics or culture**

**Q9. Do you think that this focus will help you when communicating in English?**

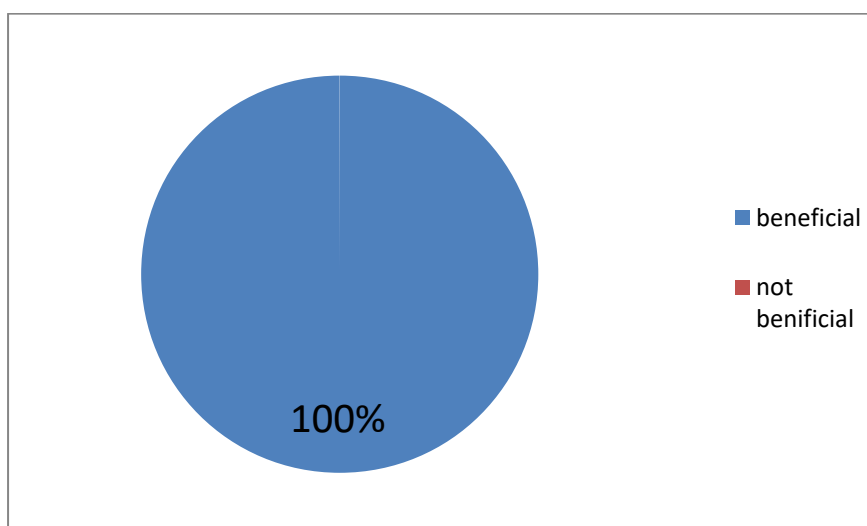
In this question, the answers were 100% with "Yes". The first question was whether the focus on culture helps in communicating when using the English language whereas the second seeks to know if using short stories is beneficial to teach the English culture to EFL learners. Students are aware that without understanding the culture of the FL they are learning, successful communication and/ or comprehension would be hindered. This view is new for many participants (as clarified in the question 9) where it is clear that 56% of students did not pay any attention to cultural aspects within a given short story.



**Figure 10: the extent of focusing on culture helps when communicating**

**Q 10/ Do you think that using short stories to teach culture would be beneficial for EFL learners?**

This figure represents that the majority of the students said that using short stories is more helpful in teaching culture or in acquiring it. Furthermore, student were experiencing new techniques and objectives to reach by reading a short story so they have learned and experienced new things included in a short story that they have not noticed before.



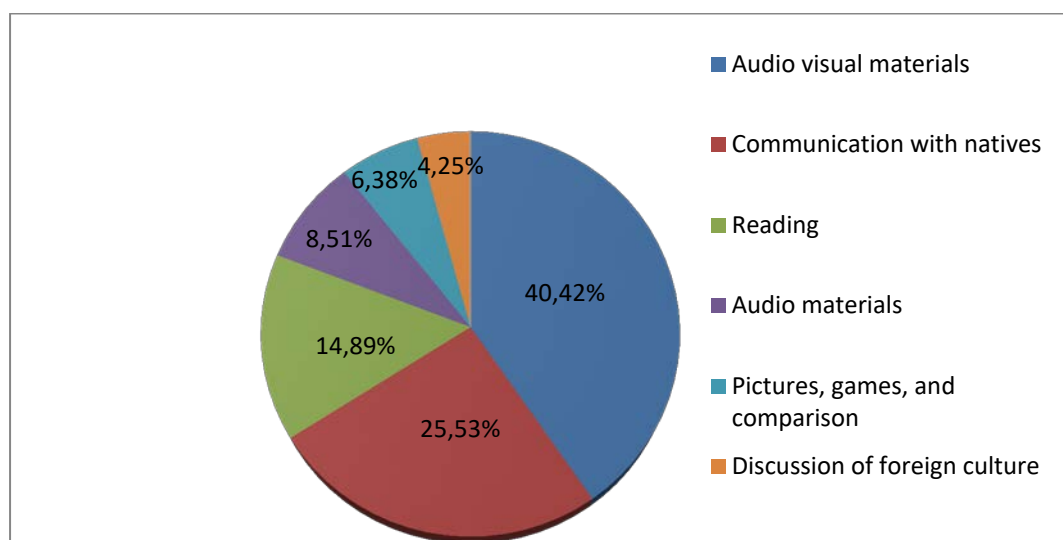
**Figure 11: using short stories is beneficial to teach culture**

**Q 11/ What other techniques or materials do you suggest to promote students' knowledge of foreign cultural elements?**

The questionnaire finished by asking an open-ended question about the techniques and materials that can be used to promote students' knowledge of foreign cultural elements. The answers provided 6 types of techniques and materials. The table below represents how many times each one is proposed by the 13 participants. From the above table and figure, it can be observed that audio-visual materials together with communication with natives represent more than 65% of the techniques and materials that the students see as efficient in inculcating the target culture in their minds. Reading ranked third with 14.89 % which is quite a small percentage especially in comparison to communication and audio-visual materials. It is noteworthy that students did not specify particular types of texts to be read. The three other suggested techniques and materials i.e. audio materials, pictures and games, and discussion of foreign culture appeared in even small percentages with 8.51% for audio materials, 6.38% for pictures and games, and 4.25% for discussion of culture. Students have chosen these suggestions for the reason that each student has his or her own strategies and own styles to learn English language and its culture that a reflection of the different individual differences.

The technique and materials suggested by students	The frequency of appearance in the answers
Audiovisual materials	10 suggestions
Communication with natives	6 suggestions
Reading	4 suggestions
Pictures, games, and comparison	3 suggestions
Audio materials	2 suggestions
Discussion of foreign culture	1 suggestion

**Table10: representation techniques and materials suggested by students to promote cultural knowledge.**



**Figure 12: the percentage of the suggested techniques and materials to teach the target culture.**

### 3.7 Discussion and Interpretation of Results

It is interesting to note that teaching short stories could deter the students' full attention from the pure linguistic aspects of the language to other subtle ones as culture.

We can say that teaching short stories helps gain culture knowledge because of the findings of the experimental group that is mainly put under statistical analysis, unlike the control group. The mean of the experimental group– the one under treatment– jumped from 5.09 in the pre-test to 9.30 in the post-test. These findings are powerfully sustained by the students' answers in the questionnaire especially in the answers of the questions 8 and 9 where all students agreed upon this point.

Still, short stories might not be the only material that can enhance culture knowledge as the students provided a list of other, yet, interesting materials and techniques that can do so such as communicating with natives and using audio-lingual materials. This does not mean that they are not satisfied with short stories as a source of cultural knowledge and intercultural comprehension but maybe this is good for the sake of teaching variety and richness, meeting different needs, and considering the numerous individual traits, likes, dislikes, etc.

### **3.8 Pedagogical Implications**

This part presents a number of the most prominent pedagogical implications and recommendations that can be drawn from the current research. They are largely derived from the information gained during the different stages of data collection, analysis and discussion. Some of them are addressed to teachers, students, course designers and researchers.

#### **3.8.1 Implications for Teachers**

The teacher who reads this research will get inspired by the results found about the efficacy of short stories in teaching culture and can get an idea about how short stories can be employed to teach the culture of the foreign language. Furthermore, many teachers who did not experience culture teaching can do so with reliance on the chosen short stories and the



already built tests that are used in this study. Still, these are but a starting point; more modifications and adaptations are possible.

### **3.8.2 Implications for learners**

Teaching culture to EFL students can be beneficial for them in order to enhance their level in the target language especially in communication with native speakers. Therefore, they need to spend some time in leisure reading. Short stories can be proposed as a material to be read for they do not require a long time which would not form a burden on the students and at the same time they learn from them both the culture and the language to encourage them to read authentic materials is helpful for them to be fluent and motivated to acquire the culture of the language. Students can also utilize the various techniques and materials as the audiovisual materials or hold discussions about the foreign culture as they are useful sources of cultural knowledge.

### **3.8.3 Implications for Course Designers**

Language is one piece of the whole culture, so the research designers should relate the materials to the students' varied cultural backgrounds to also include their prior experiences, and cultural knowledge to make the content meaningful and interesting. Tabari (2013) maintains that : "the dire need to make decisions the contents on and choices of materials in deciding what to do include in or omit from specifications of content and which elements are to be the basic building blocks of the syllabus, presents syllabus designers with constant problems"(as cited in Nunan, 1988). Another aspect is the use of technology, particularly Social Media, as digital natives use it as their means of communication.

### **3.8.4 Implications for Researchers**

We have tried to find out the attitudes of students towards teaching/learning a foreign language through the cultural based approach and the effects of them on developing cultural awareness. This research may give a background for further research about the field of teaching culture and cultural analysis. Likewise, as presented in the questionnaire analysis, researchers may benefit from the findings of students attitudes about learning strategies and also interests that can be an encouragement to develop a accompanied research in one of those facets questionnaire dealt with.

### **4.3.6 Limitations of the Study**

It is crucially important to mention the most important limitations of this study. To begin with, the number of participants was relatively small that effects the division of the group and the experiment design by creating a narrowed scope of research. Moreover, time played a crucial role in dealing with the division of the experiment plan with facing some problems with the lessons timing in where students were not aware they will have a session within the experiment. In addition to that, there were a lot of absences which a negative effect on the experiment i.e. many students did not attend the whole sessions. Furthermore, statistically speaking, there were wide differences between the pre-test and the post-test scores that resulted from a wide development in the experimental group and slight one in the control that indicates the big weakness in terms of cultural knowledge the participants were suffering from. At last but not least, the materials used in the experiment were limited to using printed short stories without using any other authentic materials such as videos, data show, audio stories.

## Conclusion

It is worth reminding that we have raised a unique research question at the beginning of our study. This question has generated one hypothesis. The research question was as follows: Can students acquire cultural elements if they are through British/American short stories?

In order to get an answer to this question, we advanced one hypothesis. The hypothesis assumes that learners can acquire British/American culture with teaching British/ American short stories. Considering the outcomes obtained previously and the numerical data we had computed earlier the answer to the research question would be as such: Teaching students British/American short stories can help them acquire the cultural knowledge of the target language community; the differences in scores between the pre-test and the post-test shows that clearly.

This conclusion was clearly supported by the results (figures and tables) of the pre- and post-tests before and after teaching the three short stories. To make the results more reliable and valid, a questionnaire was administered to get information about the students' impressions about studying short stories in class and their role in helping them acquiring culture. First-year master students at Mila University Center found that the English short stories they were exposed to really had an impact on both their cultural knowledge and awareness; this impact was a positive one.

The results displayed above reveal that the learners seem to welcome learning culture as a way to enhance their comprehension abilities in the language that is part of the culture itself, and their interest is vividly present through a number of their positive responses.

The method of teaching and questions provided in the session were the responsibility of the teacher. The lessons were delivered in a healthy environment and comfortable atmosphere using the pair-work strategy, which was, possibly, one of the reasons that led to the success of the experiment especially when succeeding at escaping boredom or anxiety.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The present dissertation is a challenge to examine through a mixed approach the efficacy of using short stories to teach British/American cultural knowledge. Likewise, it set out to explore students' attitudes about learning the culture and to discover their best strategies and material they find the best to learn it. The research took place in the department of foreign languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre with first-year master students of English. The first part of the dissertation was dedicated in a form of two chapters to offer a theoretical outline of the thesis. The first chapter is about culture in general with enlightening the reader about the definition, characteristics, key elements, and the relationship between culture teaching and finally dealing with culture shock. The second chapter is about short stories in both American and British literature, short stories development, characteristics, elements and its role teaching culture. The third chapter was to the present research methodology and the description of the participants as well as data collection and analysis procedures. The fourth is meant only for results, discussions, and interpretations of results gathered through the experiment and the questionnaire. The findings of the experiment that we designed point clearly to the fact that the treatment to which the experimental group was exposed does have an impact on the students' awareness about cultural markers. These results were corroborated and checked against a control group that did not receive any instructional treatment. Additionally, the findings of the students' questionnaire reveal that the participants hold a positive attitude towards one-month instructional experience

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# *Appendices*

**Appendix N°01:** the pre-test and post-test of the first short story( the Chaser)

*A test prepared for a scientific research based on questioning first-year master students of English.*

Read the definition below then answer the following questions:

Culture:

Culture is a distinctive feature of the human beings and a crucial aspect of their lives. Every human social group whether small or a large one a community or nation is characterized by a system of laws, rules and norms of speaking, behaving, eating, clothing ... etc.

(Note: all the following questions are about the American culture)

1) What does the following expression mean?

"As nervous as a kitten"

.....  
.....

2) a- "... before he found the name he wanted written obscurely on one of the doors".(John Collier)

b- "... Went up certain dark and creaky stairs in the neighbourhood of Pell Street..." (John Collier)

c- "Is it true," asked Alan, "that you have a certain mixture that has-erquite extraordinary effects"?(John Collier)

- write down any cultural marker in the expressions above.

- a) .....
- b) .....
- c) .....

3) What the cultural element " dime" means:.....

4) For what Americans use the rocking-chair in their daily lives?

.....

how the word "dozen" is used by Americans in their daily lives?

.....

.....

5) "Sit down, Mr Austen," said the old man very politely".(John Collier). Knowing that the word "Austen" is the family name of Mr Alan, why the American old man uses the family name instead of using the first name?

.....

6) Can women divorce her husband in the American society?

.....

7) For what sake "love potion" was being used in the American society?

.....

.....

8) "Au revoir," said the man at the end of the short story to Alan.

According to you why the American old man used Au revoir instead of saying "Goodbye"

.....

9) " ... On one of the dirty buff-coloured walls were a couple of shelves"

Why did Americans use to paint their walls in buff-coloured?

**Appendix N°02:**the pre-test and post-test of the second short story( the Wish)

*A test prepared for a scientific research based on questioning first-year master students of English.*

1) "... and black and yellow carpet that stretched the whole length of the hall from the stairs on which he sat to the front door in the distance." (Roald Dahl)

Mention any culture marker mentioned in this quote?

a\_.....

b\_ .....

2) what makes tennis a sport practised by rich people?

.....

3) for what needs do British people use coal?

.....

4) " If I touch the red I will be burnt." (Roald Dahl)what is the symbolism of the red colour in the already noted quote?

.....

5) what is the symbolism of the yellow colour in the British culture?

.....

6) why British people give puppies (small dogs) for a child birthday?

.....

7) what is "fringe" and for whom it is made?

.....

.....

8) what makes a summer-house different from an ordinary house?

.....

9) for what British people use "windmills"?

.....

10) What is "Easter day"?

.....

11) what is the equivalent of the "yard " in your culture?

.....

**Appendix N°03:** the pre-test and post-test of the third short story( Cat in the Rain)

*A test prepared for a scientific research based on questioning the first-year master students of English.*

1) How do Americans call "the cat"?

.....

2) What is a "gravel path"?

.....

3) How do Americans call a female servant?

.....

4) What is meant by calling a man " Padrone " in a hotel?

.....

5) Why do American girls do have a short haircut?

.....

6) What is a dressing table and for what sake it is used?

.....

.....

7) "I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel,"

she said. "I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her." (Ernest

Hemingway)

From the quotes mention the two cultural markers in :

• .....

• .....

8) She said to her husband "And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles"

(Ernest Hemingway) .From the former quotation:

what is meant by the word "silver"?

.....

Mention the cultural marker in it

.....

**Appendix N°04:** The pre-test and the post-test of the first short story of the control group

*A test prepared for a scientific research based on questioning the first-year master students of English.*

**The killers BY Ernest Hemingway**

1) Mention the culture within the following quotations :

- "Mr Anderson, you ought to go out and take a walk on a nice fall day like this "

Ernest

.....

the man called Al said. He wore a derby hat and a black overcoat buttoned across the chest. His face was small and white and he had tight lips. He wore a silk muffler and gloves.

.....

...George said. "You can have ham and eggs, bacon and eggs, liver and bacon, or a steak."

- What do ham and bacon mean.....

2) "Just a bright boy," Max said. He leaned forward and took the ham and eggs. Both men ate with their gloves on. George watched them eat"

- Why do Americans wear gloves in their daily lives?

.....

3) " Max turned to Al. "He thinks it's all right. That's a good one."

- What is meant by the underlined expression? .....

4) Al said. "Who's out in the kitchen?"

"The nigger."

"What do you mean the nigger?"

- What phenomenon can be noticed from the previously mentioned quotation?

.....



“We know all that, bright boy,” Max said. “Talk about something else. Ever go to the movies?”

- What is the meaning of movies according to Max? .....

5) What is meant by the underlined?

- George looked up at the dock. It was a quarter past six. The door from the street opened. A streetcar motorman came in.....

- “You were in a kosher convent. That’s where you were.”

.....

"... and then along the car-tracks to Henry’s eating-house. George was inside, back of the counter." .....

6) Henry’s had been made over from a saloon into a lunch counter

- What does the word Saloon in English mean?

.....

- What makes "lunch counter different from other types of the restaurant" .....

**Appendix N°05:** The pre-test and the post-test of the second short story of the control group

*A test prepared for a scientific research based on questioning first-year master students of English.*

**My Old Man** by Ernest Hemingway

- 1) "... but the old man said it was a dog's life."
  - What the following expression means in the American culture  
.....
- 2) What does running in the forenoon in the hot sun represent?  
.....
- 3) What does Ernest Hemingway mean by this quote "Sweating plenty?"  
.....
- 4) What do they mean by going cloppetty, cloppetty, clop, clop, clop in the American society?  
.....
- 5) Explain what is meant by «dressing room » in American culture?  
.....
- 6) "I was nuts about the horses" what do Ernest Hemingway mean by this expression?  
.....
- 7) "... But, say, it is funny that a big town like Paris wouldn't have a Galleria, isn't it?"
  - What does Ernest Hemingway mean by the word "Galleria"?  
.....
- 8) " Well, we went out to live at Maisons-Lafitte "
  - In which country do you think they went out to live in?  
.....
- 9) "They take the first batch of skins out to gallop them at 5.30 in the morning and they work the second lot at 8 o'clock" Ernest Hemingway

Explain the expression that is underlying ?

.....

10) " I went around to the paddock to see the horses"

What is the of the meaning of the word "paddock" in this quote.

.....

11) "pants" what does this word mean in the American culture explain?

.....

12) in American culture what they mean by the word "derby"?

.....

**Appendix N°06:** pre-test and the post-test of the third short story of the control group

*A test prepared for a scientific research based on questioning the first-year master students of English.*

**At Christmas Time by Anton Chekhov**

1) What is the meaning of the underlined

- " and went to the tavern to Yegor, the brother of the innkeeper's wife,"

.....

- "or heating her stove, or dozing at night," .....

2) Why is Christmas considered part of English culture?

.....

3) "And now -- it happened on the second day of the holidays,"

- Which day of the week is the holiday in the USA?

.....

4) What does the underlined word mean?

- "In the tavern kitchen" .....

" 'And we wish them a happy Christmas; we are alive and well, and I wish you the same, please the Lord . . . the Heavenly King.' "

- .....

"... unbuttoning his waistcoat. "It must be seventy degrees. What more?" he asked."

•

.....

"The foremost of our enemies within is

Bacchus." .....

- " executing upon the paper flourishes like fish-hooks

".....

5) Underline the culture features in the following quotation:

" well-fed, bursting with health, with a coarse animal face and a red bull neck "

6) What is the equivalent of the mile in the American culture

?.....

7) Write the meaning of the following idiom:

" The trees are as white as white "

.....

## Appendix N°07: The questionnaire

### *The Questionnaire*

*This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a university research about the role of reading English short stories in acquiring the culture of the target language. You are kindly invited to participate in this research by filling up this questionnaire with utmost honesty. Please, tick the right box (✓) or provide a full statement when necessary.*

#### **I. General Information**

1. What is your purpose in learning English?

- a. To get a job
- b. To pursue higher studies
- c. To communicate in the language both in speaking and writing
- d. To know about the English culture

2. When learning a foreign language, do you think that it is essential to know the culture of its native speakers?

Yes  No

#### **II. Short Stories**

3. Do you read short stories?

Yes  No

4. If yes, how often? .....

5. What do you mainly learn when reading them?

vocabulary  syntax  foreign culture

#### **III. Short Stories and the Acquisition of Culture**

6. After having six sessions of culture learning through short stories, to which extent do you think that reading short stories can enhance one's cultural knowledge?

.....  
.....

7. Before those sessions, have you paid attention to culture when reading a short story?

Yes  No

8. Is it interesting to focus on culture instead of focusing on the linguistic aspects when reading a short story?

Yes  No

9. Do you think that this focus will help you when communicating in English?

Yes

No

**10.** Do you think that using short stories to teach culture would be beneficial for EFL learners?

Yes

No

**11.** What other techniques or materials do you suggest to promote students' knowledge of foreign cultural elements?

**Thank you for your cooperation!**

## ملخص

العديد من الطلبة والاساتذة لا يكونون أي اهتمام لتعليم او تعلم الثقافة اثناء قراءة أو تدريس القصص القصيرة و هذا النقص في الاهتمام يعتقد أنه السبب الرئيسي لصعوبة فهم اللغة الإنجليزية. يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقيق في فعالية استخدام القصص القصيرة لتعزيز المعارف الثقافية. وتحقيقا لهذا الغرض ، أجريت تجربة و استبيان لطلاب السنة الأولى ماستر لغة إنجليزية في المركز الجامعي عبد الحفيظ بوالصوف ميلة لمعرفة ما إذا كانت هناك أية تطورات في المعارف الأساسية الثقافية للطلبة بعد أخذ دروس عادية في حصص مادة الثقافة و اللغة حيث تم تدريسهم ثلاث قصص قصيرة. وهذه التجربة كانت متبوعة باستبيان لتعزيز موثوقية النتائج وصحتها ؛ ومكنت أداتا البحث من جمع البيانات الكمية والنوعية. في الواقع الاستبيان يهدف أساسا إلى معرفة انطباعات المشاركين بشأن تجربتهم في تعلم الثقافة من خلال القصص القصيرة ومعرفة مدي أهميه ذلك بالنسبة لهم. وبعد جمع البيانات وتحليلها يمكننا أن نؤكد الفرضية التي وضعناها في البداية بأن المتعلمين يمكنهم ، إلى حد كبير ، اكتساب الثقافة البريطانية/الأمريكية من خلال تدريس القصص القصيرة البريطانية/الأمريكية. غير ان النتائج لا تزال غير قابله للتعميم بالنسبة لعينة الدراسة التي كان عددها محدودا جدا. وعلي الرغم من هذا القصور ، انتهى البحث بتقديم بعض التوصيات التربوية للمدرسين والمتعلمين في اللغات الأجنبية ، وتوجيهات للبحوث المستقبلية.