

Investigating the Status of Intercultural Communicative
Competence in Algerian Middle Schools: The Case of the New
Curriculum of EFL

Afaf Rabehi

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Department of Educational Research
Lancaster University



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Abstract

This research is based on a qualitative exploratory enquiry which aims to investigate the status of culture in the new middle school curriculum of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) in Algeria and its potential to develop learners' ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence). The current literature on ICC recognises the urgent need for FL (Foreign Language) education to shift from the traditional approach of teaching culture, which is knowledge based, to introducing the intercultural dimension instead. Consequently, FL institutions, mainly in Western contexts, have developed practical guidelines to help in implementing and assessing ICC (e.g. the Common European Framework of Reference, CEFR) in the classroom. However, Arab contexts such as the Algerian one, remain unexplored. The key question that this study addresses is **How far does the cultural dimension of the new EFL curriculum in Algerian middle schools contribute to the development of learners' ICC?** Methodologically, this research is based on social constructionism; subsequently, an instrumental case study was undertaken drawing on EFL textbooks and semi-structured interviews with EFL educators as the main data sources. Data analysis is guided by Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence (IC). The findings of this study show that the new EFL textbooks, as the main resources for Algerian teachers and learners, take a nationalist and essentialist approach to addressing culture; therefore, barely encourage the development of ICC. Most cultural representations are Algerian-centred which means that learners' CCA (Critical Cultural Awareness) is not developed. Similarly, analysis of participants' perceptions, experiences, and teaching practices revealed that EFL teaching in Algeria is still focused on communicative competence, and culture teaching practices are highly influenced by religion and national identity, among other factors. Therefore, the ultimate objective of the new curriculum is to present and represent Algeria to the world.

Through focusing on two aspects of the EFL curriculum (textbooks and educators), a gap in authors and teachers' interpretations of the same resources is identified. Thus, this study contributes to the literature, particularly, the factors that affect development of ICC; it also offers practical implications for EFL institutions and educators in Algeria.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Table of contents.....	3
Acknowledgments.....	10
Declaration.....	11
Dedication.....	12
List of tables.....	13
List of figures.....	13
List of abbreviations.....	14

Chapter One: Introduction.....	16
1.1. Personal experience.....	16
1.2. Rational of the study.....	19
1.3. Statement of the problem.....	21
1.4. Research questions.....	22
1.5. Structure of the thesis.....	24

Chapter Two: Context of the Study (Language Policies and Education in Algeria).....	27
2.1. Overview.....	27
2.2. Algeria: Brief background and history.....	28
2.3. Language conflict in Algeria.....	30
2.3.1. Language in colonial Algeria.....	31
2.3.2. Language in post-independence Algeria.....	32
2.3.2.1. Arabisation.....	33
2.3.2.2. Defrenchification.....	34
2.3.3. Language in contemporary Algeria.....	35
2.3.3.1. The spread of English.....	35
2.4. Culture(s) in Algeria.....	37
2.4.1. The Arab affiliation.....	37

2.4.2. The French influence.....	38
2.4.3. Regional cultures.....	38
2.5. Education in Algeria.....	40
2.5.1. Educational reforms.....	42
2.5.2. The teaching of English.....	46
2.6. Chapter summary.....	47
Chapter Three: Literature Review.....	49
3.1. Overview.....	49
3.2. Culture: definition.....	50
3.2.1. Culture as a practice.....	53
3.2.2. Culture and the nation.....	54
3.2.3. Culture and religion.....	55
3.3. Aspects of culture.....	55
3.4. Culture in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning.....	57
3.4.1. Traditional approaches.....	58
3.4.2. Towards an intercultural approach.....	59
3.4.2.1. (Inter)Cultural awareness.....	59
3.4.2.2. Conceptualising the intercultural.....	61
3.5. Origin of ICC.....	62
3.5.1. Intercultural Communicative Competence.....	64
3.5.1.1. The intercultural speaker.....	64
3.5.1.2. Knowledge.....	66
3.5.1.3. Skills.....	67
3.5.1.4. Attitudes.....	68
3.5.1.5. Critical cultural awareness.....	69
3.6. ICC in practice.....	71
3.6.1. Cultural representations and reference in language textbooks.....	72
3.6.1.1. Politics of exclusion.....	73
3.6.1.2. Politics of inclusion.....	74
3.6.2. FL educators' perceptions.....	76
3.7. Issues and Challenges.....	77

3.7.1. Identity construction and negotiation.....	78
3.7.1.1. National identity.....	80
3.7.1.2. Religious identity.....	80
3.7.2. Stereotyping and othering.....	83
3.7.2.1. Stereotypes.....	83
3.7.2.2. Othering.....	84
3.7.3. Globalisation and intercultural citizenship.....	85
3.8. Research on ICC and young learners.....	86
3.8.1. Algerian context.....	86
3.8.2. MENA region.....	88
3.8.3. Muslim context.....	89
3.8.4. Other contexts.....	90
3.9. Chapter summary.....	92
Chapter Four: Research methods and methodology.....	93
4.1. Overview.....	93
4.2. Part One.....	94
4.2.1. Research questions.....	94
4.2.2. Philosophical assumptions.....	94
4.2.2.1. Overarching theoretical framework.....	95
4.2.3. Research methodology.....	97
4.2.4. Research methods.....	100
4.2.4.1. Case study.....	100
4.2.4.2. The units of analysis.....	102
4.3. Part Two.....	103
4.3.1. Documents.....	103
4.3.3.1. Sampling.....	104
4.3.2. Interviews.....	105
4.3.2.1. Sampling.....	107
4.3.2.2. Research participants.....	108
a. Authors.....	108
b. Inspectors.....	109

c. Teachers.....	109
4.3.2.3. Research sights.....	109
a. City A.....	110
b. City B.....	110
c. City C.....	111
4.3.3. The fieldwork.....	111
4.3.3.1. Preparing the interview guide.....	112
4.3.3.2. Accessing the field.....	112
4.3.3.3. In the field (conducting interviews).....	114
a. Face to face interviews.....	114
b. Online interviews.....	115
4.3.3.4. Exiting the field.....	117
4.3.4. Social desirability.....	117
4.3.5. Approaches to data analysis.....	118
4.3.5.1. Analysis of documents.....	119
a. Analysis versus Evaluation and why it matters.....	120
b. The framework of analysis.....	120
c. The model of evaluation.....	125
4.3.5.2. Analysis of interviews.....	126
a. Transcription.....	127
b. Coding, memo writing, and generation of themes.....	128
c. CAQDAS.....	130
4.4. Part Three.....	131
4.4.1. Trustworthiness of the research.....	132
a. Credibility.....	132
b. Transferability.....	134
c. Dependability.....	135
d. Confirmability.....	135
4.4.2. Ethical considerations.....	136
a. Participants' safety.....	137
b. Researcher's safety.....	138

c. Confidentiality and anonymity.....	140
d. Power relations.....	140
e. Informed consent.....	142
f. Reciprocity.....	143
4.4.3. Researching multilingually.....	144
4.4.4. Reflexivity.....	148
a. Access to the field.....	149
b. Researcher-researched relationship.....	150
c. The insider-outsider lens.....	150
4.5. Chapter summary.....	151
Chapter Five: Culture and Intercultural Communicative Competence in the	
textbooks.....	154
5.1. Overview	154
5.2. Analysis: Cultural representation in the textbooks.....	155
5.2.1. Presentation of the textbooks.....	155
5.2.2. Representation of culture on the covers.....	157
5.2.3. Representation of culture in the chapters.....	162
a. Me, my country, and the world.....	163
b. Me and my travels.....	166
c. Me and lifestyles.....	168
d. Me and my environment.....	174
5.2.4. Summary of findings and discussion	180
5.3. Evaluation: Approaches to ICC.....	183
5.3.1. Awareness.....	183
5.3.2. Attitudes.....	186
5.3.3. Skills.....	193
5.3.4. Summary of findings and discussion.....	197
5.4. Chapter summary.....	199
Chapter Six: Algerian EFL educators' perceptions and practices.....	201
6.1. Overview.....	201
6.2. Participants' definition of culture.....	202

6.2.1. Culture as the way of life.....	203
6.2.2. Culture as the behaviour of people.....	205
6.2.3. Culture as the heritage (Big C culture).....	206
6.2.4. Culture as the fifth skill.....	206
6.2.5. Culture as the process of knowing/knowledge.....	207
6.3. Participants' further goals.....	209
6.3.1. Bringing up 'good' Algerian citizen.....	210
a. Developing and protecting learners' multiple identities	210
b. Learners' religious identity.....	214
c. Representing the national self.....	215
6.3.2. Using English in 'real life'	217
6.3.3. The intercultural citizen.....	218
a. Accepting the other.....	219
b. Deconstructing stereotypes.....	221
c. Global citizenship.....	222
6.4. Participants culture teaching practices.....	224
6.4.1. Emphasising learners' culture only.....	226
6.4.2. Emphasising foreign cultures first.....	227
6.4.3. Emphasising learners' culture first.....	229
6.5. Factors affecting the implementation of ICC.....	234
6.5.1. The tourist lens.....	235
6.5.2. Religion.....	236
6.5.3. Participants' intercultural encounters.....	238
6.5.4. Lack of CCA tasks.....	239
6.5.5. Learner's age and level of English.....	241
6.5.6. Fear of acculturation.....	242
6.6. Chapter summary.....	245
Chapter Seven: Conclusions.....	247
7.1. Overview.....	247
7.2. Summary of the study.....	247
7.3. Answering the research questions.....	248

7.4. Contribution to knowledge.....	254
7.5. Implications of the study.....	256
7.5.1. Methodological implications.....	256
7.5.2. Educational implications.....	257
7.5.3. Pedagogical implications.....	259
7.6. Limitations of the study.....	260
7.7. Future research.....	264
Appendices.....	265
Appendix 1: Participants' Information Sheet (PIS).....	265
Appendix 2: Consent form.....	266
Appendix 3: Interview guide(s).....	267
Appendix 4: Sample interview transcript.....	270
Appendix 5: An example of coding in Atlas.ti.....	272
Appendix 6: Example of coded transcript (excerpt).....	273
Appendix 7: Artwork samples from the textbooks.....	274
Appendix 8: Interviews conducted.....	279
 References.....	 281

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own work. It does not contain material that has previously submitted for any other degree or qualification in this or any other institution.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the souls of my mother and grandmother who would have been very proud of me.

List of tables

Table 1. Littlejohn (2011) levels of analysis of language teaching materials.....	122
Table 2. Framework of analysis.....	124
Table 3. Byram and Masuhara (2013) evaluation criteria.....	126
Table 4. Textbooks' content.....	156

List of figures

Figure 1. MS1 cover.....	158
Figure 2. MS2 cover.....	160
Figure 3. MS3 cover.....	161
Figure 4. Task 2 from <i>Me, my country, and the world (MS1)</i>	165
Figure 5. Presentation of <i>Me and lifestyles (MS3)</i>	169
Figure 6. Reading text from <i>Me and lifestyles (MS3)</i>	173
Figure 7. Example task from <i>Me and my environment (MS3)</i>	176
Figure 8. Example of the use of artwork in <i>Me and my environment (MS3)</i>	187
Figure 9. Structure of interactive tasks (<i>MS3</i>).....	194

List of abbreviations

CA: Cultural Awareness

CAQDAS: Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software

CC: Communicative Competence

CCA: Critical Cultural Awareness

DA: Dialectical Arabic

ELT: English Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

FLT&L: Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

IC: Intercultural Competence

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

ICTs: Information and Communication Technologies

IS: Intercultural Speaker

ISe: Intercultural Sensitivity

NS: Native Speaker

PIS: Participant Information Sheet

SA: Standard Arabic

SL: Second Language

Part I

Chapter One: Introduction

I come from Versailles. Versailles is my hometown. I left it when I was 25 to find out who I was in a foreign tongue, under foreign skies [...] It is only by understanding Versailles that I can understand the uniqueness of Babylon. In turn, Babylon helps me to understand the unique characteristics of my culture. (Kramersch, 2013, p. 61)

1.1. Personal Experience

At the start of this chapter, I want to illustrate how my personal experience has influenced and shifted the focus of my research; that is my journey as an IS (Intercultural Speaker), and how similar to Claire Kramersch's experience, Lancaster helped me to better understand Khenchela - my home city. If I had conducted this research elsewhere, particularly in my home country, Algeria, the design, the findings and, most importantly, my interpretation, would be entirely different from the current ones. In short, it would have been a very different thesis. In my first research proposal, the main goal I intended to achieve through a PhD project was to find out how the "target culture" – mainly British – can be implemented in the teaching practices of English in Algerian middle schools using ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies). This was a result of living in Algeria for 23 years, having in mind a preconception which suggested that there exists a single British culture associated with English language that should be introduced to learners through their English classes. I believed in the existence of a single and fixed British culture even during my first months as a PhD student in England during which I concluded that the only obstacle Algerian middle school teachers were facing was merely pedagogical; that is: how

to approach and teach this culture; and given that ICTs have not been widely used as a pedagogical tool in schools, using them to address the target culture in addition to the four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) seemed to be an interesting topic of research.

However, after a few months in England – during which I failed to get through several intercultural situations – I realised that the British culture I was so eager to research does not really exist; a fact which I had constantly rejected and refused to acknowledge. I also realised that relating cultures to national boundaries does not recognise their potential to change and grow; rather, what exists is a group of subcultures, or regional cultures which have the potential to change through time.

In my country, Algeria, Arabic is the official and national language; however, most Algerians speak Derja; in other regions, Tamazight and its variations are more common. Islam is the conventional religion of the country, and the government penalises citizens who violate some religious practices in public. This, however, does not mean that practicing other religions is banned. Also, unlike the Western world where individualism is a norm, in the Arab world, collectivism is preferred (Eldin, 2015) and Algeria is no exception. Living in Algeria myself, I was not fully aware of the cultural diversity that exists within the country; I simply assumed that despite the slightly different characteristics of each region, we as Algerians all share the same culture, which I related to language and religion mostly. When I moved to live abroad, I gradually started to look at my country from a different angle as an outsider, which allowed me to reconsider both my preconceptions and my research questions.

In light of my personal development, the experience of living abroad and the multicultural environment I eventually became a part of, allowed me to look at myself as a part of a group – national, regional, religious – differently for the first time. That is, through interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds and discussing a variety of topics, my attitudes changed, and I developed a sense of CCA (Critical Cultural Awareness) through which I was able to step back and look at my cultural background, from others' perspective; others who are culturally very different. It was not an easy journey to go through. At some points, I even did my best to resist this transition because changing my perspectives meant letting go of some, or all of what I had learnt, believed in, and taken for granted. Eventually, and due to the constant contact with culturally different individuals (friends, flatmates, colleagues, academics) I realised that as a part of my new life, trying to understand both why things are the way they are and why others perceive them differently was necessary. As a result, my whole understanding of the concept of culture, its characteristics, and how it is related to other aspects of life, have changed.

I do not claim here that what I have gone through happened to me only; experiencing culture shock, disappointment, and fear of change can happen to anyone, or anyone moving between two distant cultures. However, the interpretation of the situations and their effect on individuals can vary and, in my case, my interpretation could have been different if at some stage, as a learner/student in my country, I had been made aware of the significant effect issues such as stereotypes and othering, among others, can have on individuals' perspectives and their worldviews. I do not remember learning anything about intercultural competence while studying English for five years at university; a

module about intercultural communicative competence (ICC) was introduced during my masters but was not in any way prioritised or emphasised. This, however, does not suggest that overcoming culture shock is guaranteed through formal learning, simply because learning about a situation is not the same as being a part of it.

Thus, as an Algerian Muslim female living in the UK (United Kingdom) and researching a culture related topic, I realised that before trying to solve the issue of how to introduce foreign culture(s) and ICC into Algerian middle school teaching practices of English, understanding why it is an issue in the first place was far more important.

1.2. Rationale of the study

ICC has been a subject of research in different fields (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009); studies have shown that within the sector of FL (Foreign Language) education, there are different settings that can contribute to the development of learners' ICC; among these settings is experiential learning (Dervin, 2017) through, for example, study abroad programmes during which learners can interact with foreign cultures and individuals. Classroom learning, on the other hand, is more demanding and challenging, not only because learners are in their familiar context learning about an unfamiliar one, but also because of the role of the teachers and other factors like the materials they use. FL teachers, therefore, play a significant role in both the success and the failure of learners' understanding and acceptance of other cultures, therefore the development of their ICC.

Byram's (1997) work on ICC has led to the recognition of the significance of the cultural and intercultural dimension in FL education in Western settings (Deardoff, 2009)

particularly in Europe such as that related to The Common European Framework of Reference (Guilherme, 2002) and recently in East Asian contexts (mainly Japan and China). Other non-European contexts, however, especially the Arab one: the MENA region (the 22 countries of the Middle East and North Africa) are still trying to understand how to implement ICC in FL education without having to compromise or challenge their own fundamentals (religion mainly). In such settings, the intercultural pedagogy can be perceived as a threatening one due to the centrality of CCA which requires learners to look at their assumptions and values differently; a step that young learners for instance may not be ready for yet. This means that before proposing new methods and approaches about how to implement ICC in different contexts, it is important to look at why it is not being implemented. Algeria, for instance, as a postcolonial country is still in the process of decolonising FL education through initiating reforms to meet the international standards of education while maintaining its own influence on the curriculum. For policy makers and curriculum designers, this can create a fundamental tension between aiming to prepare English speakers who can perform successfully in the international arena and the potential threat to their national and/or religious identity the process might bring about. In practice, the challenge for teachers is to successfully deliver the different objectives of the curriculum while managing factors like their own perceptions, and the level and background of their learners. Thus, instead of asking Algerian EFL teachers to refer to and implement Byram's (1997) or others' frameworks and expect fruitful results, it is necessary to first investigate EFL educators' attitudes towards this new trend that initiated in the West, in order to set out grounds for the training of teachers and the methods and materials they can use. This will be the first part of my contribution to knowledge; the second part will be investigating the relationship between Algerian EFL educators' attitudes about ICC

and the representation of culture in the new EFL textbooks. In other words, this study aims to contribute to the field of intercultural language education in Algeria and beyond through developing an understanding of the extent to which a successful implementation of ICC can be context specific.

1.3. Statement of the problem

The current study explores the status of culture in an educational setting from a different standpoint in comparison to previous research. First, the context of the study is challenging, Algeria is neither a monolingual nor a bilingual country (Chapter 2 provides a better understanding of the sociolinguistic situation). There are other factors, mainly religion and regional cultures, which I believe influence individuals' perceptions of other cultures. Second, most of the related research on the relationship between culture and language learning, and the potential influence of the former on the latter, is aimed at how to implement culture in language learning, and learners' and teachers' perceptions towards ICC. In this research, however, the main aim is to explore the status of culture and the factors which affect the teaching of ICC in EFL education in relation to the textbooks' authors, inspectors, and teachers (henceforth participants). The majority of the previous studies that have tackled this topic have focused on intermediate or advanced FL learners. In this study, I tried to shed light on how ICC is dealt with during middle school education because I argue that learners' age and language level should not be a reason to postpone introducing other cultures and developing skills like CCA.

Lastly, the data of this study, specifically documents (textbooks) will contribute to the literature on culture in EFL textbooks because, despite receiving considerable attention in

the field of EFL, the role of textbooks in teaching culture has not been widely researched (Gray, 2010). Also, to my knowledge, this is the first research that analyses cultural component and evaluates its potential to develop learners' ICC in the Algerian context since the educational reform of 2016.

1.4. Research questions

As mentioned previously, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Algeria launched a series of reforms throughout all three levels of education (primary, middle, and secondary) in 2016 translated as The Second-Generation Curricula building on The First-Generation Curricula of 2003. The new curriculum of English for middle school revolves around promoting core values to which 'openness to the world' is central (Curriculum of English, 2015, p. 5). Accordingly, it is important to investigate how the study participants perceive and implement the (inter)cultural dimension of the curriculum in practice and the potential impact of both on learners' ICC. Hence, my central research question emerged:

How far does the cultural dimension of the new EFL curriculum in Algerian middle schools contribute to the development of learners' ICC?

To answer this overarching research question, the following questions were formulated:

RQ1: How is the cultural dimension represented in the Algerian middle school textbooks of English?

RQ2: How can this representation contribute to the development of learners' ICC?

RQ3: What are Algerian EFL educators' perceptions of culture in EFL?

RQ4: How can these perceptions affect teaching practices and therefore, the development of learners' ICC?

The first research question addresses cultural representations of English through text and artwork in textbooks, with particular emphasis on the explicit versus the implicit requirements and expectations. A descriptive analysis of how culture is represented is believed to help form an idea about authors' understanding of culture, their broader ideological stances and the governmental guidelines. The academic literature within the field provides different approaches for textbooks' analysis, drawing on several languages and different levels of language learning (Risager, 2018). However, analysis of FL materials targeted at learners in the MENA region is still needed.

The second question has an evaluative stance to it; it aims to identify how, if at all, representations of culture can help learners to develop attitudes, skills, and awareness of ISs (Intercultural Speakers), drawing on Byram's (1997) work. Both RQ1 and RQ2 aim to identify how cultural representations vary as learners' language develops from beginner to pre-intermediate level.

The third research question explores middle school EFL educators' perceptions of culture; their definitions of the concept and how they relate it to language learning.

The fourth question explores classroom practices through the shared experiences of educators. It seeks to identify links between their perceptions and their practices and the extent to which the latter are directed towards the development of ICC. It also aims to highlight the difference, if any, between the three categories of educators: authors' perceptions in relation to the textbooks they designed, inspectors and their supervision of

teachers, and how teachers' practices (use of textbooks and selection and adaptation of other materials) are an extension of their understanding of culture.

Drawing on the previous research questions, the final question aims to address any possible gaps and issues that affect EFL educators' current practices as well as their willingness to implement ICC.

1.5. Structure of the thesis

In this chapter, I drew on my personal experience as the main factor contributing to the shaping of the current study. The rationale of study, statement of the problem, and the research questions are also addressed.

In the **next** chapter, I provide a brief historical background of Algeria, highlighting the impact of French colonialism (1830-1962) on culture and education in the country. This is particularly important because the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria is complex as I stated earlier. The main topics I address in this chapter are: language conflict, culture and the educational system in Algeria.

In chapter **three**, I critically review the literature on the status of culture in FLT&L (Foreign Language Teaching and Learning) as the first step towards answering the first research question. This includes looking closely at the concept of culture, its characteristics, its relationship with language in general and FLT&L specifically. Then, I introduce other concepts including 'awareness' due to their importance to the current research. The second part is dedicated to reviewing the current literature on ICC; in doing so, I focus on Byram's (1997) model and the concept of IS. Next, I look at the two factors that contribute to the

development of learners' ICC in practices; these are textbooks and FL educators' perceptions. The chapter ends with a discussion of further issues and challenges that are deemed to affect the development of ICC, mainly identity and othering.

Chapter **four** presents the research design, the methods and methodology of my research. To do so, I start by setting out my philosophical position and how social constructivism and interpretivism informed my study. Then, I explain the suitability of qualitative methodology and case study method, providing a detailed account of the data collection tools (semi-structured interviews and documents) after which I outline the data analysis procedures. The chapter ends by discussing the trustworthiness of the research along with underpinning the ethical considerations and how researching multilingually affected the course of the study.

In chapter **five**, I present and discuss the first part of the findings derived from analysing three textbooks used for EFL teaching in Algerian middle schools. The textbooks in question are not commercial products, they are designed and approved by representatives of the Algerian MoE and are widely used by both teachers and learners. To answer the first set of research questions, I undertook two approaches: analysis and evaluation; I analysed the representation of culture in four selected chapters using Littlejohn's (2011) framework of analysis. Then, I used Byram and Masuhara's (2013) criteria to evaluate if and how the cultural representation found through the analysis contributes to the development of learners' ICC. I justify the need for analysis and evaluation and the difference between both approaches in Chapter **four**.

Next, in chapter **six**, I present and discuss findings related to participants' perceptions and practices regarding the teaching of culture in EFL discussing when relevant, the difference between the three categories of participants. Data are presented and discussed under four core themes and subthemes covering perceptions, practices, and goals of participants, in addition to the challenges and obstacles they face.

The **concluding** chapter of the thesis provides a summary of the study, answering the research questions and highlighting the important conclusions. The chapter also addresses the contribution to knowledge alongside the implications and limitations of the study as well as some recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Context of the study (language policies and education in Algeria)

Algeria today is an important as well as a 'difficult' country. Little known to most people in most of the English-speaking world, known often in confused and conflicting ways in Europe.

McDougall, 2017

2.1. Overview

Researching the teaching of culture and the development of ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence) in FLT&L (Foreign Language Teaching and Learning) in a context like Algeria makes it particularly important to shed light on two things: the educational system of the country, and its (Algerian) historical, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The sociolinguistic situation in Algeria provides a good example of how language and culture are inseparable. This chapter contextualises the research topic and provides an overview of the different factors and language policies that helped shape the current EFL (English as a Foreign Language) curricula and teaching practices in the country. First, I briefly explore the history of Algeria, highlighting two important phases: colonial Algeria, and post-independence Algeria. Then, I address the language conflict in the country which involves standard languages (Arabic, Tamazight, French, and most recently, English) and local dialects (Tamazight variations and Derja, a mixture of Algerian Arabic and French – which cannot be expressed in writing). Next, I look at culture in Algeria; how it is constructed and related to history and religion, among other factors. At the end of the chapter, I provide a brief history of the educational system in

Algeria focusing on the most recent educational reform which has highly influenced the teaching of English in middle school (the context of my study).

2.2. Algeria: Background and brief history

Algeria is one of the three North African/Maghrebi countries (with Tunisia and Morocco) and the largest country in Africa by area, with a population of more than 41 million (2017). According to the three latest constitutions (2002, 2008, 2016), MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) is the official and national language of Algeria. Yet, there are at least two main ethnic groups in the country who speak different languages, known as the Berbers and the Arabs. Berbers are the native inhabitants of the North African region whose language is what distinguishes them from the rest of the Arab region. However, over the years Tamazight, the Berber language, and Arabic are known to have influenced and borrowed from one another (Benrabah, 2005).

Among the Berbers of Algeria, four major ethnic groups can be identified: the Kabyles, the Chaouis, the Touaregs, and the Mozabis. As mentioned above, the main language of the Berbers is Tamazight, which is also currently associated with the Kabyles region; the other three groups speak different dialects. Arabs speak a dialectal Arabic referred to as Derja which is very different from MSA. Thus, North African Arabic is quite different than Middle Eastern Arabic because of the influence of Tamazight. Generally speaking, the sociolinguistic situation in the region is known to be complex, and code mixing and switching between French and either Derja, or Tamazight and its variations, depending on the region, are very common (Le Roux, 2017).

Usually, when issues about this sociolinguistic situation are raised, the first influence that comes to mind is the French colonialism which lasted for 132 years (1830-1962) and caused the death of more than 1.5 million Algerians. I particularly want to focus on the colonial and postcolonial phases here because of their current effect on different aspects of the Algerian society: language, education, and culture, to name but a few, what Benrabah refers to as such a 'profound impact on Algeria's cultural and linguistic profile (...) that Algerian society was never the same again' (2005, p. 394).

Prior to the French colonialism, there were no official/national languages in Algeria. After they invaded the country in 1830, the French ended the tribal system that had governed the country for centuries (Benrabah, 2004) and tried to create internal conflicts through promoting a positive image of the Berber against that of the Arabic speaking Muslim community (later known as the Arabs). First, they created the term 'kabylia' (tribe) then the *Kabyle* myth to distinguish the Berbers living in the north east of Algeria from the rest of the Berbers and Algerians (Benrabah, 2013). Further to this distinction, the French tried to divide the nation through allocating Berbers a higher status and constructing stereotypes about their linguistic and physical similarity to Europeans as opposed to Arabs (Varvel, 2015; Benkhaled and Vince, 2017; Le Roux, 2017). According to Goodman (2005), they viewed Arabs through a lens of religion and Berbers through a lens of culture and claimed that Algeria was comprised of two main ethnic groups: Arabs: Muslims, who spoke Arabic and were considered less civilised; and Kabyles: superficially, Muslims who spoke Tamazight, thus were more likely to assimilate (Silverstein, 2002a; 2004c; Goodman, 2005; Benrabah, 2013).

Algerians – regardless of their origins – resisted and fought against the coloniser for over a century until they declared the War of Independence in 1954.

To rebuild the nation of Algeria after the independence, the leaders used an authoritarian policy to declare Islam and Arabic as the religion and language of the country (Goodman, 2005; Benkhaled and Vince, 2017), later known as the policy of Arabisation, neglecting the status of Tamazight. However good were the intentions of the government leaders at the time, the consequences were far from expected. In the following two sections, I shed light on the effect of the French colonialism on the language situation in Algeria, especially after the independence.

2.3. Language conflict in Algeria

Due to the country's complex history, Algerians now identify themselves as multilinguals (Benrabah, 2014). While the third article of the latest constitution (2016) states that Arabic is and will remain *the* official and national language of Algeria, the fact that at least two other standard languages (Tamazight and French) and colloquial languages are now spoken in the region cannot be denied. Each of these languages has its own sociocultural status which is a result of some historical developments (Le Roux, 2017) the most important of which is the French colonialism and the policies the government tried to impose after independence. It is necessary at this stage to acknowledge the wide gap between MSA that was made official in Algeria, and Derja, which most Algerians speak (Goodman, 2005; Maddy-Weitzman, 2012); the former is the language of the Quran and has strong ties with Islam, but as Abu Haidar (2000) and Holliday (2000) assert,

it is not spoken anywhere in the Arab world; the latter consists of a variety of dialects – drawn mostly from MSA and French.

2.3.1. Language in colonial Algeria (1830s-1950s)

Arabs invaded the area that is now known as Algeria, in the 7th century after which, Islam and Arabic spread. The Ottomans, who invaded the country in the 14th century, did not impose or encourage the use of any language, nor did they attempt to change the culture and religion of the state (Deeb, 1997). However, for three centuries they turned Algeria into a ‘pirate state open to multiple cultural – and linguistic – models’ (Benrabah, 2005, p. 392), although until 1830, Arabic and Tamazight were the two main languages in Algeria; over 50% of the population spoke Tamazight while the rest spoke Arabic (Benrabah, 2013).

The language conflict started during the colonial period when the French decided to eradicate the language(s) and culture(s) of Algerians as part of their ‘civilising mission’; they believed that their language and culture was superior to the local language(s) and culture(s) (Deeb, 1997; Maamri, 2009; Benrabah, 2004; 2005; 2007; 2013; 2014; Le Roux, 2017). Thus, their aim was to acculturate/assimilate Algerians through banning Arabic (standard and dialectal) and Tamazight from all public and official contexts including schools, imposing French instead (Heggoy, 1973; Al-Khatib, 2008; Maamri, 2009; Roux, 2017; Daoudi, 2018). Arabic was officially declared a FL and redefined as such in 1938 (Grandguillaume, 1983). Amongst the two groups – Arabs and Berbers – the former resisted the most to an extent that some Arabic speaking parents refused to send their children to

school and preferred them to be illiterate than learn the language of the coloniser (Benrabah, 2004; 2005; 2013; Maamri, 2009). However, this resistance to French acculturation did not last long; instead, demand for French education and culture increased (Maamri, 2009; Benrabah, 2004; 2013) especially during the War of Independence (1954-1962). This, as I shall discuss shortly, resulted in the creation of a more serious conflict and change of language attitudes in post-independence Algeria (Benrabah, 2005).

2.3.2. Language in post-independence Algeria (1960s-1990s)

The language issue in Algeria has been divisive ever since independence (Benrabah, 2007a) when the newly appointed government leaders decided to adopt the famous Arabisation policy (also referred to as pan-Arabism and the nationalist transition) to rebuild the nation (Le Roux, 2017). The movement originated in Egypt and was meant to reach and ‘unite’ North African and Middle Eastern countries promoting visions of ‘an imagined Arab homeland stretching from the Ocean to the Gulf’ (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012, p. 111). For the purpose of this thesis, I refer to Arabisation and de-Frenchification separately despite them being used interchangeably in other texts.

On the one hand, the policy of Arabisation aimed at recognising MSA as the sole official and national language of the country (Benrabah, 2004; 2007; 2013; 2014; Rahal, 2012; Roux, 2017; Daoudi, 2018), reconstructing the ‘lost’ identity and reducing conflicts between Algerian citizens, to unite them; and Islam was used once again to convince the people of the legitimacy of this policy (Benrabah, 2013; Timlatine, 2015). De-Frenchification, on the other hand, aimed at immediately replacing French with English

because the former language holds ‘too many bitter memories’ (Benrabah, 2013) and the potential future of English as a lingua franca (Daoudi, 2018). Unexpectedly, both policies failed due to the lack of planning and legitimacy (Benrabah, 2013; Daoudi, 2018). Policy makers used a top-down authoritarian strategy to implement both policies, aiming for a monolingual ‘authentic’ Algeria (Goodman, 2005, p. 56) without much (or any) consideration of how the linguistically and culturally diverse Algerians would cope with the quick changes imposed on them (Benrabah, 2004; 2007a; 2013).

2.3.2.1. Arabisation

To begin with, Arabisation was the most criticised policy, strongly rejected by people because it meant marginalising Tamazight, a language that was spoken by more than 50% of the population before the colonial period and denying its status which led to conflicts within the Algerian society and the rise of the ‘Kabyle Spring/Unrest’ in the late 1970s (Timlatine, 2015; Le Roux, 2017). Consequently, the Kabyles maintained the use of French and refused to adopt MSA, as a form of resistance (Benrabah, 2007a; Daoudi, 2018) which was reflected in how some parents banned the use of any form of Arabic in their households and encouraged their children to use Tamazight and French only (Kahlouche, 2004). This led to the emergence of two groups: Arabophones and Francophones; the former believed that Arabisation – due to its link with Islam – was the only way to recover from French colonialism and reconstruct a solid national identity. The latter – mainly Kabyles – argued that French was the language of modernity, science and technology (Goodman, 2005; Maamri, 2009) in addition to being easier than MSA (Modern Standard Arabic). To sum up, Arabisation caused more conflicts than it was supposed to solve (Benrabah, 2004). The Kabyle Unrest continued until Tamazight

was officially recognised as a national language in 2002, by article 3 of the constitution (Benkhaled and Vince, 2017) and as an official language in 2016, by article 4 of the constitution (Crowley, 2017). Yet, its status in education is still weak compared to MSA, French, and English; policy makers and the Ministry of Education could not make learning Tamazight mandatory to all pupils in Algeria.

2.3.2.2. De-Frenchification

As far as the de-Frenchification policy is concerned, other than formally granting French FL status, policy makers failed to convince Algerians of the necessity to immediately ‘switch’ to English – the language with no political past (Benrabah, 2013) – in educational and administrative sectors. Two main factors contributed to the failure of this policy; first is practicality: by the end of the War of Independence (1962) most Algerians were fluent in French in addition to Tamazight and/or Derja, and MSA was a FL to them (Daoudi, 2018). Thus, introducing yet another FL to learn and use in daily life instead of French was not practicable. The second factor is related to policy makers; the same ones who called for and encouraged de-Frenchification continued using French as the medium of communication in public (Maamri, 2009) and preferred to send their children to French schools. This fact discouraged people who later found that learning and using French as a SL was easier and would help them secure better jobs. Even when the MoE introduced the option for primary school learners to choose between French and English as the first FL in 1993, over 73% of the parents were in favour of French (Rezig, 2011; Benrabah, 2013) which strengthened its status in education once again. Consequently, by the end of the 1990s, more than 60% of the Algerian society understood/spoke French, which means that the outcomes of de-

Frenchification were exactly the opposite of what policy makers intended (Benrabah, 2007b).

2.3.3. Language in contemporary Algeria

In contemporary Algeria, French continues to be the number one language used in business and professional sectors (Maamri, 2009; Belmihoub, 2017) despite all attempts to weaken its status and replace it with English; it is, as Bouherar (2020, p. 3) states “the colonial heritage”. In urban areas, for example, French is the language of communication and prestige and anyone who does not use it is perceived as less educated or less modern regardless of their actual educational background. From a wider perspective, the current linguistic situation in Algeria is a baffling one: MSA still holds the status of the national, religious, and official language of instruction in schools (Le Roux, 2017) but is not mastered even at higher education (HE) level except among those who study, teach, and research Arabic literature and Islamic studies. Derja is spoken by 70% of Algerians, the rest speak Tamazight and its variations (i.e. Kabyle, Chaoui, Mzabi). English, as Benrabah (2014) and Belmihoub (2017) argue, is currently competing with French over the status of ‘the language of prestige’ for, unlike French, it is today’s world language. In the following subsection, I sketch out the increased use of English in Algeria that led the government to take action and redefine the status of FLs in education.

2.3.3.1. The spread of English

In recent years, Algerians’ attitudes towards the French language have shifted significantly (Benrabah, 2014); people have been trying to raise awareness of the fact that French is not

the language of science and technology, therefore modernity, calling policy makers in the sector of education to redefine English as a SL and push French back to a FL status. University students and teachers of English used social media platforms, mainly Facebook, to spread English (Belmihoub, 2015). Also, the role the US (United States) embassy and the British Council have played to encourage people to learn and use English is very important; both institutions offered a range of short study abroad programmes, which are very popular amongst both students and teachers of English (Belmihoub, 2015). Similarly, Canada has also offered to support the development of English in Algeria through training teachers, taking part in the production of textbooks, and introducing technology in schools (Chemami, 2011).

In addition to the educational sector, Algeria's transition to a free market economic system has contributed to the spread of English. Particularly, the oil and gas industry in the southern cities encouraged Algerian graduates to aim for proficiency in English; most foreign (US and UK) companies require their potential employees to have a certain degree of English language fluency (Belmihoub, 2017).

A 'bottom-up' approach to language planning, which Benrabah (2004; 2013) argued would be more suitable for multilingual Algerians, was adopted by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2019. The Ministry conducted an online survey about the potential of English to replace French as a language of instruction; more than 90% of the responses were in favour of the decision. Afterwards, a second online survey was conducted to consult with the people about the most effective ways to implement English, in order not to repeat the mistakes of the 1960s. This decision was widely welcomed and was considered by many a step towards a decolonised, more

globalised Algeria. Thus, despite Benrabah's (2014) claim about the current competition between English and Chinese, as world languages, the spread of English among the young generation in Algeria, mainly students, rules out Chinese.

In line with Bouherar (2020), religion and history can be viewed as the two major factors that affect the shaping of culture(s) in Algeria. Thus, taking into consideration the history of the country, in the following sections, I provide a description of culture in Algeria with regard to three factors: religion and the Arab affiliation, the French influence, and the regional cultures.

2.4. Culture(s) in Algeria

2.4.1. The Arab affiliation

Culture in the Arab context, the MENA region in general and in the Algerian one specifically is significantly different from, for example, the Western and East Asian ones; and this is highly related to both language and religion, among other factors. Arabic is the official language of all Arab countries, mainly because it is the language of the Quran. Islam is the main, but not the only religion in the area.

As previously mentioned, we can distinguish two forms of Arabic in the region, MSA and the dialectal Arabic, which can differ significantly from region to region, across and within countries. However, despite these similarities, we should not use the phrase 'Arab culture' or refer to culture in the Arab context as a singular homogenous entity (Zaharna, 2009; Davis and Bentahila, 2012); the cultural diversity in the area should be both acknowledged and taken into consideration when researching IC (Zaharna, 2009). In this

thesis, I use the term Arab from a linguistic perspective only; any discussions about the origins and the identities of the Arab nations is beyond the scope of my study. Also, I argue that discussions about culture in Algeria should not exclude religion, because like in other Arab countries, Islam is perceived as a way of life, and food, dress code, law, values, attitudes, and behaviours are indeed deeply influenced by religion (Al-Omari, 2015). However, interpretations of Islam can differ significantly from one country to another (Abu Bakr and Nordin, 2017).

2.4.2. The French influence

In Maamri's (2009) words: 'it would be foolish to pretend that we (Algerians) have fully recovered from the traumatic effects of our first confrontation with France' (p.86). Indeed, culture in Algeria (probably Tunisia and Morocco too) is distinctive due to the impact of French language and culture. In addition to language, the lifestyle in Algeria is still highly influenced by the French one (Hamada, 2011). Yet, despite Maamri's comment above, it is safe to argue that most of this effect is on the superficial aspects of culture, for example, Algerians still favour French cultural products for they are 'more interesting and entertaining' (Maamri, 2009, p.86) and that the core of culture – values and beliefs – have to some extent, recovered.

2.4.3. Regional cultures

Algeria is a large country populated by diverse cultural groups most of which can be identified according to their origin and the region they live in, among other factors. As I explained in the beginning of the chapter, Algerians are mainly Arabs or Berbers who speak either Derja or Tamazight (and its variations). However, the use of terms like 'Arab' and

‘Berber’ does not entail any racial meaning but refer to ‘grow[ing] up in an environment where Arabic or Berber traditional customs prevail’ (Benrabah, 2005, p. 386). Similarly, from a cultural perspective, according to Benrabah (2005), one should not compare Arab culture against Berber culture because the core of culture is more or less the same ‘from one Algerian border to another’. This is an illustration of how factors such as language (or dialect), practices, customs, traditions can shape cultures. Thus, in what follows, I shall describe the five main cultural groups/subcultures in Algeria: Arabs, Kabyles, Chaouis, Mozabis, and Touaregs.

The Arabs are currently the largest ethnic group in Algeria. Arabs’ cultural practices are not significantly different from the other cultural groups; but some might argue, can be defined as religion oriented. Also, unlike the remaining cultural groups, Arabs are based in different regions around the country.

The Kabyles are the largest Berber community populating the northeast of Algeria (including areas of Tizi Ouzou, Bejaia, and Bouira). In addition to language, cultural practices and products of the Kabyles are different and they have a rich tradition of folklore, literature, poetry, to name but a few (Goodman, 2005; Maddy-Weitzman, 2012). These all flourished in the 1970s during the Kabyle spring.

The Chaouis, a million of the Berber population are Chaouis; they live in five cities in the east of Algeria; the Chaoui dialect is the closest to Tamazight. However, unlike Kabyles, their overall lifestyle keeps changing. Being a Chaoui myself, I can vouch that the Chaoui dialect and various cultural practices are starting to gradually disappear and that people are now expressing more affiliation to religion and Derja.

The Mozabites reside in the heart of Algeria and are distinguished for their unique customs and spoken language. They are known for attachment to their ancestors' cultural practices and beliefs and they are the least Arab-influenced community. Based in Ghardaya and neighbouring cities, the Mozabites do their best to distinguish themselves from their Arab neighbours; in fact, Ghardaya was initially one of the research sites for this study but was later dropped due some safety issues that the Lancaster University Ethics Committee highlighted.

The Touaregs/Terguis are no more than a few thousands who populate the southeast and southwest of the Algerian borders. They are known for their distinct traditional dress code, folklore, and other practices.

In the following section, I provide an overview of the status of language in the educational system in Algeria, highlighting the five educational reforms that have taken place since 1962. I particularly focus on how EFL pedagogy has changed through the two most recent reforms, known in Algeria as FGP (First-Generation Program of 2003) and SGP (Second-Generation Program of 2016). However, it is worth clarifying that my intention is not to compare the two.

2.5. Education in Algeria

The current educational system in Algeria is composed of three compulsory levels that are regulated by the MoE: primary education (year 1-5, ages 6-10 years), lower secondary education (middle school) (year 1-4, ages 11-14), and secondary education (year 1-3, ages 15-17). Education is free throughout all levels and around 90% of Algerian schools and

universities are public. The private ones are excluded from this study. During the first two stages of compulsory education, pupils learn three languages: Arabic, French, and English respectively (in addition, Tamazight is learned in some cities). French is taught alongside Arabic from year 3 in primary school up to year 3 in secondary school (for 10 years); at university, most scientific majors are taught in French which means that the status of French shifts from being a SL to becoming a language of instruction. Here 'lies the core of the crisis of the educational system in Algeria' (Maamri 2009, p.94), because students who choose to study a scientific major suddenly find themselves face-to-face with a completely French oriented educational system - from a linguistic perspective - for which most of them are not well prepared (Rezig, 2011).

English, on the other hand, is only introduced in middle and secondary school levels – grades 6 to 12 – as a second FL, but for an average of 3 to 4 hours a week throughout the four years whereas French is taught for 6 to 7 hours weekly.

In this thesis, the distinction between SL and FL is important. I refer to French as a SL and English as a FL. The distinction between the two, according to Risager (2006), is based on when, where, and how the language is learned and used, and for which purposes. A SL is learned either early or later on in life, either within the family or in an outside setting; learning a FL, however, does not take place during childhood but later, and it may be for specific purposes (Risager, 2006). Also, the SL occupies more space in and outside schools compared to the FL. For purposes of this research, I use the terms 'foreign culture' instead of 'target culture' to refer to any culture that is foreign to learners, regardless of whether or not it is associated with the language in question.

2.5.2. Educational Reforms

The Algerian educational system has gone through a series of reforms that resulted in minor or major revisions of the curricula and textbooks; often, these reforms are motivated by political considerations (Messekher, 2014). From a historical point of view, five reforms were implemented since the independence in 1962 in an attempt to either completely eliminate French or replace it with English.

1. **Arabisation** was an extension of the country's newly adopted ideology which relied on using MSA everywhere as a means of reconstructing Algerians' lost identity; in line with McDougall (2017), Arabisation and education were set "within the broader campaign of cultural decolonisation" (p. 239). The educational system was prioritised; it was "the first to be Arabised [...] when the religio-conservatives were offered administration of the MoE in 1965" (Benrabah, 2004, p. 66). The reform was unsuccessful due to several factors among which was the lack of teaching staff and materials, which led the Ministry to recruit one thousand teachers from Egypt (Benrabah, 2004; 2005; Goodman, 2005; Maddy-Weitzman, 2012; Le Roux, 2017) and import school texts to help improve the quality of education in the country. The teaching of EFL during this period was no exception, the lack of Algerian-designed materials resulted in the use of commercial British textbooks that were "overloaded with foreign language culture" (Hamada, 2011, p. 3). As I explained in earlier sections, the sociolinguistic situation of the country after independence was far too complicated to accommodate a monolingual educational system.

2. **The Fundamental Schooling System (FSS)** was implemented in 1976 and was no different than Arabisation in its first year. In 1977, the reform brought French “back to life” after being excluded from all educational contexts. The FSS comprised of 12 years of compulsory education (six years in primary school, three in middle school, and three in secondary education). The two main changes associated with this reform were the introduction of French as a SL in year 4 of primary education and a language of instruction for scientific subjects, in addition to the re-installment of teacher training in French (Benrabah, 2005; 2007). This resulted in the division of educators into two groups: those who supported the re-introduction of French – the language of modernity – and those who, according to Rezig (2011) were ‘stuck’ in Arabic because of its direct link with national identity. Consequently, the status of French was undefined and the decision about how to use it was entirely up to teachers until it was completely removed from primary and middle school education in 1986.

English, however, was introduced in grade 8 (age 13 years) but with an Algerian post-colonial mindset. Hayane (1989) reports that textbooks of English were so heavily influenced by the authors’ painful memories of French colonialism that they excluded any ‘British cultural content and inserted cultural information they deemed to be Algerian instead’ (Belmihoub, 2015, p. 209). I shall discuss relating the English language to the English speaking countries in the next chapter.

3. **English in Primary Schools** was introduced in 1993; the aim of this reform was to enhance foreign language learning (FLL) at an early age (Rezig, 2011) and give primary school pupils - and their parents - the option of either French or English as a first compulsory FL. This, however, has increased “the multilingual and multicultural

conflicts and choices” (Hamada, 2011, p. 7); the reform was stopped shortly after because, as previously mentioned, over 70% of the parents favoured French.

4. **The First-Generation Program (FGP)** was initiated in 2002 and put to practice in September 2003 after the FSS was announced as a failure (Benrabah, 2005). This reform brought radical changes that affected all three levels of compulsory education (Messekher, 2014), and it was by far the most critical turning point in the history of modern education in Algeria. The reform was implemented after a series of meetings with UNESCO officials who agreed to fund it (Tawil, 2006; MoE, 2006). In general, the main changes of this reform were:

1. Reducing the primary school phase from 6 to 5 years and prolonging the middle school phase from 3 to 4 years.
2. Introducing FLs two years earlier (Benrabah, 2005): French in grade-two rather than grade-four, and English in grade-six instead of grade-eight.
3. Using French rather than Arabic (partially) as a medium of instruction for scientific subjects (mathematics, science, physics, chemistry) (Benrabah, 2007).
4. Introducing Tamazight as a new subject to be taught in middle schools nationally (Benrabah, 2005). However, it is fair to argue here that this decision was not taken seriously; 16 years later, Tamazight is only taught in some cities and totally neglected in others.

5. Setting the ground for the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in all subjects (Bellalem, 2014).

6. Adopting a competency-based approach as the main pedagogy for teaching French and English, following according to Hamada (2011), a post-structuralist approach to increase learners' autonomy and construction of knowledge, attitudes, and CCA. This was a step towards IC (Bellalem, 2014; Yassine, 2015). According to the MoE: the objective of teaching EFL was to encourage learners to develop attitudes of curiosity and openness through exposing them to different cultures “especially Anglophone cultures like the English, American, Australian, Canadian, etc.” (2006, p. 5, translated from French).

5. Second Generation Program (SGP): The most recent reform was implemented in September, 2016 when the MoE launched new curricula and textbooks for primary and middle school levels. From a broader perspective, the SGP is a revised version of the FGP because it did not introduce any outstanding changes as such. As far as the teaching of English is concerned, the SGP extended the competency-based approach, reinforced the communicative approach, and promoted two relatively new objectives which are derived from the Law of Orientation No. 08-04 23 (2008), these are: the acquisition of the core values of: “national identity, national conscience, citizenship and openness to the world” and cross curricular competencies (Curriculum of English, 2015, p. 5). In a detailed description of the goals of the new curriculum of English for middle school, the authors state the following objectives:

1. Help Algerian society live in harmony with modernity through providing learners with the linguistic tools essential for effective communication.
2. Promote national and universal values.
3. Develop critical thinking, tolerance, and openness to the world.
4. Contribute to the shaping of a ‘good’ citizen who is aware of today’s and tomorrow’s challenges.
5. Offer learners opportunities to access science, technology, and world culture while avoiding the danger of acculturation.

Before moving to the last section of this chapter, it is worth noting that it is uncommon for EFL teachers’ suggestions and feedback to be considered prior to implementing reforms which often results in teachers who are overwhelmed by the new methods and materials and learners who find the content of the textbooks unappealing (Messekher, 2014). This brings forward a major concern of my research which addresses the connection between three categories of Algerian EFL educators (textbooks’ authors, inspectors, teachers).

2.5.3. Teaching English

In Algeria, the HE sector is comprised of universities, university centres, and a number of graduate schools: ENS (Ecole Normale Supérieure). The sector went through one main reform in 2005 with the LMD (Licence-Master-Doctorat) system being implemented to replace the Classical one (Système Classique); the main changes included reducing the duration of studies from 4 to 3 years for the Bachelor’s degree (Licence) and introducing 2 year postgraduate degrees (Master). As far as teacher education is concerned, depending on their grades, Baccalaureate holders (high school graduates) can enrol either in universities/university centres or an ENS, admission to which is more competitive for it

guarantees employability. Also, unlike university students, ENS students as pre-service teachers are required to undertake practical training for at least one term prior to graduation. LMD English language graduates, however, have to pass a national contest, after which together with ENS graduates, they go through an intensive training with the inspectors of their subjects in their local states, as an initial step before they start their career. Then, throughout their first year, all novice teachers (LMD and ENS graduates) continue to receive training at least once a term. Later, inspectors arrange meetings with all teachers either to introduce new teaching techniques suggested by the MoE, or to check and assess their progress.

In the classroom, teachers (of all subjects) and learners are advised to use the textbooks approved by the MoE. However, teachers are encouraged to use other textbooks or compile their own materials, provided they comply with the guiding principles and the objectives of the curriculum (Curriculum of English, 2015).

2.6. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I highlighted the main historical events that contributed to the shaping of the current educational system in Algeria, particularly, the teaching of English in middle schools. Agreeing with Benrabah (2013), the French impact on Algeria's "cultural and linguistic profile [... was] so profound that the Algerian society was never the same again" (p. 24). From a linguistic perspective, five decades after independence, Algeria is still the second largest French speaking country after France (Varvel, 2015; Crowley, 2017). In fact, this impact – as I shall discuss in Chapters 5 and 6 – is reflected in how EFL educators perceive and deal with foreign cultures in their teaching practices. In the following chapter,

I critically review the existing literature on the teaching of foreign culture(s) in a FL and the development of ICC, highlighting factors like materials and educators' perceptions, amongst others.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1. Overview

In this chapter, I critically review the most prominent discussions regarding the implementation of the cultural dimension in FLT&L (Foreign Language Teaching and Learning) and the development of FL learners' ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence) in the classroom. In doing so, I divided this chapter into three broad sections. Given the importance of the concept of culture to this study, it is fundamental to begin this chapter with exploring its main definitions and characteristics. I look at culture from a meaning-oriented perspective (systems of meanings) then a practice-oriented one. This is followed by exploring the relationship between language and culture, and whether the two are inseparable and how this might affect the use of language in an educational setting. I then discuss the status of culture in FLT&L and the transition from the traditional approach to teaching culture, which was based on transferring knowledge, to current methods which emphasise developing ICC.

In the second section, I explore the concept of ICC, its origin and its dimensions as first introduced in Byram's (1997) work. Then, I discuss the concept of the intercultural speaker where I argue against the suitability of its label as representative. This is followed by a discussion of ICC in practice in which I highlight the importance and the direct impact of textbooks and FL educators' perceptions on learners' ICC.

In the third section of this chapter, I set out a discussion of three challenges which affect the development of ICC in contexts similar to Algeria. These are identity, where I focus on the effect of national and religious identities; and othering, where I introduce the concept

of stereotypes and how constructing them potentially leads to othering. The last challenge is related to globalisation and intercultural citizenship. The chapter ends with a review of recent empirical studies on ICC and young learners of English in different contexts: Algeria, the MENA region, Muslim countries, and broader contexts.

3.2. Culture: definitions

Culture is, as agreed by several scholars, one of the most complicated terms to define (Williams, 1983; Eagleton, 2016). This is mostly because it is a subject of interest in many disciplines (House, 2007) and has been defined from different viewpoints over time (Yesil and Demiroz, 2017). In this research, I look at culture from the anthropological stance first, for two main reasons: a) because the link between culture and language has been increasingly highlighted in cultural anthropology (Risager, 2006); and b) because anthropology captures culture as ‘the overall way of life’ of a particular community (House, 2007, p.8), which stresses the importance of the group but does not eliminate the influence of the individual in shaping the culture(s). I then move to discuss some of the prominent postmodern views of culture, mainly addressed in cultural studies, whose interpretations added significant aspects like otherness, awareness, among others, which are of specific relevance to this research.

I shall start by discussing the meaning-oriented conceptualisation because it is related to both language and society (Risager, 2006). To this end, Keesing (1974) suggested three approaches to look at culture: the cognitive, the structural, and the symbolic one.

From the cognitive perspective, culture is viewed as a synonym of knowledge existing in "the human consciousness" (Risager, 2006, p. 45) of which language is a very important aspect. Ward Goodenough (1964) summarises what is known today as the cognitive view of culture:

A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term. By this definition, we should note that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour, or emotion, it is rather an organisation of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind; their models of perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them. (p.36)

In his definition, Goodenough seems to analyse culture in relation to what it is, where it is and why it matters. He portrays culture as a clear, static, and ideal body of knowledge that individuals can access in order to function in a particular society. This also suggests that he only refers to the conscious part of learning/knowing about cultures, in other words, what lies on the surface of a particular culture; and pays less attention – if any at all – to the unconscious part of learning, or the deep level of culture which can be difficult to grasp and learn.

The cognitive analysis of culture has been criticised by structural anthropologists. In his theory, Lévi-Strauss (1966) describes culture as the set of symbolic systems which express both the physical and social reality of a society and to which language is central.

All culture can be thought of as a whole made up of symbolic systems, the highest-ranking of which are language, matrimonial rules, economic relations, art, science, and religion. All these systems aim to express certain aspects of physical reality and social reality and, furthermore, the relations that these two types of reality maintain between each other and that the symbolic systems themselves maintain between themselves. (1966: XIX)

Thus, Lévi-Strauss highlights the relationship between symbolic systems, mainly culture and nature. In his view, the main difference between cultures is in how individuals make use of raw materials the physical world provides (Keesing, 1974). In other words, according to Duranti (1997), Lévi-Strauss's interpretation of culture is based on the assumption that "the human mind is everywhere the same [...] and that there is no basic cognitive difference in thinking about the world" (p. 33), an analysis which, in reference to cognitive anthropology, draws a more ambiguous, rather than apparent, understanding of the concept, and to some extent, appears to reduce the complexities between cultures and does not give much attention to how other factors, like religion, can play a fundamental role in the shaping of cultures.

Later, Geertz (1973) proposed an interpretive analysis of the concept, referred to as 'symbolic' by Keesing (1974). Geertz contrasts the cognitive perspective – which views culture as a phenomenon that exists in the mind – and argues that culture is socially constructed by, and can be found among, the members of a society (cited in Risager, 2006). Culture, therefore, is public and can be interpreted rather than studied. Also, unlike Lévi-Strauss whose analysis of culture can be related both to the 'general' and to the 'particular' (Risager, 2006), Geertz (1973) highlights the 'particular' view of culture that can be analysed through a 'thick description' of its semantic structures.

3.2.1. Culture as a practice

The previous approaches to conceptualising culture have been a subject of criticism since the 1980s after which new visions of culture emerged, mainly in cultural studies. Particularly, the notion of ‘culture as a system of meanings’ had been reconsidered and a notion of ‘culture as a practice’ emerged (Risager, 2006). To put it in its simplest terms, Baker (2015, p. 56) suggests viewing culture as “something that we ‘do’ rather than something that we ‘have’”. Thus, culture is highly related to the ‘way of life’ of a particular community (Williams, 1983) which entails a range of different practices, beliefs, values, behaviours, habits, traditions, folklore, and language to name but a few (Croucher, 2017).

The practice-oriented realm, along with cultural studies, suggest looking at culture as a fluid, dynamic process (Jenks, 2005; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013) which contradicts the meaning-oriented view of the concept as a static, end product. Through interaction, therefore language, individuals continue to create and recreate cultural practices (Baker, 2015; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). This suggests that culture is a phenomenon whose aspects can be negotiated and reconstructed as result of either internal, or external influences (House, 2007; Spencer-Oatey, 2012; Barrett et al., 2013). Furthermore, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, p. 21) stress that viewing culture as ‘a situated process’ rather than a ‘coherent whole’ suggests that cultures can accommodate diverse and contradictory elements; thus, individuals who may be considered to belong to the same cultural group can interpret the same events differently. This highlights the role of the individual and “engages the idea of individual identity as more central concept in understanding culture” (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p. 23). Also, in line with Hofstede et al. (2010) and Croucher

(2017), cultural practices are more likely to change in comparison to cultural values and beliefs; this suggests that despite some postmodernist claims to revise the whole notion of ‘culture’ due to the constant change in its ‘social groups’ (House, 2007), the fact that different cultures still exist should not be debated, at least at the time.

3.2.2. Culture and the nation

Cultures have long been understood as a set of practices and products that are constructed and owned by members of nation states (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Baker, 2015). Cultures, in this respect, are bounded to geographical borders and viewed as singular, static, and frequently labelled according to national affiliations and national languages (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Baker, 2015). Even within the intercultural field, as Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) emphasise “there is often an implicit assumption that cultural group is equivalent to national or ethnic group” (p. 40). This is commonly referred to as the essentialist view of culture as it reduces cultures to countries and regions. For example, Algerian and Turkish cultures and people are viewed as essentially different to each other (Holliday, 2005, p. 17). At the micro level, ethnic, regional, and organisational subgroups may be recognised as part of the national culture (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013); and at the macro level, the national culture (e.g. Algerian) becomes a part of a wider culture (e.g. Arab) (Holliday, 2005). Essentialism not only reduces culture to physical territories but implies that people’s behaviours are entirely defined by the culture to which they belong, rendering invisible individuals’ agency (Holliday, 2005; Risager, 2006) and strengthening stereotypical representations (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). The non-essentialist perspective views culture as a practice, not belonging to a physical territory to which people

belong; rather, it is complex and changing and binds and separates people (Holliday; 2005; 2010; Hoff, 2020).

3.2.3. Culture and religion

Important to the discussion of culture is the status of religion in a given society; as Tarakeshwar, Stanton and Pargament (2003, p. 377) state, “religion is inextricably woven into the cloth of cultural life”. However, the interplay between the two concepts tends to be overlooked in the literature and unlike the nation-state for example, cultures are rarely seen as bounded by religion. According to Bouherar (2020), cultural practices are derived from religious beliefs. Similarly, Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) state that “the culture of a religious (sub-)group can be manifested in a variety of ways, including in members’ values, beliefs and orientations to life, in their communicative conventions, in their policies and procedures, and in their buildings, rituals and behaviour” (p. 41); I discuss how the impact of religion can be context specific later in this chapter (see section 3.7.1.1.).

3.3. Aspects of culture

The distinction between different categories, or levels, of culture offers a slightly different understanding of the concept because it suggests perceiving the culture of a particular community according to what is observable and what is not (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Hofstede et al. (2010) for example, state that there are four components which together can cover all aspects of culture; these are values, rituals, heroes and symbols respectively; the last three form the practices of culture while values are the core of culture. Similarly, Dodd (1998) explains that culture can be divided into three layers: the inner core consists of the values, beliefs, identity, history, and worldviews of the

group; the intermediate layer consists of the practices which make up the culture (rituals, art, communication(s), customs); and the outer layer covers the educational, political, religious, family, health, and other broader cultural systems, which represent a particular culture. While Dodd's categorisation appears to be sufficiently comprehensive, I argue that the status of religion can change depending on the cultural group. Al-Omari (2015) suggests looking at a group's culture as a combination of two main aspects: behaviours and attitudes; the former answer what is going on, while the latter explain why.

Another more common distinction used to refer to similar categories is big C and small c culture, surface and deep culture, and high and low/popular culture, among others. In this thesis, I refer to the distinction between big C and small c culture to avoid confusion and because they are the most cited in the literature of FL pedagogy.

It is often agreed that what constitutes big C culture are the visible aspects which distinguish a certain group from the other: its achievements, artefacts, literature, music, language, and food among others (Tomalin and Stemplesky, 1993; Holliday, 2013; Kramsch, 2013; Holtzman and Sharpe, 2014). Small c culture on the other hand, covers aspects such as values, beliefs, habits, and others which lie at a deeper level and may only be identified when living among the group. In the FL classroom, teaching both categories can often be difficult and confusing; therefore, teachers may choose to focus on the aspects of big C culture, arguing that teaching small c culture is challenging.

To this end, I shall define culture as the overall shared way of life of a particular social group in a particular period of time, which covers a variety of aspects like, but not only,

language, dialect, religion, folklore, beliefs, values, behaviours, traditions, which differentiate one group from the other. It is a set of learned and transferred aspects, which are subject to constant negotiation and gradual change. Also, for the purposes of this thesis, culture is seen as inherently plural and while I repeatedly argue against tying culture to the nation, it is important to highlight that the link between the two cannot be ignored.

In the following sections, I explore the relationship between culture and language in general and FLT&L in particular.

3.4. Culture in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

The relationship between culture and language has been widely acknowledged in the literature of FLT over the past decades. In their works, Kramsch (1993, 1998), Byram (1997), Risager (2006, 2007), and Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) among others emphasise the importance of incorporating culture in the process of FLT&L. Yet, the nature of the relationship is still a subject of debate; the common view perceives language as one of the aspects of culture as it is the means through which culture is socially constructed, transferred and manifested (Brown, 1986, 2014; Kramsch, 1993, 2011, 2015; Risager, 2006; House, 2007; Hall, 2012; Baker, 2012; Yesil and Demiroz, 2017). This, however, does not indicate that speaking the same language implies sharing the same culture; people who speak one language can belong to different cultural groups (Sapir, 1921), for example in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa), or the English-speaking countries, cultural practices vary from one region to the other despite sharing the same official language. Indeed, associating cultural awareness with national cultures, both native and

foreign, has been a subject of criticism; particularly, when the language in question is English, due to its current use as a global lingua franca (Baker, 2012).

In this thesis, I refer to language and culture as being closely related to each other rather than one being a part of the other.

The relationship between language and culture indicates that studying the language calls for the understanding of the cultural context in which the language is being used (Kramsch, 1993; Morgan and Cain, 2000; Pulverness, 2003; Hall, 2012; Eldin, 2015). Also, the focus on linguistic competence solely and engaging with ‘culture free’ language teaching might make learners focus on the literal meaning of the language, after which they are likely to become ‘fluent fools’ (Bennet, 1993; Morgan and Cain, 2000; Yesil and Demiroz, 2017).

3.4.1. Traditional approaches to teaching culture

In practice, traditional teaching of both language and culture did not take into consideration the outside world of learners in which their linguistic and cultural practices are different (Hall, 2012). Instead, the focus was on transferring factual knowledge about people of the ‘target’ culture, the native speakers of the language (Kramsch, 1993; Byram, 1997; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2004; Fenner, 2008; Scarino, 2010; Kiss, 2018) which in some ways relates to the cognitive view of culture. From this perspective, culture is viewed as “a body of knowledge that people have about a particular society” (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p. 22). Several studies have been conducted in which FL teachers explicitly expressed that for them, teaching a foreign culture means introducing the

learners to aspects of big C culture; therefore, there was little or no space for learners to reflect on what is taught to them (see Yeganeh and Raeesi, 2015).

Following this approach, learners were expected to automatically develop intercultural awareness (Fenner, 2008). However, depending on factors like age, learners may experience culture shock and get lost between their culture(s) and the foreign one(s). This situation can also depend on their native culture and the extent to which it is distant from the foreign one(s). This traditional approach has been widely criticised because it results in a narrow perspective of culture (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013); particularly, cultural knowledge has been replaced by cultural awareness which later has been expanded to include an ‘intercultural’ dimension as well, all of which will be discussed in this chapter.

Before moving to the next section, I want to clarify that when arguing that culture should be taught alongside language, I am only referring to the type of language learning that takes place in general educational institutions (mainly schools); any other language learning settings like ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and EAP (English for Academic Purposes) are excluded from the discussions of this study.

3.4.2. Towards an intercultural approach

3.4.2.1. (Inter)Cultural Awareness

Developing cultural and intercultural awareness in the language classroom requires teachers to move from transferring cultural knowledge to learners to helping them become aware of the status of culture (both native and foreign) in communication (Baker, 2012). At this stage, it is necessary to get to the distinction between

the cultural and the intercultural; it is equally important to distinguish between knowledge and awareness as they sometimes tend to be confused. The cultural orientation views culture as a static entity, an object to be studied through the accumulation of cultural knowledge; as a result, “the cultural component becomes self-contained and is often very remote from the language itself” (Liddicoat, 2005b, p. 301). In other words, learners’ pre-existing values, practices, worldviews and identity are not confronted or transformed (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). The intercultural orientation, however, focuses on meaning-making and views both culture and language as interactive sites for exploring, problematising and redrawing borders between the self and the other (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013).

According to Fantini (2018): “knowledge can be forgotten, but once one is aware, it is difficult to become unaware” (p.36). Also, awareness is more about the ‘self’ in relation to everything and everyone else (Fantini, 2012; 2018). Similarly, Croucher (2017) states that being aware requires moving from accepting knowledge as it is, to looking for and questioning what lies beneath the surface. Although Fenner (2008), among others, advocates that developing such awareness is the responsibility of learners first and their teachers next, factors like the background of learners, their age, and their language level suggest that teachers should be more involved.

In the following sections, I look at the conceptualisation of the intercultural situation before reviewing the background of ICC and its components, as discussed in Byram (1997). I then move to address ICC in practice, highlighting textbooks and the perceptions of FL educators as the two main factors that contribute the development of learners’ ICC in the classroom.

3.4.2.2. Conceptualising the intercultural

IC (Intercultural Competence), ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence), global citizenship, and other similar terms have been widely associated to FL education in the last three decades. Scholars in the field of FLT&L continue to advise against perceiving the NS (Native Speaker) as a model and encourage educational institutions in general and FL teachers in particular to incorporate intercultural aspects. Yet, as Byram and Masuhara (2013, p. 142) state, IC is “often described rather than defined because of the complexity of what it refers to” and as Kramsch and Hua (2016) argue, because of the static notion of culture that still accompanies IC. One of the most comprehensive definitions of an intercultural situation is that of Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) because unlike some other scholars, they shed light on a very important aspect, that is the required distance between the cultures involved: “an intercultural situation is one in which the cultural distance between the participants is *significant enough* to have an impact on communication, an impact which is obvious to at least one of the parties” (p.41). Thus, the distance between the cultures of the individuals is what determines whether the situation is intercultural or not, regardless of the language they use to interact. In other words, national boundaries should no longer be the one and only criterion upon which the description of a situation as intercultural depends (Kramsch, 1998). IC is therefore the set of skills that enable individuals to appropriately and effectively act in cross-cultural situations (Ashwil and Hoang Oanh, 2009). To this end, I want to shed light on an important distinction between IC and ICC. The difference between the two competences lies within the use of language; while ICC is particularly related to the discussion of cultural topics in a FL, IC can be related to a variety of domains including FLT (Byram 1997; Boye and Byram, 2017). It is worth noting here that despite the many efforts to define IC, the

concept is still a subject of debate. Thus, from now on, I use ICC due to the context of the study being FLT. I shall return to global citizenship at the end of the chapter.

3.5. Origin of ICC

Before going any further, it is necessary to briefly review the origin of the notion of ICC. Up until the 1970s, Chomsky's (1957, 1965) famous concept of linguistic competence dominated the field of language education. Chomsky's claims that the ideal speaker/listener should master the linguistic rules of the language led to the assumption that the NS is the representative of the community in which the language is used as a mother tongue. Later, Hymes (1972) initiated the concept of CC (Communicative Competence) and argued that mastering grammar rules is not enough because children for instance, do not acquire and use the linguistic rules only, they also learn other aspects or rules, like when, what, and with whom to speak. Therefore, the sociolinguistic aspect of language acquisition had to be incorporated. Both Chomsky and Hymes were concerned mainly with first language acquisition; later, Canale and Swain (1980) and then Van Ek (1986) developed new frameworks in which they explored the communicative dimension of SL/FL learning. Canale and Swain's (1980) model of CC consists of four competences namely: grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse; and later, Van Ek (1986) developed a model of communicative ability of six competences: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, socio-cultural competence, and social competence.

Instead of defining and going through the competences of each model, I want to shed light on the gap that led to the development of ICC which is, as Byram (1997) puts it, the

continuous implicit reference to the NS as a model and the lack of reference to the importance of nonverbal aspects of communication, especially in Van Ek's model. Although both points are important, reference to the NS as the model has been discussed more widely than nonverbal communication.

Michael Byram among others gave two reasons to critique the NS model. The first one is that FL learners can never have the exact same mastery of language as NSs due to the fact that the conditions in which both parties learn the language are different (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 2013). The second and, from my perspective, the most important reason is the possibility of creating the wrong competence, what he refers to as “linguistic schizophrenia” (Byram, 1997, p.11). This can happen when FL learners abandon their first language in an attempt to master the foreign one and blend in the foreign community which therefore can lead to them abandoning their culture and acquiring a new sociocultural identity. This, as I shall discuss later in this chapter, is what FL educators want to avoid rather than achieve.

In the succeeding sections, I review the model of ICC as introduced by Byram (1997); this includes a definition of the intercultural speaker and the five factors (*savoirs*) that constitute the model. The selection of this model among others (i.e. Bennet's (1986; 1993) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity) can be explained by “the attainable ideal” it proposes, that is the intercultural speaker, its focus on the educational setting and the specification of the roles of both FL teachers and learners (Byram, 1997, p. 70). Also, as I shall explain in the following chapter, the five *savoirs* can be used as a set of criteria for the development and evaluation of the intercultural in the FL curricula.

3.5.1. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

ICC was introduced in the 1990s to build on the notion of communicative competence (Guilherme, 2002; Sercu et al., 2005) and broaden the aim of FLT&L. Byram's work (1997) is widely considered as the foundation of ICC. Also, among other IC models, Byram's is to some extent more concerned with how identity is negotiated 'within and across cultures' (Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009). As I shall discuss later, identity is of particular importance in my study.

To avoid falling into the trap of the NS, and to move beyond transferring cultural knowledge, Byram (1997) argues that FL learners need to develop ICC, which Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) define as "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different" (p. 12). This set of abilities should allow the FL learner to engage in successful interaction. On top of these abilities is the willingness to decentre, reflect, and accept criticism; that is to look at one's attitudes and beliefs from the perspective of the outgroup and to reconsider one's perspectives about the others (Byram, 1997; Sercu et al., 2005 Kramsch, 2015). However, agreeing with Sercu et al. (2005), the intercultural situation is uncomfortable and can trigger different emotions ranging from "anger and anxiety to excitement and relief" (p.2).

3.5.1.1. The intercultural speaker (IS)

Central to the phenomenon of ICC is the concept of the IS; yet, it is not always made explicit how important it is for language educators to have a clear understanding of who the IS is. Probably the most common discussion related to the concept is the distinction

between the IS and the NS. Until recent decades, the NS has been widely recognised as the ideal model for FL teachers and learners (Byram, 2008; 2012; Boye and Byram, 2017), or as Kramsch (2013, p. 58) puts it: “an attractive exotic other”. Traditionally, the notion of NS was used to refer to an individual who, not only appropriately uses the language but also represents its cultural contexts (Kramsch, 1998). However, with the introduction of ICC, the concept of NS had to be revised, and most scholars now encourage language teachers and learners to shift their focus from the NS to the IS. Therefore, in what follows, I want to address the identity of the IS.

The IS is someone who can perform in more than one cultural setting without causing or falling into situations of misunderstanding and conflict; thus, someone who can ‘mediate’ between cultures (Byram, 2002; 2003; 2008; Corbett, 2003; Gohard-Radenkovic et al., 2004; Sptizberg and Chagnon, 2009) and find what Kramsch (1993a) describes as “the third space” between their native culture(s) and the foreign one(s), in which they can distance themselves from their own culture and look at it differently. According to Ryan (2006, p. 21), the IS “is neither completely part of nor completely apart from their culture, but lives on the boundary or edge of their thinking or culture”. That is, in each language and culture, the IS should act as an insider and outsider (Byram, 2008; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). The IS can be confused with bicultural or even multicultural individuals; for instance, Ashwil and Hoang Oanh (2009) state that IC is “the essence of being bicultural” (p. 143). Yet, Byram (1997; 2008) distinguishes between acting interculturally and being bicultural; he states that individuals can become bicultural “in a natural way” through living in specific situations, but to act interculturally learners would require the help of the teacher (p.59).

What I want to emphasise in this section are the labels sometimes attached to the IS, one of which of which is 'the representative'. Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) state that perceiving ISs as representatives of cultures is an overgeneralisation that leads to an oversimplification of cultures and reduces their complexities. This means that one culture can be more diverse and complex than individuals who identify themselves with it perceive it to be. Indeed, the diversity within one culture can be greater than the differences between cultures (Jandt, 2013). Despite sharing the same cultural background, individuals can act as different representatives of the same culture, which can cause confusion for the other ISs. Thus, using terms like representative can lead to acts of stereotyping (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009; Jandt, 2013). In the succeeding section, I review the factors that contribute to the success of intercultural communication as introduced in Byram (1997).

3.5.2.1. Knowledge (*Savoirs*)

Knowledge is the first dimension of the framework; two categories can be identified in an intercultural interaction: one related to the cultures and the social groups of both cultural groups, which is generally acquired through socialisation; and one related to the knowledge of the norms and processes of interaction which entails an awareness of how social identities are acquired and how interlocutors from different backgrounds are perceived (Byram, 1997). Agreeing with Byram, the second category of knowledge is more significant to the success of intercultural communication because, according to Hofstede et al. (2010c) "awareness is where it all starts" (p.419).

An important point that should always be mentioned when discussing the knowledge dimension of ICC or IC in general is how objective culture specific knowledge can be.

According to Byram (1997), this depends on how and where knowledge is acquired; he goes on to describe what individuals learn in their social groups about the foreign cultures as ‘relational’ for it is “often presented in contrast to the significant characteristics of one’s national group and identity” (p.26). Similarly, Kramsch and Hua (2016) state that culture specific knowledge can be problematic if treated as static, objective, and accessible to anyone because then it would reinforce stereotypes and result “reductionist profiling” (p. 46)

Sercu et al. (2005), among others, state that culture specific knowledge is not enough and that the interculturally competent individual “needs to acquire a certain amount of culture-general knowledge” (p.4) which will facilitate interaction with diverse cultures. Among the five dimensions of ICC, Risager (2007) argues that knowledge tends to be downgraded and sometimes taken for granted.

3.5.2.2. Skills (S’avoir apprendre)

Byram (1997) distinguishes between two categories of skills in ICC: skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction. To define each category and clarify the difference between them, he illustrates how and when each skill can be used and how it can be related to knowledge. Skills of interpretation and establishing relationships “involve the ability to analyse data from one’s own and another country and the potential relationships between them” (Byram, 1997, p. 33). The skills of discovery and interaction may require the individual to take part in a social interaction during which they are likely able to identify “significant phenomena in a foreign environment” (p.38), a process which is more challenging in situations where the two – or more – cultures involved are distant

and have less – or nothing – in common. Also, as Byram states, skills of discovery can be used either independently from, or in conjunction with, skills of interpretation.

In the context of FLT, Byram (1997) argues that learners acquire these skills in the classroom environment through the help and guidance of the teacher. Also, the classroom can be the setting in which learners take the first step towards knowing about other cultures; they may consider doing research outside the class about what they find interesting or what they did not understand very well. Then, coming back to the classroom, they can reflect on what they have acquired (Byram, 1997) and this helps them develop their ICC. However, some skills and attitudes need and can only be learned and developed outside the classroom, either through independent learning and fieldwork, or through interaction with individuals from other cultures (Byram, 1997).

3.5.2.3. Attitudes (Savoir être)

FL learners should have attitudes of openness towards other culturally different individuals (Byram, 1997, Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009; Byram, 2012); this is described as “the ability to decentre” (Byram, 1997, p. 34; Byram, Gribvoka, and Starkey, 2002, p. 7). To be open, according to Lejeune (2003) involves a willingness to “allow some flow of communication between self and the outside so that bridges are established” (p. 111).

Like knowledge, attitudes are transferable; that is, FL learners’ attitudes towards their own and other foreign cultures are shared with and influenced by members of their group (peers, family, friends). Learners may share negative attitudes towards the foreign culture(s) represented to them; in such situations, the teacher should step in to clarify misunderstandings which may result in a change in their attitudes (Byram, 2003).

To this end, I argue that attitudes are the central factor of ICC because developing the “right” attitudes towards one’s own and other cultures is the most challenging step towards successful intercultural and cross-cultural communication (Sharifian, 2012) after which CCA can be developed.

3.5.2.4. Critical Cultural Awareness (*Savoir s’engager*)

The four aforementioned factors - knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpretation and skills of discovery - can “in principle be acquired through experience and reflection without the intervention of the teacher” (Byram, 1997, p. 33). Thus, CCA, as suggested by Byram (1997; 2006; 2008; 2009a) and others in the field, is the central dimension of ICC for ‘it ensures that language teaching has an educational function’ (2009a, p. 325). Byram (1997) defines CCA as “an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in our own and other cultures and countries” (p. 53). In his original work, Byram continuously stresses the importance of making explicit the standpoints and rationale from which individuals evaluate other cultures and their own; that is, as Guilherme (2002) states “bringing the unconscious to consciousness” (p. 140) because “without justification and explicitness, judgement descends into prejudice and relativism” (Byram, 2006, p. 117). In other words, CCA requires being aware of the underlying values and assumptions about what we consider is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ (Byram and Masuhara, 2013). Byram (1997) argues that this evaluative element is what makes CCA different than the other *savoirs* especially attitudes (*s’avoir etre*). Interestingly, Byram also argues against using and referring to religion as an evaluation criterion; however, the relationship between religion and culture (see section

3.2.3) and religion and identity (see section 3.7.2.2) show that within the context of this research, as an example, the significance of religion in the intercultural situation can vary.

Although CCA is central to the development of ICC, in the classroom, it can be seen as the most challenging dimension because it involves questioning what one has long accepted and taken for granted. Thus, FL teachers may prefer to encourage learners to reflect on the aspects of the foreign culture(s) but not their own. Reasons for this can be related to learners' age and the development of their national and religious identities among others (I discuss the effect of these forms of identity on the development of learners' ICC later in this chapter). Byram (1997) and Guilherme (2002) however, argue against postponing CCA to later stages of FLL and stress the necessity of implementing the dimension in all levels. In such a case, it is the responsibility of the teacher to slowly steer their young learners in the right direction, which would require them to choose and use the appropriate materials and methods that would help learners to decentre (Tarasheva and Davcheva, 2002).

Attitudes and CCA are closely tied and best studied together because they are both concerned with a 'general disposition' or decentring (Sercu, 2005, p. 4). Yet, while attitudes are mostly about the culturally different others, CCA is mostly about the self: how the individual can move from accepting beliefs, values, and practices in their culture and perceiving them as positive and right, to stepping back and critically looking at them from the point of view of someone who is an outsider to their culture.

Despite the numerous studies and publications about the importance of shifting to ICC, in practice, FL teachers around the world are still committed to the traditional approach of CC

and transferring cultural knowledge. Although most literature in the field suggests methods and techniques of how to incorporate and assess ICC in the classroom, the reasons why teachers do not implement it are still understudied. Thus, through this study, I want to understand how EFL educators in Algeria perceive the teaching of ICC in the EFL classroom. Therefore, in the succeeding sections, I set to review the two main factors that directly affect the development of ICC in the Algerian setting: textbooks and EFL educator's perceptions.

3.6. ICC in practice

Recognising the importance of developing learners' ICC generally leaves language educators facing two issues: which culture(s) to teach and which methods and techniques to use. How to incorporate culture into language teaching practices is one of the obstacles teachers often face, especially if they have never experienced living in or visiting the country of the foreign culture(s) (Byram, Gribvoka, and Starkey, 2002) which is likely the case for most Algerian EFL teachers.

This brings forward the question of which culture(s) to teach (Nguyen, 2017). However, the current debate about English as an international language, or a lingua franca, suggests separating the language from its cultural roots (Fenner, 2008), but this is beyond the scope of the current research.

The question of how to incorporate the (inter)cultural dimension into the teaching of FL and how to develop learners' ICC is still a subject of research and scholars have not yet agreed on an approach that would suit all or most

contexts. Yet, some studies revealed that teachers tend to use the comparative approach where learners can compare aspects of their culture with others from the foreign culture(s) (Canale, 2016). In relation to the Arab context for example, Eldin (2015) among others suggests starting with learners' understanding of their native culture first then gradually shifting their focus to learning about and understanding the foreign one(s). This, however, can be time consuming and instead of introducing other cultures, teachers might end up exploring the different aspects of the learners' native culture(s).

Because this study's main focus is on the status of culture and the potential of ICC in the new curriculum of English in Algeria, it is essential to discuss the two factors that are deemed to affect the development of learners' ICC: textbooks and teachers' perceptions.

3.6.1. Cultural representations and references in FL textbooks

Among the different types of FL materials now available to both teachers and learners, textbooks are still by far the main resource for many teachers (Sercu et al., 2005; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Richards, 2014; Risager, 2018) for they usually translate the objectives of the curriculum into structured chapters, lessons, tasks and activities (Sercu et al., 2005). This, however, does not change the fact that there is still a lack of materials that support the development of ICC (Hall, 2012; Kiss, 2018) and when available, they are usually of 'limited use' because they tend to present fictional, generalized material "designed to be used by any teacher with any learner anywhere" (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p. 102). This puts more pressure on the teacher to be critical, adaptive, and creative as the 'qualified' choice of materials is one of the most important factors for the development of ICC (Fenner, 2001; 2005).

The choice of whose culture(s) to address in the classroom – though challenging (Fenner, 2001; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013) – does not solve the problem as the teacher would have to make other decisions regarding whether to focus on the similarities or the differences (Kramsch, 1988; 2015) or both; and consider the potential influence of differences on the learning behaviour of learners (Holliday, 1994). Another issue related to the selection of materials is how the foreign culture(s) is represented; how much diversity is revealed (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Canale, 2016), and what textbooks are designed to include and/or exclude. Thus, in what follows, I discuss what Canale (2016) refers to as the politics of exclusion and inclusion in FL textbooks.

3.6.1.1. Politics of exclusion

It is not uncommon for textbooks to include local/native cultures rather than the one(s) of the language studied (or others). This does not promote the intercultural dimension of language learning but serves other ideological purposes instead, mostly local ones (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). Reasons for the exclusion of foreign cultures seem to be linked to factors like policy and the distance between learners' native culture(s) and the foreign ones; thus, authors/editors may decide to leave out certain aspects "to protect the learner from the perceived discomfort of encountering different ways of living in and viewing the world" (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p. 86). In the Arab context for example, foreign cultures, mainly Western ones, can be seen as a threat to young learners; therefore, excluding some aspects from the learning materials might seem to be a way to avoid learners' potential attachment to the Western beliefs and way of life. Mahmoud (2015) among others argues against implementing foreign cultures in the FL textbooks of Arab learners and encourages curricula authors and textbook designers to proudly

implement their Arab Islamic culture(s) to avoid the ‘serious threat of losing identity’. This can be seen in Adaksu, Britten and Fahsi (1990) and Al-Asmari’s (2008) analyses of culture in Moroccan and Saudi Arabian language textbooks, respectively; they noted that Western cultural content in textbooks is likely to cause discomfort and confusion for learners who may start to compare the cultures. Interestingly, however, this approach is not exclusive to Arab/Muslim contexts; similar studies on Chinese and Japanese textbooks of English, by McKay (2004) and Efron (2020), revealed that English was used to introduce and promote Japanese culture to foreigners (generally Americans); seemingly, Liu (2005) found that aspects of Chinese culture dominated EFL textbooks in China.

Canale (2016, p. 232) however, argues that not all reasons are ‘ideologically-driven’; authors may make decisions based on the ‘imagined’ abilities of the users; that is certain aspects of diversity could be excluded to ‘reduce the information load’ which can lead to the mis- or under-representation and hindering the complexities of foreign cultures and/or make it difficult for learners to engage critically with either cultures (native and foreign).

3.6.1.2. Politics of inclusion

Cultural representation in FL textbooks is without doubt a ‘highly selective’ process (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p. 85), and most of the time this selection leaves learners with oversimplified information (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Pulverness and Tomlinson, 2014; Canale, 2016; Kiss, 2018) that can be compared to a touristic guide in which famous cultural materials are represented. In doing so, learners are perceived as passive consumers and “superficial tourists” who are not interested in engaging with the foreign

culture(s) (Elissondo, 2001, p. 74); “instead of an intellectually provocative experience in the classroom, students often receive an education based on ready-mades devoid of real connection with specific geographies and historical processes” (2001, p. 97). More often than not, textbooks focus on depicting the differences between local and foreign cultures (McKay, 2004; Canale, 2016), muting differences within cultures, which reinforces the politics of exclusion. When diversity is included, it tends to be introduced in texts – possibly artwork – which “do not require an emotional investment from the reader” (Elissondo, 2001, p. 74). In other words, ‘heated’ topics and ideologies tend to be avoided (Canale, 2016). Furthermore, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, p.89) argue that even when textbooks address cultural diversity and other aspects like change, they tend to ‘typically essentialise the culture’ ignoring how changes are adopted and perceived differently.

Teachers are invited to move beyond textbooks and supplement or even replace them with materials that are a) “more relevant to their learners and their teaching goals” and b) challenge the single perspective on language and cultures which textbooks often embody (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p. 91). This brings forward the vital role of teachers as facilitators of ICC, which I discuss in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

It is interesting to note that even when the aim is to implement the intercultural dimension in language textbooks, the notion of the NS as model is not totally excluded. For example, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) argue that textbooks should provide learners with an understanding of how language is used by NSs.

3.6.2. FL educators' perceptions

To successfully implement ICC in the EFL classroom, there should be an agreement amongst EFL educators about the appropriate materials and methods to be used. Therefore, all concerned parties should themselves have a certain degree of ICC (Sercu et al., 2005; Byram, 2008) and develop an intercultural identity (Yang, 2018), or at least, show willingness and readiness to implement ICC. Teachers, in particular, are deemed to be the most important party for, unlike the others, they are in direct contact with learners; they are, as Guilherme (2002, p.123) states, 'transformative intellectuals', they can transform learners' attitudes about both their own culture(s) and others, either consciously, through being explicit about what skills or attitudes they want to improve or change, and awareness of the importance of the materials and methods of instruction; and/or unconsciously, through sharing their perceptions with the learners without any intention to influence or divert their way of perceiving the self and/or the other.

In describing the teacher-learner interaction, Corbett (2003) states that the challenge for the FL teacher is to manage the change of learners' beliefs and attitudes resulting from contact with a new/foreign culture so that "it empowers rather than subjugates" them and the society they belong to, in which case the teacher becomes 'a moral guide' (p. 208). However, McConachy (2018) advocates the need for teachers to be cautious not to impose their ideologies, as they can be "highly influential in the formation of cultural stereotypes" for learners (Itakura, 2004 p.43) through the selection of materials which provide a single or limited perspective (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013).

Central to this literature review is the discussion of potential issues and challenges in the process of ICC development in the Algerian context. Byram's model of ICC (1997) discussed above defines and presents the required knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness that can help and prepare learners to act as intercultural speakers; nevertheless, it would be naive to expect that a Western developed model can be successfully adapted in all contexts. Although Byram in his original work acknowledges the sensitivity of some contexts and the importance of identity and otherness for ICC, in line with Hoff (2020), the representation of culture and identity in the model "suffers from certain inconsistencies and simplifications" (p. 59) which have been acknowledged in later publications (Byram et al., 2017; Houghton & Byram, 2017; Byram & Wagner 2018; Porto). Still, challenges that can prevent FL teachers, and other educators, from successfully implementing ICC in the language curriculum are understudied. From a broader perspective, these can be related to the conceptualisation of culture and ICC, pedagogy (i.e., teaching practices, materials selection, assessment), teachers' profiles, policy makers' profiles, and learners' profiles to name but a few.

3.7. Issue and Challenges

The challenges that can affect the development of ICC on a conceptual and pedagogical level can vary depending on the context of teaching, among other factors. In the following sections, I address three challenges, two of which are very specific to the context of the current study and therefore, deemed to be the most important; these are identity and othering. In line with Spitzberg and Chanson (2009), Byram's framework of ICC seems to be focusing on the negotiation of identity "within and across cultures" (p.17). Yet, neither

identity nor othering were explicitly discussed in the 1997 volume. Global citizenship is the last challenge I shall highlight; it is a more common one and has been explicitly discussed in previous research, in comparison to the first two.

3.7.1. Identity construction and negotiation

Before reviewing the relevant literature on the relationship between identity construction and negotiation and the development of FL learners' ICC, I want to shed light on an important point, that is, how identities are multiple and negotiable and constantly developing due to internal and external factors (Guilherme, 2002; Osler and Starkey, 2005a; Holliday, Kullman, and Hyde; 2012; Noels, et al., 2016; Croucher, 2017; Yang, 2018). Therefore, rather than referring to identity as a singular entity, it is advised to acknowledge the fact that individuals have multifaceted identities, which suggests the need to be precise about which form of identity is emphasised. Also, I argue here that cultural identity is the most complex and challenging form of identity due to the still blurred image of the concept of culture, and the link between culture and identity.

Over the past decades, the concept of identity has gained a significant interest in the field of intercultural education; as Dervin (2012) states: “questions of identities – be they cultural, national, ethnic, religious – have never mattered more than with the current complex practices of intercultural communication” (p. 183). Identities are formed, developed, and negotiated through socialisation (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Holliday, Kullman, and Hyde; 2012; Ryan, 2006), either in formal contexts like educational settings, where learners can develop their national identity – referred to as secondary socialisation by Berger and Luckmann (1966), or in informal contexts – primary socialisation – where

they usually form their ethnic and regional identities (Byram, 1997) among others. In the educational setting, factors like the large proportion of time young adolescents spend in the classroom and the teachers' beliefs and practices, influence the development of their identities (Taylor, 2013). As I shall argue, the extent to which individuals' identities affect their ICC is highly dependent on the history, values, and beliefs of their culture(s).

In the last two decades, researchers have shown a considerable interest in exploring the relationship between identity construction and negotiation and SL/FL learning (Taylor, 2013). In the Algerian context(s), the development of learners' multiple identities is most likely one of the reasons why foreign cultures are marginalised in the EFL classroom, although Byram (2003) states that changing learners' attitudes is far more important than changing identities. At the stage of middle school, learners aged between 11 and 14 years old are supposed to be developing their identities; and since identity cannot be separated from culture and is sometimes even confused with culture (Hosftede et al., 2010c); embracing other cultures' identities can be seen as a risk. In this case, EFL learners' multifaceted identities would be competing with other – more global – identities, a situation Bauman (2004) refers to as 'the crisis of belonging' (p.20) in the age of globalisation. I shall come back to this point later.

Among the various forms of identity, in this study, I focus on national and religious identities of participants and learners due to the status and the influence of these two in the Algerian context. Thus, in the following subsections, I describe and discuss how these impact the teaching of foreign cultures in the language classroom.

3.7.1.1. National identity

Reference to national identity when learning a FL is inevitable (Tarasheva and Davcheva, 2002). Yet, in practice, Risager (2007) and Gholaminejad (2017) argue that relatively few studies have explored the importance of FLT for the development of learners' national identity. In contexts like Algeria, discussions about national identity can be even more complex and intriguing due to the country's history, as described in the previous chapter. Belonging to a post-colonial region, Algerians are still trying to get rid of the French influence (mainly language and culture) and construct an independent national identity of their own.

In contexts where the FL is 'of a higher status', Byram (2008, p.71) states that learners' appreciation of the FL and culture(s) over their own, can lead them to reject their national/ethnic identity and try to imitate the dominant language group. Taking Algeria as an example, English is perceived as a higher status language in comparison to Arabic (MSA and Derja), and even French (the SL in Algeria). Also, unlike other forms of identity, Bauman (2004, p. 22) reports that national identity "would not recognise competition, let alone opposition".

3.7.1.2. Religious identity

Religion has long been viewed as a marker of individuals' identity (Souza, 2016) and an integral aspect of culture (Croucher, 2017). Yet, in intercultural education research, religion – in comparison to other aspects of culture – is still understudied (Melles and Frey, 2017). This can be explained by the fact that the intercultural field and ICC have long been studied and researched from a Western perspective, and – most recently – an East Asian one,

contexts which are known to be religiously diverse. Also, as Nadeem et al. (2017) point out, in the West, individuals' religions do not have an emotional impact on their ICC; in other words, religious beliefs can have very different effects on cultures and on how people communicate (Zhang, 2013). Thus, in educational settings, it is commonly agreed that teachers should not attempt to change or influence learners' religious beliefs. In the case of Algeria however, religion is a fundamental aspect of people's life, more than 90% of the population identify themselves as Muslims; thus, many believe that Islam is a way of life which means that most aspects of their daily life are rooted in and guided by either the Quran or the words of Prophet Muhammed (Sunnah); these aspects include law, food, dress code, and communication to name but a few (Al-Omari, 2015).

As Croucher (2017) explains "religion binds people together" (p.102) and affects how they judge and perceive the world. Given the importance of religious identity in Algeria, it is possible that EFL teachers would have to choose between two options when it comes to introducing foreign cultures. The first is to avoid bringing up cultural topics in the classroom because of the assumption that they would threaten the Islamic identity of their learners. The second option would involve informing learners, when necessary, that values and practices of foreign cultures are different because they do not have the same religious beliefs. This second option is more dangerous than the first because learners may view the foreign culture(s) negatively and reject the idea of learning about them or communicating with people from such cultures. Learners' age can be another reason why teachers might want to avoid any culture/religious discussions (discussions about religion and culture) and focus on communicative competence instead.

It should be mentioned here that Islam supports diversity and communication between individuals of different cultural backgrounds (Abu Bakr and Fikri Nordin, 2017; Yousefzadeh, 2018). Yet, in some Muslim contexts, interaction with non-Muslims is seen as a threat that should be avoided even though it is explicitly cited in the Quran and in the Sunnah that no harm comes from communicating with people of different faiths. The first solution that comes to mind in such a situation is to raise FL teachers' awareness (and other educators) about the fact that religion is not a synonym of but an aspect of culture; an understanding which can be very challenging for some Muslims because of their understanding of Islam as "a way of life", a short definition which has been – and still is – related to culture for a long time.

Identity is an essential concept in this research; however, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore in depth how FL learners' identities are constructed and negotiated, or argue about the relationship between language learning and identity or the possible effect(s) of one on the other. What I want to explore through this study is how the teaching approaches and the textbooks of English, as the two main factors which affect the development of learners' identity in the classroom (Zacharias, 2010), are influenced by participants' perceptions of their own and the foreign cultures. In addition, I will explore what possible relationship they believe there is between learning about other cultures and the construction of learners' multiple identities.

3.7.2. Stereotyping and Othering

3.7.2.1. Stereotypes

Before discussing how stereotypes and the process of othering influence people's perceptions of foreign cultures, it is important to highlight how, despite the common criticism, essentialism is still one of the common perceptions of culture (Holliday, 2010). Holliday argues that essentialism "presents people's individual behaviour as entirely defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live in a way that the stereotype becomes the essence of who they are" implying that individuals are not allowed to step outside the cultural zone designated to them (2010, p. 18).

Stereotypes, therefore, are those "pictures in our heads" (Lippmann, 1922, p.3) which are "held by a social group about a social group" (Hinton, 2019, p. 26) as a result of categorising individuals and groups on the basis of oversimplified standards leading to attaching those categorisations to all members of the group (Moore, 2006; Hinton, 2019). Stereotypes can be divided into two categories: auto-stereotypes (perceptions of the self) and hetero-stereotypes (perceptions of others) (Dervin, 2012; Li, 2013); and 'as a rule' auto stereotypes tend to reflect positive evaluations while hetero stereotypes often reflect negative perceptions of others (Lebedko, 2013). In the literature, stereotypes are often referred to as judgmental and negative (Li, 2013; Houghton, 2013), or a criticism (Hinton, 2019). Al-Omari (2015), for example, states that stereotypes occur when individuals compare their best practices to the worst practices of another culture(s). Bartminki (2009) and Li (2013), however, argue that stereotypes can be neutral, positive, or negative and that it is almost impossible to get rid of them; instead, Bartminki

suggests that individuals should try to learn ways to use them to solve misunderstandings and problems of communication. Holliday et al. (2012), however, argue against using stereotypes to understand foreign cultures because “we do not behave sufficiently rationally [...] to be able to work with such templates objectively” (p.25).

Managing, or setting aside, cultural stereotypes in the FL classroom is a concern of many teachers and researchers (Li, 2013; Houghton, 2013). Cultural stereotypes among other types, cannot be dismissed easily; rather, they are likely to become reinforced (Itakura, 2004). The relationship between stereotypes and ICC is still a complex one, and Fantini (2018), among others, suggests that ICC weakens stereotypes.

3.7.2.2. Othering

Otherness is the result of a discursive process by which a dominant in-group (“Us”, the Self) constructs one or many dominated out-groups (“Them”, Other) by stigmatizing a difference – real or imagined – presented as a negation of identity and thus a motive for potential discrimination. To state it naïvely, different belongs to the realm of fact and otherness belongs to the realm of discourse (Staszak, 2009, p.2).

The above definition draws a useful understanding of what the process of othering is; however, Staszak’s (2009) reference to the other as dominated and devalued by the self should be debated. Othering is based on a distinction between the self (the inner group) and the other (the outer group) which, according to Holliday (2005; 2010, p. 71), starts with identifying “our” group through contrasting it with “their” group often resulting in attaching negative characteristics to the other which are opposite to the positive ones of the self. Yet, this distinction cannot and should not be linked only to ethnic or national groups; the fact that there are various others, who do not have to be negative, should be

acknowledged (Petersoo, 2007; Holliday et al., 2012). Thus, the concept of othering should be given considerable attention when referring to inner groups (Brons, 2015): subcultures, or regional cultures within the same culture/country; different religious groups (Staszak, 2009); and those with different traditions and cultural practices, which highlights the close relationship between the two concepts of othering and stereotypes (Dervin, 2011; Hinton, 2019). Usually, individuals prejudge and construct stereotypes about a particular social group, which then leads them to perceive the group as the other (Holliday, 2010; Holliday et al. 2012), through this ideology of difference (Pickering, 2001; Holiday, 2010b; Hinton, 2019). However, unlike experiencing stereotyping, Byram (1997) argues that experiencing otherness can deepen the understanding of someone's own identity and allow them to look at who they are from a different angle.

The definition of who the other is (or can be) depends on the context and on how individuals perceive themselves. In the broad context of my research – EFL teaching – the other can be anyone who is not Algerian or Muslim. However, due to the country's complex history (see Chapter 2), Maamri (2009) suggests that the other is and will always be, the French.

3.7.3. Globalisation and intercultural citizenship

The last challenge I want to address is the effect of globalisation on EFL T&L. Among the several challenges that can be linked to globalisation, I focus here on the concept of global citizenship. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, IC and ICC are sometimes referred to as global competence or global citizenship. Particularly, it is believed that the development of IC leads to the development of global competence (Ashwil and Hoang Oanh,

2009). Globalisation, according to Portuguese upper secondary school teachers, in Guilherme's (2002) study, can be perceived as positive and negative: it helps learners get out of their local contexts and interact with others; however, it is the threat to learners' culture and identity, what she referred to as "the danger of cultural colonisation" (p. 130). Even when globalisation is not an issue, Kim (2009) argues that the success of an intercultural interaction depends on the degree of identity security of individuals.

In the last section of this chapter, I review existing empirical studies on ICC in relation to young learners. For the purposes of this research, I selected studies that investigated the representation of culture and ICC in locally produced EFL textbooks and how it is perceived by EFL educators; the context of the studies is another relevant criterion that was taken into consideration.

3.8. Research on ICC and young learners of English

Previous studies have shown that the representation of culture in FL textbooks tends to be biased; that is, certain cultural groups tend to be favoured over others. In the case of English, it is usually either the culture(s) of inner circle countries (UK and/or USA) or the local culture(s) of learners. The context in which textbooks are produced and used is an important factor that can determine which culture(s) is represented and how.

3.8.1. Research undertaken in the Algerian context

Within the Algerian context, Messekher (2014) carried out a two-stage study to explore how the cultural dimension is represented in the EFL textbooks of the FGP (First Generation Programme); stage one was a content analysis of the four textbooks; in the second stage, she interviewed teachers about their perceptions of how culture is

represented. The overall findings of her study showed that culture was “a solid teaching component” (p. 77) of the textbooks and that it was represented through both text and image in the form of factual knowledge about the US, UK, and Algeria, respectively.

Ait-Aissa and Said (2015) conducted a quantitative content analysis of an Algerian secondary school EFL textbook (*New Prospects*) to evaluate how ICC is addressed. Adopting two checklists (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999, and Lee, 2009) as criteria for the evaluation, the authors reported that the textbook focuses heavily on aspects of big ‘C’ culture. With regards to which cultures are represented, their findings revealed that the textbook is “overloaded with features of the non-target culture” that are aimed to prepare learners “to talk about their own culture” (p. 33). In a similar study within the same setting of secondary school, Yassine (2015) analysed the development of intercultural competence in three successive EFL textbooks and reported that in *New Prospects*, culture is presented as a variety of aspects, including but not only historical facts, shared values, traditions, and human achievements. Grouping these representations into three categories - learners’ culture (C1), target culture (C2) and universal culture (C3) - Yassine concluded that the focus on C1 and C3 shows that “there is a move towards intercultural teaching in *New Prospects*” (p. 73). Although Yassine’s findings were consistent with those of Ait-Aissa and Said (2016), clearly, their interpretations differed. Yassine (2015) stresses the importance of the positive image of the self portrayed in *New Prospects* in helping the learners to transition from the cultural to the intercultural; Ait-Aissa and Said (2015), however, argue that overloading the textbook with local culture hinders rather than facilitates the development of ICC.

Another important study aimed to gain an understanding of Algerian EFL teachers' perceptions of culture and IC and draw implications for pedagogy (Bousslama and Benaissi, 2018). Their findings revealed "some deficiencies in EFL teachers' perceptions of the concepts of culture and IC in ELT contexts" (p. 130). The teachers in their study referred to culture as a body of factual knowledge that is tied to the nation; they also highlighted the importance of the target culture projecting NSs as ideals. Bousslama and Benaissi (2018) added that when the notion of IC was mentioned, teachers pointed to the dimension of knowledge and attitudes only.

3.8.2. Research undertaken in MENA region

Recent research carried out in Tunisia aimed to evaluate the potential of ICC in EFL textbooks of primary, middle, and secondary schools (Abid and Moalla, 2019; 2021) and investigate how the EFL classroom (textbooks, teachers and learners) contributes to the development of secondary school learners' intercultural identity (Abid, 2019). Textbooks' analysis revealed an imbalance in the portrayal of culture where the target culture (British) and culture-free texts were more represented than non-target culture(s); learners' culture, however, was not represented (Abid, 2019; Abid and Moalla, 2019; 2021). Another important finding is related to the type of contact that took place between characters in the textbook which Abid and Moalla (2019; 2021) described as indirect and not intercultural. Participant teachers in Abid's study (2019) pointed to the gap in the textbooks and expressed interest and willingness to help learners develop their intercultural identity through referring to practices and materials other than the textbooks.

Another study by Elarbash (2019) investigated the status of Western cultures in the Libyan EFL curriculum of secondary education from the perspectives of teachers and learners.

Findings revealed that although both teachers and learners agreed on the importance of learning about ‘Western’ cultures, in practice, teachers preferred to focus on the “positive aspects” and leave out anything that goes “against the beliefs and values of their own culture” (p. 201).

3.8.3. Research undertaken in other Muslim countries

Cheng and Beigi (2012), in their quantitative content analysis of three Iranian EFL textbooks, reported that the source culture predominated the textbooks through both text and image. They concluded that “the building of a sense of nationhood to safeguard Iran against international threats and challenges” (p. 315) is of a greater priority to the Iranian government. Subsequently, their findings revealed that there is a lack in the representation of foreign cultures and religions other than Islam which is covertly depicted through images mainly. Sharing some of my research interests, Derakhshan (2021) conducted a qualitative study to explore the potential of the newly-designed Iranian EFL textbooks to present and (re)create cultural meanings at different levels (cultural, intercultural, multicultural and transcultural). Informed by social semiotic approach, perceptions of teachers, teacher educators and learners from different provinces regarding the text-image-task relationship in one textbook were analysed. The findings indicated that although aspects of learners’ culture and some foreign cultures were highlighted - on a superficial level - in most cases, the choice of images was not related to the tasks; this means that learners’ communicative competence was prioritised, and the use of visuals was “merely to fill in space” (p. 21). Another important finding which learners, teachers, and teacher educators confirmed was

the lack of tasks that encourage reflection and critical thinking; therefore, the development of CCA.

In a similar study, Hermawan and Noerkhasanah (2012) analysed the cultural content in Indonesian EFL textbooks for primary education; their findings revealed that the cultural dimension is depicted from a traditional perspective focusing learners' local culture first then the foreign one(s), in this case the USA. Learners are encouraged to compare between the two cultures on a superficial level meaning that "underlying concepts and value system of local and non-local culture have not been well introduced" (p. 60). Another relevant study by Setyono and Widodo (2019) used CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) to evaluate the representation of cultural and multicultural values in an Indonesian EFL textbook for secondary education and their potential to develop learners' ICC. Unlike the previous study, the findings indicated that the textbook highlights values of tolerance and respect of pluralism; also, diversity (cultural, religious and ethnic) within the Indonesian context was projected through images.

3.8.4. Other contexts

Wenninger and Kiss (2013) adopted a semiotic approach to analyse the cultural representation in two Hungarian textbooks of English written for beginner learners. Highlighting the shortcoming of quantitative content analysis for treating culture as "an objectifiable component" (p. 699), their qualitative study aimed at examining the cultural potential in the image(s), text(s) and task(s). The findings revealed that both textbooks "include segments that have an explicit focus on culture" (p. 710) but from a factual stance that does not prompt learners to reflect. Similar to Derakhshan (2021), they found that

images were used as “space-fillers” and argued about their potential to promote “critical discussions about students’ cultural beliefs and stereotypes” (p. 711). In a similar study, Stranger-Johannessen (2015) examined the potential of text-image relationship in a Ugandan EFL textbook to facilitate intercultural dialogue. His analysis showed that the textbook has a “strong nationalistic focus” (p. 138); therefore, cannot act as a vehicle to promote ICC.

Another recent study on EFL textbooks for Japanese elementary schools aimed to examine the representations of multilingualism and multiculturalism using CDA (Efron, 2020). It was found that the textbooks prioritise and emphasise the distinctiveness of the Japanese culture and “rely on cursory, superficial inclusion of other cultures to introduce students to the world” through a tourist lens (p. 26). Efron (2020) also noted that the teaching manuals lack discussion points and group activities that can promote a learner’s reflection. Similar studies by Yuen (2011) and Song (2013) on the portrayal of culture in secondary school textbooks in Hong Kong and Korea, respectively, showed that foreign cultures predominate.

Different from the ones reviewed above, Sercu et al. (2005) conducted a quantitative study to explore secondary education FL teachers’ perceptions and teaching practices in seven countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Mexico, Poland, Spain and Sweden). It was concluded that, in all countries, the traditional approach to teaching culture which focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and positive attitudes still dominates. As regards the materials the participants use, Sercu et al. noted that teachers who use locally produced textbooks complained about the limited selection of topics which address culture. Another important finding is related to the gap between teachers’ beliefs and their actual teaching practices; the authors reported that “no clear relationship appears to exist between teachers’

beliefs regarding integration and the way they actually shape their teaching practices” (p. 11).

3.9. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have provided a review of the literature tackling the concepts within the intercultural field that are relevant to the current study. Due to the complexity and importance of the concept of culture, the starting point of the chapter aimed to unpack culture and look at how it is linked to the nation and religion before moving to explore the links between culture and FL teaching and learning. This was followed by highlighting the shift from the traditional approach of teaching culture, or the cultural turn, to the intercultural one.

Next, Intercultural Communicative Competence was introduced and discussions about the conceptualisation and pedagogy were reviewed. Following this, key issues that can affect the implementation of ICC in FL education, namely identity, othering and globalisation were addressed. The chapter ended with a review of existing empirical studies on ICC and young learners in different contexts.

Chapter Four: Research Methods and Methodology

4.1. Overview

The present research aims to explore how far the new Algerian middle school curriculum of English can encourage the development of learners' ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence). In the previous chapter, I reviewed the existing literature on the teaching of culture and the development of ICC in FLT (Foreign Language Teaching) including, but not only: definitions of relevant concepts, common challenges educators face, and the conceptual framework for my study. In this chapter, I introduce the research design underpinning the study, from the choice of methods through to data collection and analysis and the trustworthiness of the research. The chapter is divided into three parts: in part one, I set out 'the building blocks' of the research (Grix, 2010). In doing so, I first state my research questions, then I explain my ontological and epistemological positions before proceeding to justify the choice of methodology (qualitative) and the specific method (case study) to answer the research questions. This is followed by a brief description of the units of analysis (textbooks and educators of English). In part two, I lay out a detailed description of the processes of data collection and analysis. Starting with the documents (textbooks) as the first source of evidence, I introduce them and the frameworks of analysis I used. Moving to interviews, I first set out the sampling strategies I used to select participants, then I lay out the different steps I followed to conduct the interviews: preparing the interview guide, accessing and exiting the field. At the end of part two, I discuss how I analysed the interviews. In the third, and last, part of this chapter, I discuss aspects of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and the challenges of researching multilingually. To conclude the

chapter, I critically reflect on the overall research journey highlighting how my bias and positionality affected the construction of knowledge.

4.2. Part One

4.2.1. Research Questions

This research was designed to address a set of open-ended research questions which evolved over the course of the study as a result of ‘an interactive design process’ (Maxwell, 2013, p. 99); consequently, the following questions were formulated:

1. How is the cultural dimension represented in the Algerian middle school textbooks of English?
2. How can this representation contribute to the development of learners’ ICC?
3. What are Algerian EFL educators’ perceptions of culture?
4. How can these perceptions affect teaching practices and therefore the development of learners’ ICC?

4.2.2. Philosophical assumptions

“Whether we are aware of it or not, we always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to our research” (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p.15). These guide and shape the different stages of the research process, starting from the identification of the topic to the meaning the researcher makes of the collected data (Huff, 2009; Grix, 2010; Mason, 2018). To conceptualise these beliefs, scholars use various terminologies: ontologies and epistemologies (Crotty, 1998), worldviews (Creswell, 2014), and paradigms among

others. Ontology, according to Mason (2018, p.4), is the ‘essence to things’, it is concerned with the nature of reality and it answers the ‘what’ of the research, while epistemology deals with knowledge and the question of what counts as knowledge or evidence (Crotty, 1998; Merriam, 2009; Maxwell, 2013; Bryman, 2016; Cohen et al., 2018; Mason, 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018). Ontology and epistemology are intrinsically interrelated (Crotty, 1998; Birks, 2014); yet, Grix (2010, p.59) argues that “ontology is the starting point of all research, after which one’s epistemological and methodological positions logically follow”; thus, in the following sections, I explain my ontological and epistemological positions.

4.2.2.1. Overarching theoretical framework

As stated in my research questions, through my study, I aim to investigate Algerian middle school educators’ lived experiences and perceptions of culture in EFL pedagogy and their effect on learners’ development of ICC. Therefore, I adopted social constructionism as the overarching theoretical framework of my research; to be more specific, this study is informed by social constructionism (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), a view of social reality as constructed “in and out of interaction between human beings and their world” through engagement and interpretation, within which language plays a crucial role (Crotty, 1998, p. 53). In other words, within the realm of social constructionism, reality is constructed by social actors and meaning cannot be described simply as objective or subjective; in this respect, constructionism brings together objectivity and subjectivity. This implies a relativist ontology recognising that social actors may inhabit different worlds which constitutes various sets of meaning and multiple realities (Crotty, 1998).

At this stage, it is important to highlight the distinction between constructionism and constructivism as they tend to be used interchangeably in some textbooks. Within constructionism, the social dimension of meaning is at the centre; however, constructivism, according to Crotty (1998) is “an individualistic understanding of the constructionism position (...) it points up the unique experience of each of us” (p. 58). In a similar vein, Shwandt summarises this distinction as follows:

Contrary to the emphasis of radical constructivism, the focus here is not on the meaning-making activity of the individual mind but on the collective generation of meaning as shaped by the conventions of language and other social processes. (1994, p. 127)

Another implication of social constructionism that constructivists tend to resist and that not all social constructionists emphasise is criticality in regard to how culture is understood as what “shapes the way in which we see things and gives us a quite definite view of the world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 71); Crotty argues that culture can be limiting.

As a qualitative researcher, I acknowledge, to a certain extent, the unique experiences and individual agency of each of my participants; however, in this study, I am more interested in the collective meaning-making process and the hold culture has on participants as emphasised in social constructionism.

4.2.3. Research methodology

Before I explain my research methodology, it is worth distinguishing between methods and methodology since both concepts tend to be used interchangeably sometimes. Schwandt (2007) describes methodology as ‘a middle ground’ between philosophical discussions and methods; to use Mills and Birks’s (2014, p. 32) definition: “methodology is the lens a researcher looks through when deciding on the type of methods they will use to answer this research question”. Following my ontological (constructivist) and epistemological (interpretivist) positions, I position myself in this thesis as a qualitative researcher conducting an interpretive study (Stake, 2010).

Probably the most common answer to why researchers conduct qualitative enquiry is that – as opposed to quantitative researchers – their interest is in words as opposed to numbers, or their overall objective is to develop an understanding rather than an explanation of the phenomenon (Stake, 2010; Bryman, 2016). For Maxwell and Loomis (2002) and Maxwell (2004a), both methodologies have their strengths and logics which researchers use to address different types of questions and goals. According to Creswell and Poth (2018, p.43), “we conduct qualitative research because a problem or an issue needs to be explored [...] because we need a complex understanding of the issue” and to understand the context of the problem since “we cannot always separate what people say from the place where they say it” (p.44). Similarly, Creswell (2014, p.4) defines qualitative research as:

An approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or a human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s

setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

As far as my research is concerned, the problem that needed exploring and understanding is **How far does the cultural dimension of EFL learning in Algerian middle schools contribute to the development of learners' ICC?** to do so, it was necessary to understand the context of ELT&L in Algeria and understand the phenomenon through interacting with the participants, and interpreting their experiences, practices, and beliefs. Interpretation, according to Erickson (1986), is the most defining characteristic of qualitative research. In what follows, I state why using qualitative methodology to study my research problem was inevitable, through illustrating the characteristics of the methodology:

- **Focus on understanding:** most scholars agree that the main purpose of qualitative research is to understand the meaning participants make of their experiences, values, beliefs and so on (Merriam, 2009; Maxwell, 2013) and how this influences their behaviour (Maxwell, 2013).
- **The descriptive nature:** central to understanding the phenomenon is describing the context of the research, the participants involved, and their experiences (Merriam, 2009).
- **The researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis:** since understanding is the essence of qualitative research, the role of the researcher in developing such a goal is also essential (Merriam, 2009) for two reasons. First, while collecting data, the researcher is flexible, he or she can respond to different questions and adapt to different situations raised by participants (Merriam,

2009). Second, interpretive research relies ‘heavily’ on the researcher to define and redefine the meanings of the data they collect (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2010); thus, colouring their interpretations with their subjectivities is not only inevitable, but can contribute to the outcome of the study. However, the researcher should acknowledge and identify these biases (personal experiences, background) and how they may have shaped the process of their research (Merriam, 2009; Creswell and Poth, 2018).

- **The importance of the context:** as previously stated by Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is context-dependent; that is, researchers must provide an account of the context in which the study takes place through seeking an understanding of the different contextual features that influence participants’ experiences. In doing so, researchers can understand “how events, action and meaning are shaped by the unique circumstances in which they occur” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 30).
- **Inductive/deductive approaches to data analysis:** typically, researchers approach data inductively looking for emergent patterns, categories, themes, concepts, and sometimes theories (Merriam, 2009). However, Creswell (2014, p.186) argues that “deductive thinking also plays an important role as the analysis moves forward”.
- **Evolving design:** qualitative study requires researchers to be flexible and willing to change their original plans regarding methods and/or even their research questions along the way (Creswell, 2014; Creswell and Poth, 2018), providing that they do not make significant changes to the original research plan (Maxwell, 2013). Merriam (2009) however, argues that this is not a requirement but an additional characteristic of qualitative research. In my case, flexibility during the processes of data collection and analysis – as I shall illustrate later – was a requirement not an option.

Having explained the philosophical assumptions and the methodological approach that inform my research, I set out the research methods I used.

4.2.4. Research methods

4.2.4.1. Case study

It is commonly perceived that case study is a rather complicated approach to define; neither social scientists nor research methodologists could agree on two things: first is whether to classify it as a research design/method of enquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018) or more as “a choice of what to be studied” (Stake, 2005, p. 443); and second is what constitutes a case (Patton, 2015). Among the various available definitions, Stake (1995, p.1) defines it as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its complexity within important circumstances”. From his perspective, the main focus of a case study is not the methods but the case itself: “the first objective of a case study is to understand the case [...] the prime referent in case study is the case, not the methods by which the case operates” (Stake, 2006, p. 2). Merriam (2009, p. 40) on the other hand, defines case study as a research design: “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system”. Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 96) provide a rather comprehensive definition that seems to accommodate and take into consideration both perspectives; they view case study as a qualitative approach “that may be an object of study as well as a product of an enquiry”.

The main defining feature of case study research is the boundness of its context (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2015), usually the first decision researchers take (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

A bounded system, according to Creswell (1998), is bounded by space and time; thus, a case can be an individual, a group, a program, an organisation, an event, a community etc. (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014; Creswell and Poth, 2018). However, Yin (2014) argues that the boundaries between the case and its context may be blurred. Other defining features of a case study design are common in most qualitative research (see section 4.2.3.) among which scholars highlight the use of multiple sources of evidence and the detailed description and analysis of the findings (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2015; Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Stake (2005) identifies three types of case studies which differ according to the researcher's interest; these are intrinsic, instrumental, and collective case studies. An intrinsic case when "study is undertaken because of an intrinsic interest in, for example, this particular child, clinic, conference, or curriculum" (p. 445). On the contrary, an instrumental case study is undertaken "mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else" (p. 437). The third type, collective case study, sometimes referred to as multiple case study is, as the name suggests, a study of a number of cases "to investigate a phenomenon, population, or a general condition" (445). Often, the purpose is to study the issue from different perspectives (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

As far as the current study is concerned, the case is the second-generation curriculum of English and the issue is the development of ICC. Although both case and issue are of paramount importance, due to the overall context of the study (Algeria), this is an instrumental case study for the issue matters first. Case study is the most appropriate approach for my research for two main reasons: first, it is particularly useful for studying

events and issues related to education in general, especially “evaluating programs and informing policy” (Merriam, 2009: p. 51). Although I clearly state in later sections that my intent is not to evaluate all the new curriculum, I am evaluating one of its aspects (the ICC). Second, the overall purpose of my study is to answer ‘how’ the phenomenon (issue) works in a context (case) over which I have no control (Yin, 2014).

4.2.4.2. The units of analysis

Merriam (2009) argues that the unit of analysis is what determines if the study qualifies as a case study. Stake (1995, p. 4) asserts that “case study research is not sampling research”; in other words, selecting the unit of analysis should not be confused with selecting samples, as each process serves a different purpose (Cohen et al., 2018); the former, according to Patton (2015), can be more overwhelming. The researcher first decides on the appropriate units of analysis (the focus of the study) after which, decisions of sampling strategy and sample size become clearer (Patton, 2015). To understand how the new curriculum of English (the case) encourages the development of ICC (the issue) and therefore, answer the research questions, I selected three textbooks of English and three categories of EFL middle school educators as the units of analysis.

To be more specific, the textbooks were the primary unit of analysis in my study because of their status as the main teaching and learning resource; the initial analysis and evaluation of the teaching manuals laid the foundation of the semi-structured interviews with the authors, inspectors and teachers of English (henceforth participants) about the intended and actual use of the textbooks in the classroom as well as their (participants’) perceptions of culture and ICC. Analysing the textbooks prior to conducting the interviews not only enabled me to familiarise myself with the setting of the study and have an overall idea of

the new curriculum which then facilitated the interview process, but also helped me to identify the extent to which authors' goals are communicated to and interpreted by the teachers through the textbooks.

4.3. Part Two

Having explained my choice of qualitative research and philosophical assumptions and illustrated the methods I used to answer my research questions, I now set out a detailed description of the several stages of data collection and analysis. In doing so, I describe the textbooks - as the primary source of evidence – and the sampling procedures; then, a description of the frameworks of analysis will follow. Next, I set out all the steps relevant to the use of interviews as the secondary source of evidence in this study; this includes sampling of participants and sites, conducting and analysing the interview data and lastly, the use of CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software).

4.3.1. Documents

The second source of evidence in this study is documents. According to Yin (2014) and Creswell and Poth (2018), documentary information can be relevant in most case studies, primarily because it corroborates evidence from other sources. Bryman (2016) however, argues against considering documents as an easy-to-analyse source of evidence based on their availability. The selected documents are textbooks of EFL that have been designed according to the curriculum; these textbooks are used nationally by both teachers (instructing tool) and learners (learning reference) of middle school. The textbooks, referred to as MS1, MS2, MS3 and MS4, were designed by Algerian authors and published

by two of the biggest publishing companies in Algeria: Casbah Editions and ENAG Editions. MS1 has been in use since September 2016 whereas MS2 and MS3 were launched in September 2017; as previously mentioned, MS4 had not been launched while I was conducting this research. Each textbook is divided into four to five chapters; each chapter highlights a broad theme which would then be addressed gradually throughout tasks, using texts or images or both.

4.3.1.1.Sampling

To understand how the phenomenon occurs within the case, I selected a sample of four chapters for the analysis and evaluation (I explain the difference between analysis and evaluation in section 4.3.8.2.) mainly because it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse and evaluate all three textbooks. Also, rather than focusing on one level (i.e. MS1/MS2/MS3), I wanted to look at how the (inter)cultural dimension is addressed as learners' language skills are supposed to be developing.

Silverman (2013) stresses the importance of being precise regarding the size of the textual data, the more precise the sample is, the more effective the analysis can be. The process of sampling involved two steps: skimming and reading (Bowen, 2009). First, I skimmed through each manual to gain an overall understanding of the format and distribution of materials (task, text and image). Next, I read the general introduction and the table of content of each textbook which I followed by reading the term projects that precede each chapter to identify any claims by the authors about the inclusion/exclusion of the cultural dimension and whether there are any chapters and/or sections within chapters that are specifically designed to address culture. Among all chapters in the three textbooks, four stood out: one in each of MS1 and MS2 and two in MS3; it was very clear that the intention

of each chapter was to inform the learners about both their culture(s) and the foreign one(s). This was identified through the initial reading of the tasks and the use of text and image; the remaining chapters focused almost exclusively on the Algerian context. To clarify, I initially wanted to select one chapter from each textbook; however, after the skimming through MS3, I decided to add another chapter because it is the only one in which the ‘other’, or the foreign character was (explicitly) set as an ideal. This, I realised, would provide interesting insights into how the other and the foreign culture(s) in general are positioned and represented across chapters.

Before moving forward, it is worth noting that the aim of the analysis and evaluation is to investigate the status of culture in the textbooks and not to evaluate the quality of the EFL teaching and learning process or the success of the reform.

4.3.2. Interviews

Qualitative interviews, also referred to as in-depth interviewing (Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Seidman, 2013; Mason, 2018) are the main source of evidence in this research for I am interested in participants’ specific experiences, beliefs, values, that is, their stories. As Seidman (2013) remarks: “stories are a way of knowing [...] telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process” (p. 7). In other words, given that the ultimate objective of my research is to gain an understanding of an educational issue (developing ICC through the new EFL curriculum), interviewing the people whose experiences reflect the issue is the most adequate method (Seidman, 2013); it is, as Stake (1995, p. 64) remarks “the main road to multiple realities”.

Qualitative interviews are flexible (Bryman, 2016). That is, they enable the researcher to get complete answers to complex issues, in addition to the spontaneity and control that are likely to cover the situation (Cohen et al., 2018). Also, interviews allow for the construction of multiple realities since participants view the phenomenon from different perspectives. As Patton (2002) states:

we cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time [...] We cannot observe how people have organised the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. (p. 341)

Amongst the three most common types of interviews (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), the semi-structured one is by far the most used in qualitative studies (Marshall and Rossman, 2011) because researchers go to the field sufficiently prepared. They enter the field with an interview guide which comprises a set of general thematic questions they want to ask their participants; at the same time, they are willing to ask follow-up questions (probes/prompts) depending on the participant's answer. Probes, according to Patton (2015), are helpful for both the interviewer and the interviewee; they help the former to get deeper, richer responses and the latter to get a better understanding of the question and the desired response. Cohen et al. (2018) state that probes can range from the somewhat intrusive to the more intrusive and can take different forms; thus, how participants/interviewees answer depends highly on the interviewer skills in asking the right probes. Also, it is through semi-structured interviews that participants will have the opportunity to raise other issues and talk about other experiences and thoughts that might be more important but not tackled in the interview guide (Patton, 2015). Finally, the

broader and the more general the questions are, the higher the chance for participants to construct meaning (Creswell, 2013). In the subsections that follow, I describe the research participants and the sampling strategies I used to select them.

4.3.2.1. Sampling

I used a purposeful sampling strategy to select three categories of participants from three different sites. Cohen et al. (2018, p. 219) define purposeful sampling as the process of handpicking cases and participants to meet certain requirements and to “acquire an in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it”. Purposeful sampling is an umbrella term around which different, more specific, approaches can be identified (Bryman, 2016) including, but not only, theoretical sampling, snowball sampling, convenience sampling, and volunteer sampling; which specific strategy to use depends on the researcher’s objectives and other factors such as funding and time constraints (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

One sampling issue relevant to case study research, in particular, is what Bryman (2016) refers to as the levels of sampling. Bryman explains that the researcher first selects the sites/contexts (level 1), then selects individuals within each site (level 2). In my study, the process was reversed because I was interested in whose shared experiences would contribute to the findings more than the specific contexts they belong to. That is, I first selected the categories of participants based on their professional background; then, I selected the sites from which I recruited two of the categories. This, however, does not suggest that this is a multiple cases study because my aim is to understand how the

curriculum (the case) encourages the development of ICC (the phenomenon). I provide a more detailed justification in the next two sections.

4.3.2.2. Research participants

First, given that this research is about how the new curriculum of EFL encourages the developments of ICC, it is only logical that the main, perhaps even the best, participants would be EFL teachers who use this curriculum. However sufficient the experiences of teachers could be, for a deeper understanding of how things work, I added two other categories of participants whose shared experiences would enrich the overall picture: the authors and inspectors of English.

a. Authors (Au)

These are individuals whose professional background is in EFL teaching. Usually, they are appointed by the MoE to design the curriculum of English which would be used as a reference for writing and producing both the national and the commercial textbooks that teachers, and most likely learners, use in the classroom. In this case, the curriculum authors were also involved in writing the textbooks of the four levels. When the new curriculum was launched in September 2016, they led meetings with teachers and inspectors of each district in Algeria to introduce Middle School Year 1 (MS1) textbook. Then, authors and inspectors of all districts met to discuss and check the progress of the new curriculum. The three selected authors had been teachers of English before getting promoted; in total, each had a least 10 years of experience in the field. One was the head of the project (designing the curriculum and the textbooks) and is the inspector of national education in Algeria. The

second author was a teacher trainer before being promoted to an inspector. The last one is a university teacher whose background was in teaching English at middle school.

b. Inspectors (Ins)

These are former teachers of English who were promoted after at least 10 years of experience in teaching. They are in charge of supervising, training, and instructing teachers through organising regular meetings (at least once a month) during which they set the agenda for the school year, introduce new teaching techniques, deliver instructions from the MoE, and check the overall progress of teachers through scheduled and unscheduled visits to schools.

c. Teachers (T)

Although all three categories of participants are important, teachers are the main focus of this study for they are in direct contact with learners, they are the “executers” of the curriculum and the textbooks. Regardless of how knowledge and instructions are cascaded, it is the teachers’ beliefs and practices that are transmitted to learners especially because they are not restricted to using only the textbooks, although they must adhere to the curriculum. This means that teachers can follow the broad guidelines of the curriculum to design teaching materials of their own; I was particularly interested in if and how they would implement ICC in the lessons which they design.

4.3.2.3. Research sites

Second to deciding on the categories of participants was the selection of sites. Again, selecting one site – one city – could be fine. However, due to the cultural situation in

Algeria (see Chapter 2), I decided to recruit participants whose regional cultures are relatively different, based on the assumption that these differences would affect and be reflected in their beliefs and values therefore, their pedagogical practices. For this reason, I selected four cities as the initial sites, three of which are known to be culturally distinctive. However, as previously mentioned, due to some safety concerns raised by the Ethical Committee at Lancaster University, I dropped one site; the approved three are Khenchela, Algiers, and Bejaia.

a. City A

Khenchela is a relatively small city (in comparison to the other two) situated in the northeast of Algeria. It was selected because it is one of three of the main Chaoui cities in the country, it is also the smallest. Unlike Algiers and Bejaia, people in the city of Khenchela are known to be relatively conservative, they speak either Derja or Chaoui and they have their own habits and traditions. Also, Khenchela is the city where I grew up, lived, and studied, which made it a convenient choice.

b. City B

Algiers is the capital of Algeria situated on the Mediterranean Sea and it is the largest metropolitan city in the country. Unlike Khenchela and Bejaia, Algiers can be described as a multicultural and modern city (from a national perspective).

c. City C

Bejaia is the largest Kabyle speaking city situated on the north east of the Mediterranean coast. In terms of local culture, like Khenchela, Bejaia is mainly monocultural, locals speak Kabyle and French mainly while Derja is rarely used. They have their unique culture related values, traditions, and practices.

From each city, I selected one inspector and four teachers of English using snowball sampling first then following with convenient sampling, due to time and availability issues. All teachers and inspectors had to meet the working experience criterion of five years' experience in teaching/training teachers, so that they can share experiences and relate to different settings. For teachers, an additional criterion was the use of the new curriculum. As I mentioned earlier, MS4 had not been launched at the time when I was collecting data; therefore, some teachers were still using the previous textbooks as a point of reference.

4.3.3. The fieldwork

I conducted 16 semi-structured interviews in total, 10 with teachers, 3 with inspectors, and 3 with the authors (I initially interviewed 12 teachers; later, two decided they did not want to be included in the study's final report). Only 9 interviews were face-to-face, the rest I conducted online. As Mason (2018) remarks, qualitative interviewing "requires a great deal of planning" (p.116) mainly concerning the nature of questions and the researcher's interviewing skills. Thus, the quality of the interview highly depends on the interviewer (Patton, 2015) asking the right questions, and asking them in the right way. To this end, I set below the different stages of the fieldwork: preparing the interview guide,

accessing the field and selecting participants, conducting the interviews, and exiting the field.

4.3.3.1. Preparing the interview guide

In order to make sure that all the basic issues I wanted to approach would be covered, I prepared three interview guides – one for each category of participants – organising the main questions thematically according to the research questions (Bryman, 2016). That is, I used one interview guide with teachers in all three sites, one with all inspectors, and one for the authors. The difference in sites was not emphasised in the questions unless it was brought up by participants. The interview questions focused on the phenomenon more than the case; for example, they explicitly addressed participants' perceptions of culture, culture in FLT&L, and their pedagogical practices; how their perceptions might affect learners' development of ICC was implicitly addressed (see Appendix 3). Depending on the theme, some questions required factual answers while others required participants' opinions. The main interview questions were not completely different as the three categories of participants shared the same professional background of teaching English. All the questions addressed participants' experiences, opinions, feelings, knowledge, and input.

4.3.3.2. Accessing the field

The first step in accessing the fieldwork was getting approval from Lancaster University Ethics Committee. For my own safety and that of the participants, the committee required I refine some sections in the consent form (found in Appendix 2); this, as I shall discuss later in the section of ethics, had a major effect on participants' decisions (current

and potential) to take part in the study. After I was granted the approval, I first approached the authors via social media platforms (Facebook) to explain my research objectives. Amongst the seven authors, only three showed willingness to participate in the study, two of whom took part in writing all three manuals as well as the curriculum (initially they were five, one dropped out right before the interview and one could not make it to two pre-scheduled online meetings).

Then, I asked for their help to contact inspectors in city B and city C; I contacted the inspector from city A through a common friend. After they agreed to take part in the study, they kindly offered to get in touch with the teachers under their supervision to encourage them to participate. However, for issues of autonomy (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012), I decided not to take advantage of the inspectors as ‘gatekeepers’ for I wanted to avoid any exercise of power over them (Miller and Bell, 2012; Seidman, 2013) which could later affect my relationship with them (Seidman, 2013) and compromise the construction of knowledge (i.e. a teacher could participate just to please their inspectors without real interest in the study); thus, I requested to contact them myself, which was the case. Furthermore, to establish a good foundation for the interview (Seidman, 2013), I initially planned to attend at least one inspector-teachers’ seminar in each city, through which I could observe potential participants and build trust. However, due to time constraints (I was living in the UK and the meetings took place during short visits to Algeria), I attended two meetings only (one formal and one informal) during which I recruited four teachers. The rest of the teachers were recruited using the snowball sampling strategy. Overall, during the sampling process, I made sure to avoid two ‘snares’: recruiting

potential participants who were “too eager to be interviewed” and trying to convince those who were not interested or showed hesitation (Seidman, 2013.p, 57).

As a novice researcher, testing my interviewing skills was necessary; thus, prior to entering the field, I conducted a pilot study with one teacher, via Skype, and two friends; both were doctoral students with whom I shared the same cultural background. All pilot interviews went well, especially the online one which, as I state later, encouraged me to consider online interviews as an alternative if the circumstances did not allow face-to-face encounters. However, as I will discuss in later sections, neither of my friends brought up the issue of language.

4.3.3.3. In the field (Conducting the interviews)

a. Face-to-face interviews

Interviews were conducted according to participants’ availability first, and mine next. For example, prior to each visit to the field, I tried to set a schedule featuring the location, date, and hour of each interview to allow enough time for reflection between interviews (Seidman, 2013). However, all participants preferred to discuss meeting arrangements once I was in Algeria. I met each one in their preferred setting which they ensured would be good for recording; in all cases except for one, the location was either a café or their place of work. I discuss the exceptional cases later as a part of the ethical considerations (see section 4.4.2.).

b. Online interviews

Online interviews in all the forms they can take are a good alternative to face-to-face interviews because of their flexibility (i.e. time and place), according to Cohen et al. (2018). Due to the unavailability of some participants, time constraints, and the research setting, I could not conduct all the interviews face-to-face. Instead, after some participants agreed to take part in the study (while I was in the UK), I suggested online (audio or audio and visual) interviews as an alternative to which all of them agreed. Then, we discussed the timing and the most convenient option regarding the online tool we would use; all of them opted for either Skype or Messenger.

All online interviews – especially the audio ones – went very well; some of them were even better than the face-to-face interviews I conducted in Algeria. According to James and Busher (2015; 2016), this might be related to the potential difference in power between the interviewer and the interviewee being reduced. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2018) state that the absence of face (audio interviews) can encourage both parties to address more sensitive topics. In my case, the absence of face seemed to encourage participants to share more, rather than sensitive data. Similar to the face-to-face interviews, all online interviews were recorded on two devices. During the interviews, I tried to note down any interesting remarks that would require reflection after the interview.

During the interviews, rapport and empathetic neutrality were the most important, yet challenging, strategies I tried to establish and maintain with all participants. To distinguish between rapport and empathic neutrality, Patton (2015) advocates that “rapport is a stance vis-à-vis the person being interviewed. Neutrality is a stance vis-a-vis the content of what

the person says” (p. 457). That is, establishing a good rapport with participants required me, as the researcher, to show flexibility, respect, and be very clear and straightforward with them about the aim of the research and what was expected from their part (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2018). Regarding the style of the interviews, the way I approached participants, tackled each theme, asked the main and follow-up questions, in addition to how I handled challenging situations was different depending on the situation and the participant (see section 4.4.2. for examples). However, a common point between all interviews was the conversational/informal style (Patton, 2015; Mason, 2018) that I tried to adopt using jokes, and sharing personal experiences with participants that would not affect their anonymity or answers in any way (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Patton (2015) defines empathic neutrality as the researcher’s ability to understand the perspective and the situation of the person – in this case the participant – without judging them, “it connotes a middle ground between becoming too involved, which can cloud judgment, and remaining too distant, which can reduce understanding” (p. 457). Maintaining empathic neutrality or keeping my emotions ‘in check’ (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2018, p.137) was challenging, particularly in situations where participants directly asked for my judgment and opinion about their responses. What made it even more challenging, as I will discuss later in this chapter, was the power relation between participants and myself and the common cultural background.

Depending on participants’ positions and answers, some questions did require further explanation and illustration. It is important to note here that, in most cases, the follow-up questions (probes) unveiled much more interesting data than the questions I initially planned to ask. This again, supports the argument about the rigour and richness of the data

generated through semi-structured interviews. Also, after agreeing with participants, as mentioned, interviews were audio-recorded on two devices (a smartphone and an audio recorder) so that I could keep the exact words they used (Stake, 1995).

4.3.3.4. Exiting the field

Qualitative researchers should be aware that their role is not to just “grab the data and run” (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 130). Therefore, after each interview was finished, I made sure to contact participants (via email, social media, or mobile) to thank them again and encourage them to contact me if they wanted to add or share further data which they thought would be useful. This exit strategy, as argued by Marshall and Rossman (2011, p.129) is the “logical, but often forgotten, extension of entry”. In order to get through a healthy exit (for both parties), I tried to maintain a friendly relationship with most participants through occasional contact; however, only a few were interested. Also, following each interview, I spent some time reflecting in my research journal on how the interview went and elaborating the notes I took during it; the relevant ones are discussed at the end of the chapter.

4.3.4. Social Desirability

Despite the advantages of semi-structured interviews, issues like bias, time, and anonymity should be considered (Cohen et al., 2018) so that participants would not feel bored or tired and start giving answers that are either too short or do not reflect what they really think or feel, just in order to end the interview. Though participation in the study was entirely voluntary and though participants were fully aware that they could withdraw at any point without providing any explanation, Collins, Shattell and Thomas (2005) state that

participants may be concerned with how the researcher will evaluate them, which may lead them to try to sound more flattering in their answers and therefore, mislead the direction of the research. To avoid this, careful preparation should be made before conducting the interviews; in this case, this preparation involved conducting a pilot study and allowing participants enough time to consider taking part in the study. Finally, the interview guide was carefully revised after each interview. Most of the time, depending on participants' answers and reactions, some of the questions were asked differently and in a different order, more open-ended questions were constructed to encourage participants to talk in order not to make them feel they were under pressure and to answer all questions.

4.3.5. Approaches to Data Analysis

Analysing qualitative data involves making sense of those data through looking for pattern, themes, and categories (Stake, 1995; Cohen et al., 2018). It is both a messy and a systematic process at the same time and is by no means a straightforward one (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Cohen et al., 2018). In line with Silverman (2013), the earlier researchers engage in analysing their data, the clearer the direction of their research is. The process of qualitative data analysis requires the researcher to move back and forth between different steps including but not only: understanding, organising, describing, analysing, and interpreting data. These steps, as Glaser and Laudel (2013) argue, should be made explicit.

In my case, the process of data analysis was not linear for two reasons:

1. The educational reform in Algeria resulted in the launching of a new set of textbooks which were not available at the same time; as previously mentioned,

MS1 was available in September 2016, MS2 and MS3 were launched in September 2017, MS4, however, was not available until September 2019.

2. Due to the fact that participants were based in different cities around Algeria, it was not possible to conduct all interviews in one phase (the recruitment was challenging too); therefore, I organised my visits to Algeria depending on their availability which resulted in a total of three visits over the course of two years (from April 2017 to February 2019).

Because of the above factors (textbooks and participants' availability), I spent two years going back and forth between collecting and analysing data. That is, the processes of data collection and data analysis were not entirely separate; for example, for the interview data, I started to note down initial thoughts as soon as I finished (and while transcribing) the first interview. While doing so, I was cautious not to impose meaning of one interview on the next (Seidman, 2013). Analysing while collecting data allowed me to get better insights regarding both my interviewing and analysing techniques (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Gibbs, 2007; Cohen and Morrison, 2011; Maxwell, 2013; Silverman, 2017). Analysing textbooks, as I shall discuss later, was a slightly different process.

4.3.5.1. Analysis of documents

To answer the first set of research questions: 1. 'How is culture represented in the second-generation curriculum of English?' and 2. 'How can this representation contribute to the development of learners' ICC?' I needed to closely examine the textbooks of English using two different, yet related, frameworks, one to analyse the representation of culture in the

textbooks and one to evaluate how such representation (the outcome of the analysis) can affect learners' ICC. Thus, in the succeeding sections, I first explain why differentiating analysis from evaluation matters in this research. Then, I set out how I analysed and evaluated the selected documents.

a. Analysis versus Evaluation: why it matters

It is necessary – at least in this thesis – to distinguish between analysis and evaluation since often, the two terms tend to be confused or used interchangeably when referring to FLT&L materials. Analysing language materials is ‘a way of reading’ them (Fenner, 2008); that is, as Littlejohn (2011) and Gray (2010) state, the main aim of analysis is to form an objective description, or an in-depth examination of what is there. Evaluation, on the other hand, is “a professional interpretation of the information obtained in the analysis stage” (Riazi, 2003, p. 27); it entails checking if what the evaluator/researcher is looking for is there or not, therefore, constructing more judgmental opinions about the content of the selected documents (McGrath, 2016). In this research, one of the two main objectives, is to find out how culture is addressed and represented in the newly published textbooks of English and this could not be done through either analysis or evaluation solely. In other words, it is not possible to determine how the representation of culture can help learners to develop ICC before establishing what is there first (McGrath, 2016). This, however, does not mean my aim is to evaluate the overall value of the curriculum and/or its worth.

b. The framework of analysis

The analysis of FL materials can be driven by different motives, or what Littlejohn (2011) refers to as aspects of the textbooks, which means that analysis is not always based on

pedagogical grounds (see Littlejohn, 2011); aspects like gender representation (Ansary and Babaii, 2003; Taylor, 2003; Blumberg, 2007; Guidice and Moyano, 2011), culture representation (Sercu, 2000; Gray, 2010; Risager, 2018), ideologies, the use of text and image, and others related to language learning (e.g. grammar and phonology) can also be explored. Therefore, different frameworks can be used depending on the aims of the analyst.

In this research, I selected Littlejohn's (2011) framework to guide me through the analysis of the textbooks in question. The main advantage of the framework is "the clear delineation between analysis and evaluation" (Pemberton, 2018) which other existing frameworks do not depict; in other words, it offers the analyst support to arrive at an analysis that is based on a detailed description of the materials rather than impressionistic judgments and assumption about what is desirable; it allows materials to "speak for themselves" before being evaluated (Littlejohn, p. 182). The framework is composed of three levels of analysis which, agreeing with him, allowed me as the analyst to move from a rather objective description of the textbooks to drawing more subjective inferences. Through applying each of the questions outlined in Table 2 to each task within the selected chapters, I gradually became more immersed in the data and was able to build up a thorough analysis of the cultural representation in each of the chapters and gain an understanding of the overall aims of and "the underlying character of the materials" (p. 190).

1. 'WHAT IS THERE'	<i>'objective description'</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statements of description • physical aspects of the materials • main steps in the instructional sections 	
2. 'WHAT IS REQUIRED OF USERS'	<i>'subjective analysis'</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subdivision into constituent tasks • an analysis of tasks: what is the learner expected to do? Who with? With what content? 	
3. 'WHAT IS IMPLIED'	<i>'subjective inference'</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deducing aims, principles of selection and sequence • deducing teacher and learner roles • deducing demands on learner's process competence 	

Table 1. Littlejohn (2011) levels of analysis of language teaching materials

According to Littlejohn, the framework can help teachers/researchers to carry out a detailed analysis of any FLT&L material (2011). However, being originally developed to analyse the methodology and the linguistic content of the materials, how to teach and learn a FL in general, using the framework as it is to analyse the status of culture was not enough. Also, the framework does not highlight the role of artwork in any way. Therefore, to guide the analysis process, I added further questions to complement the framework drawing on Gray's representational repertoires' framework which sheds light on the importance of analysing the use of artwork (or visuals) in textbooks. Yet, Gray's approach to analysing the visual dimension of FL textbooks is 'heavily' influenced by social semiotics and multimodality (2010, p. 43) which would have added another layer of complexity to the

current study. To avoid this, I employed the descriptive framework which focuses on analysing the represented participants in photographs and line drawings through identifying “who is depicted, where they are depicted, how they are depicted, and what they are shown doing” (Gray, 2010. p.45). Interpreting images in this case allowed me to uncover some of the “hidden” cultural messages that the authors wanted to deliver to learners through the tasks; unlike some researchers in the field (Littlejohn, 2011), I refer to *task* and *activity* as the same thing in this research.

In what follows, I set out how I adapted Littlejohn’s (2011) framework through reformulating his questions to fit the context of the current study:

<p>1. <i>What is there?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An objective description of all the tasks in the selected sequences; here I report the tasks as they are, without any modification
<p>2. <i>What is required of learners?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the authors’ explicit expectations? (This includes analysing the introduction addressed to learners in each textbook in which authors briefly explain to learners how and what to use the manual for) • From a cultural perspective, what are the tasks learners are required to do in the classroom: how, with whom, and with what content? (In this section, I reformulate the tasks to depict what cultural aspects are addressed without adding any interpretations as to what the tasks might implicate)
<p>3. <i>What is implied?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do the introductions tell us about how authors hope for the textbooks to affect learners’ real lives?

- *What is required?*

- What are the underlying, what I refer to as “hidden”, objectives authors want to achieve through using the specific tasks? (This includes the choice of words, the setting of the tasks and the characters involved. This, according to Littlejohn, is the most important stage because it involves “reading” what is not explicitly written)
- What are the hidden messages the authors want to send to learners through selecting the specific artwork?

Table 2. Framework of analysis

As shown in Table 2, I applied Littlejohn’s levels of analysis to each task (text and image) in the selected chapters to identify how culture is represented. In doing so, I approached the tasks inductively looking for cultural references without previously establishing what counts as culture because “cultural content cannot be specified in advance” (Gray, 2010). It is worth noting here that Risager’s framework (2018) was excluded for two reasons: first, each of the approaches/readings she proposes, although they can be applied to any language textbooks, is associated to a certain “theoretical understanding of culture” (i.e. national studies, citizenship education, postcolonial studies, etc.) (p. 10). Second, Risager does not offer a clear distinction between analysis and evaluation but asserts that all the approaches “have a descriptive and an evaluative side” (2018, p. 12).

In the following section, I introduce the model I used to evaluate the extent to which textbooks can help learners develop ICC.

c. The model of evaluation

To evaluate FLT&L materials, the checklist is one of the most used, hence criticised approaches, for several reasons. Checklists are mostly known for being systematic and explicit (McGrath, 2016) because of the specific features the analyst looks for; according to Sándorová (2019, p. 103) checklists are “examples of pre-coded questions formed prior to the phase of coding and categorising data”. Yet, the lack of aid they provide the analyst with in terms of how to identify the features they are looking for (Littlejohn, 2011) and the claim that they reflect their authors’ beliefs of what should or should not be included (Gray, 2010) have led some scholars to advocate that checklists provide a rather superficial judgment (McGrath, 2016).

In this research, I used Byram and Masuhara’s (2013) evaluation criteria shown in Table 3 to evaluate the status of the intercultural dimension in FL materials which emphasis is more on language learning. Byram and Masuhara report that the criteria are “in line with the objectives and recommendations from the relevant literature”, particularly Byram’s (1997) theory of ICC (p. 153).

Agreeing with Littlejohn (2010) the three levels discussed earlier paved the ground for the evaluation process.

I have chosen to use their criteria as a checklist because:

1. The focus of the selected textbooks is on language learning first
2. They are “pre-use evaluation criteria for predicting the likely effects of the materials” (Byram and Masuhara, 2013, p. 150) which fit the current textbooks given they have been recently launched.

4. The authors provide questions to guide the evaluator/researcher in identifying the relevant criteria; the questions are particularly useful because they highlight aspects and issues related to ICC. That is, rather than simply asking how the materials help learners develop attitudes of ICC, the questions aid the researcher through explicitly referring to decentring, identity, and stereotypes among others.

To what extent do the materials help learners to:		
Awareness	Aw1	become aware of assumptions, values, and attitudes of the self and of others beneath utterances and behaviours
Attitudes	At1	treat cultures including their own in a relative or decentralised way
	At2	be empathetic
	At3	be wary of stereotyping
	At4	retain their identity and acknowledge that of others
Skills	S1	interact effectively with people from different cultures
	S2	acquire appropriate language from exposure to language in use in various cultures
	S3	acquire effective language use from purposeful opportunities to use it in various cultural contexts

Table 3. Byram and Masuhara (2013) evaluation criteria

4.3.5.2. Analysis of Interviews

In the following subsections, I set out a detailed account of the steps and tools I used to manage, analyse, and interpret interview transcripts. These are: transcription, coding (inductively and deductively), writing analytical memos, generating themes, and how I used Atlas.ti to facilitate the process.

a. Transcription

As Gibson and Brown (2009) state, transcription allows researchers to filter their data and identify what is important and relevant to their research from what is less important and irrelevant, a process referred to as reducing data (Cohen et al., 2018). Thus, transcription is often considered as the first step of data analysis – if the researcher is the one transcribing (King and Horrocks, 2010) – which is applicable to the current study because among many things, transcription allowed me to engage with the interviews (Gibson and Brown, 2009) and note down any initial interpretations which I revisited later (Saldana, 2016). However, I did not let these initial thoughts lead the analysis process. Transcription and reducing data are two separate processes (see Marshal and Rossman, 2011; Seidman, 2013); that is, the researcher would first transcribe all interviews then move to reducing and cutting what they believe is not relevant to their study. As I explain in the following paragraph, I found it more useful in terms of saving time to start reducing data while transcribing (i.e. personal information). Also, when transcribing in the midst of data collection, I had the opportunity to reflect on and reconsider my interviewing strategies where necessary (Shelton and Flint, 2019).

Transcription is time consuming when the researcher aims for a verbatim (word by word) record of the data; that is, a one-hour interview can take up to five hours to transcribe (Seidman, 2013; Cohen et al., 2018). I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews; each lasted between 28 to 60 minutes. Initially, I spent an average of 4 hours transcribing a 30 minute interview because I kept a verbatim verbal and nonverbal record of each of the interviews. Gradually, I started to filter out the chunks of data that were irrelevant to the study including but not only initial greetings, jokes that either parties used to reduce the

formality of the interviews, and personal information shared by either parties that would not affect the confidentiality of the interviewee but was not relevant.

Language is another important factor that I had to consider whilst transcribing all interviews. As I explained in previous sections, my participants speak at least two languages: English and Arabic (Standard and Non-Standard), and some speak French as well, all of which they were encouraged to use. Consequently, I translated while transcribing which slowed down the process.

Unfortunately, the importance of the transcription process – at least for novice researchers and doctoral students – is not widely recognised. In fact, researchers can opt for professional transcription services, a costly option, just to avoid spending too many hours transcribing (Seidman, 2013). Also, due to the development of research technologies, there are now voice recognition programmes that can do the job for the researcher, which can save time but affect the reliability of the transcription (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018).

b. Coding, writing memos, and generating themes

According to Thomas (2006), qualitative data analysis is typically inductive, and data driven (Patton, 2015) in the early stages; the researcher looks for patterns and/or themes in their data. Deductive analysis on the other hand is theory driven; the analyst uses existing frameworks and models to analyse data (Patton, 2015). As I explained earlier, I started analysing immediately after the first interview (Maxwell, 2013) undertaking thematic analysis, a method which organises and describes data in detail through the identification of patterns (themes) (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Clarke and Braun, 2017). A key feature of

thematic analysis is flexibility, it can be used to identify patterns within and across data inductively and/or deductively (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Clarke and Braun, 2017).

I approached the transcripts inductively at first; following Seidman's (2013, p, 120) advice, I was fully prepared to let the transcripts "breathe and speak" for themselves without trying to fit the data "into a pre-existing code frame" (Braun and Clark, 2006). Then, I used a deductive approach to determine the extent to which the data support the pre-existing theory (Patton, 2015) using the five dimensions of Byram's (1997) ICC as a coding frame. In doing so, the following steps were followed:

I started with immersing myself in the data through reading and rereading the transcripts, looking for meaning and highlighting, each time, the interesting chunks of data (Braun and Clark, 2006). Then, I began to assign labels to the highlighted pieces, a process known as coding (Saldana, 2016, Cohen et al., 2018). Codes can be generated from various sources and can take different forms; they can be driven by theory and research questions, participants' words, and the researcher's interpretations and insights (Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Saldana, 2016; Cohen Manion, and Morrison, 2018). I acknowledge that after the first cycle of coding, as a novice researcher, I fell in the trap of creating categories too early (Seidman, 2013); consequently, I was frustrated for not capturing insights that were interesting enough, that I almost lost faith in my research. Looking back now, I can relate this outcome to being an insider; I was too close to the context of the research to the extent that I marked some of the richest data as 'irrelevant' and 'not interesting'. For example, I kept a chunk of one transcript (the first thirteen minutes) in a different folder because it was not related to the main interview questions but to the participant's own ideas. Allowing time between the cycles of coding helped me to look at

my data from a different angle each time; I kept going back to all the transcripts and then to the coded extracts until I could not identify any new codes (Maxwell, 2013).

While coding, I made sure to write analytic memos whenever a code, or a quotation, required further thinking and reflecting. Documenting my insights and interpretations as memos facilitated the process of analysis in general and helped enhance my reflexivity about the different stages of the research (Maxwell, 2013), I discuss this further at the end of the chapter.

After the initial cycles of coding, I started to identify patterns and sort the codes into potential themes and subthemes that could be related to the research questions. Next, taking into consideration Patton's (1990) criteria of internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity, I reviewed and refined the emerging themes. At the end of this stage, I had a fairly good idea about the overall story the set of themes tell about my data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Like the cycles of coding, I kept refining the themes until I identified strong links between the research questions, the analysis and evaluation of textbooks, and interview data were analysed and presented. At the end, I identified four major themes and several subthemes.

c. Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (QAQDAS)

I used a computer software (Atlas.ti) to store, organise, and visualise my data (interviews and textbooks). Most scholars insist on clarifying that the process of analysis is the same with or without the software, meaning that software can facilitate the analysis but cannot do it (Kvale, 2007; Saldana, 2016; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018). According to Kvale (2007, p.98), "computer programmes replace the

time-demanding “cut-and-paste” approach to hundreds of pages of transcripts with “electronic scissors””. Among the many tools QADAS packages can assist the analyst with, the ones I found to be the most useful were: the organised and secure storage file system which allowed me to upload all my data (interviews’ transcripts, audio file, and the textbooks) to one research file then create and compare codes’ groups and categories, the quick access to texts, the visual representation of data, and the ability to write memos and descriptions of codes; this particular option helped me to track how my reflections and interpretations evolved and changed throughout the whole process of analysis. On the other hand, like most novice researchers, I found learning how to use Atlas.ti time consuming; thus, this can be considered as a disadvantage. Similarly, Creswell and Poth (2018) advocate that the task of choosing which QADAS package to use can be daunting.

4.4. Part Three

The third, and last, part of this chapter is mainly devoted to reporting, discussing, and reflecting on the challenges I faced before, during, and after the data collection and analysis, mainly interviews. These are related to the trustworthiness of the research, ethical considerations, and researching multilingually. I argue here that in addition to the fact that I am (after all) a novice researcher, other factors such as cultural background, academic culture, power relation, and language, influenced the overall process of my research. Then, before concluding the chapter, I critically reflect on how my positionality as a researcher affected my research journey from start to finish.

4.4.1. Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Like in quantitative enquiries, scholars assert that qualitative researchers need to check and evaluate the quality of their studies according to a set of criteria (Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Bryman, 2016). To establish the trustworthiness of research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested the terms: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as alternatives to the quantitative criteria: internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, respectively. Similarly, Creswell and Poth (2018), following the work of Creswell and Miller (2000), suggested categorising the strategies of the previous criteria in three groups according to the lens they represent: the researcher's lens, the participant's lens, and the reader's lens. Below I demonstrate how I tried to meet each criterion.

a. Credibility

Because qualitative researchers believe that reality is rather “holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing” (Merriam, 2009, p. 213), their job is to ensure that their findings are sufficiently congruent with the reality (Merriam, 1998), thus, credible. Establishing credibility depends largely – if not entirely – on the researcher (Patton, 2015), it entails using a number of strategies among which are triangulation, prolonged engagement, member checking, peer debriefing, and acknowledging researcher's bias.

- **Prolonged engagement in the field:** As Patton (2015, p. 685) explains, “time is a major factor in the acquisition of trustworthy data”. As I explained earlier, I spent almost two years back and forth between data collection and analysis; this time allowed me to establish rapport and build trust. I did not need to familiarise myself with the site, culture, or the overall context of my study (Shenton, 2004; Creswell and Poth, 2018)

because I was an insider. However, getting to know some participants before the interviews – either virtually or face-to-face – helped both of us to engage in a less formal interview which added to the construction of knowledge (Patton, 2015).

- **Member checking:** Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider this to be “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314); thus, transcripts of interviews were sent to participants for their feedback on how accurately their thoughts were recorded. Interestingly, not even one participant disagreed with, or commented on the written transcripts. On the contrary, some offered to answer further questions if necessary.

- **Critical friend/peer debriefing:** The role of the critical friend here as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), is ‘a devils’ advocate’; they push the researcher through asking hard and challenging questions about the methodology and interpretations of the study (Creswell and Miller, 2000; Creswell and Poth, 2018) while analysing and interpreting data (particularly the interviews). I discussed my interpretations with two critical friends, both were doctoral students: one comes from the same cultural background as the participants and myself, and researches a similar topic; the other friend was familiar – to a certain extent – with the area of my research but had no familiarity with the context. Feedback from both friends (oral and written comments and questions), allowed me to step back and look at some findings and interpretations from different angles.

- **Researcher’s bias/reflexivity:** part of the integrity of the research is the researcher’s acknowledgment and explanation of their positionality and its effect on the research process as a whole. It is, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) define it: “the process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher, the human instrument”

(p. 183). Thus, the first section of the introductory chapter and the last two sections of this chapter are both dedicated to narrating my personal experience – before and during all phases of the research – to allow the reader to understand my positionality as a researcher, that is, the assumptions, values, beliefs, orientations, and past experiences that have likely affected the process and outcome of my research (Merriam, 2009; Berger, 2015; Creswell and Poth, 2018).

b. Transferability

Transferability is concerned with the extent to which the findings of a certain study can be transferred and applicable to other settings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2015; Creswell and Poth, 2018). Here, the researcher's responsibility is to provide 'sufficient descriptive data' but the 'burden of proof', that is, whether data can be transferable, falls on the reader or the person who wishes to use it (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 298).

- **Thick description:** Denzin (1989, p. 83) defines thick descriptions as “deep, dense, detailed accounts”; the purpose of thick description therefore, as Creswell and Miller (2000) put it, is to give the reader sufficient details that let them feel that ‘they have experienced or could experience the events being described in the study’ (p. 129). To assess the transferability of my study, I provided a thick description of the context, the setting, and the participants of the study in different parts of the thesis (see Chapter 2 and sections 4.3.3.; 4.3.4. of this chapter).

c. Dependability

Dependability is concerned with the logical process the researcher undertook throughout the study (Patton, 2015). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Merriam (2009), credibility and reliability are closely related because the validation strategies of the former can, to some extent, ensure the latter. Further to the strategies of credibility, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest adopting an ‘audit trail’ through which the researcher keeps track of and documents all their decisions, reflexions, and thoughts (i.e. journaling and memo writing) in an accessible manner to external reviewers who will act as auditors (Creswell and Miller, 2000; Bryman, 2016).

d. Confirmability

Confirmability as a trustworthiness strategy entails making explicit how findings and their interpretation are not overtly influenced by the researcher’s personal values (Shenton, 2004; Bryman, 2016; Patton, 2015). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that, similar to dependability, establishing confirmability is the task of auditors.

- **Audit trail:** this validation strategy was established through providing my main supervisor with details and documentations of the decisions and choices I took before, during, and after data collection. As an external to the study (Creswell and Miller, 2009), my supervisor’s advice and critical feedback regarding how “findings, interpretations, and conclusions are supported by the data” (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 262) and the several discussions about my positionality and biases helped me build a stronger and clearer argument. Also, the general feedback I received from colleagues and other academics when presenting the findings of my research in formal and

informal meetings and conferences directed my attention to important aspects of the study that I could otherwise not have recognised as an insider. For example, I did not consider writing about how researching multilingually affected my research until the audience at a Cultnet meeting (annual meeting during which ICC researchers gather to present and discuss latest research projects) pointed it out when I explained how challenging it was to interview participants who speak three languages.

4.4.2. Ethical considerations

Interviews are powerful, they affect people; and according to Patton (2015, p. 495), “a good interview evokes thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experience not only to the interviewer, but also to the interviewee”. Taking into account and demonstrating awareness of ethical issues is part of the quality, thus the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998; 2009; Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Central to ethical research is the need to prevent actual and potential harmful consequences researchers can cause (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). In general, many of these challenges can be anticipated before entry into the field, which gives the researcher enough time to find possible ways to manage them (Marshall and Roassman, 2011); yet, as Holliday (2013) stresses, getting ethical approval is by no means a guarantee that the researcher will not encounter ethical issues. That is, other challenges may arise “on-the-spot” or after data collection has finished; these are deemed to be more difficult to overcome because it depends – entirely – on the researcher’s judgment of what is right and wrong and their ability to navigate through ethically and legally challenging situations (Patton, 2015). In addition, other ethical issues can arise during data analysis and interpretation; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) argue that the researcher can face the

risk of being ‘over-selective’ regarding what parts to include (p. 648). In other words, the researcher can exclude data that contradicts his or her views either intentionally or unintentionally (Merriam, 2009).

In this research, I took into consideration all possible issues that may harm my participants in any way, ahead of stepping into the field. First, to make sure that they have enough time to consider their participation in the study, an informed consent form and a participant information sheet (PIS) were either emailed to them or sent through social media (Facebook) at least one week ahead of the agreed date of the interview. This step, I believe, allowed participants enough time to consider their participation and ask me any questions regarding the study, their role, and their anonymity and confidentiality. Again, to ensure they were fully aware of what was expected of them, I allocated time prior to conducting the interview to go through both forms and for them to ask questions (Patton, 2015). Yet, according to Patton (2015) and Mason’s (2018) criteria of ethical interviewing, I encountered the following challenges before, during, and after the fieldwork:

a. Participants’ safety (sensitive information):

Patton (2015) states that research participants can reveal information or share opinions with the researcher which they did not intend to, mostly because of promises of confidentiality. Accordingly, he advocates that it is the responsibility of the interviewer to establish an ‘ethical framework’ to deal with such challenges (p. 495). In my case, while transcribing one interview (before using member checking), I realised that the participant was sharing too much information through which he could be easily identified by the Algerian

audience; therefore, it would be likely to affect his career. To avoid this threat, I contacted him later to explain that I would not use such information for his safety; a decision to which he agreed. According to Mason (2018, p. 93), this kind of information can be revealed because as a researcher, I allowed the interviewee to open up through asking them indirect questions.

In another interview, I recall the participant getting too excited while talking about and defending their principles regarding identity development and construction after I followed up on their initial answer regarding culture. At the time, I was not sure if it was a simple excitement or distress due to what appeared to be a sensitive topic. To rectify the situation, I used humour then moved to another question. Later, in an informal chat, I apologised to the participant and asked them about their overall impression of the interview, they said: *'oh no, it's fine, I enjoyed it, I just did not expect it to be this tense'* (BT3). In this case, as Patton (2015) advocates, the burden was not for me to take alone as an interviewer because first, I offered them enough time to read the PIS and ask any questions, and second, the specific questions that led to the participant's excitement were follow up questions and not a part of the interview guide.

b. Researcher's safety

Discussions about ethics in social research tend to focus on the risks and pitfalls which can harm participants in all possible ways and how to avoid them (see Hammersley and Traianou, 2012; Patton, 2015; Bryman, 2016; Cohen et al., 2018; Iphofen et al., 2018; Mason, 2018); researchers' safety, however, is not emphasised as much. The safety of myself was an issue that was raised by Lancaster University Ethics Committee during

the approval process; I was advised against visiting two research sites which were highlighted on the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office website as ‘not entirely safe’. Additionally, to ensure my safety, the committee requested I report back to my supervisor any unusual incidents including when and if participants question my decision to study in the UK instead of Algeria. Yet, in the field, I experienced other safety issues that I did not anticipate, and which required immediate judgment from my side.

On one occasion, after being disrupted several times, the participant offered to carry on the interview in their car. While thinking of the appropriate response, I took into consideration three points: extending my stay in the city was not an option, I could not offer alternative locations because I was new to the city and refusing the participant’s offer meant creating an impression of mistrust which alternatively would have affected the researcher-researched relationship and the outcome of the study. So, I agreed to interview them in their car without allowing enough time to think about the potential consequences for my safety. In other words, I prioritised the interview over my safety. Initially, the situation was a little uncomfortable but as soon as the interview started, I relaxed. When the interview was over, the participant invited me for lunch, but I apologised; a response which they took as offensive. Later when I reported this to my supervisor, she advised against taking such risks again and emphasised that I should consider my own safety first.

During my second visit to the field, one participant informed me about ‘a change of plans’ one hour ahead of our scheduled meeting; my flight had just landed, and I was on my way to meet them. The problem, again, was the location; they explained that the headmaster of the school, where the interview was supposed to take place, was not sure accommodating an interview with a doctoral student was a good idea. This, according to the participant,

had to do with the subject of my research and the fact that I was affiliated to a UK university (even though I was sponsored by the Algerian government). I could not recruit another participant and I could not reschedule another face-to-face meeting because my flight back to the UK was in two days. Alternatively, I politely explained that I had to cancel the interview because of strict safety rules I had to follow. Fortunately, they were very understanding, and they agreed to schedule an online interview.

c. Confidentiality and anonymity

Although the consent form explicitly stated participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time within a period of 15 days, in addition to their anonymity and confidentiality, we (myself and the participants) went through the form before the interview to make sure that their decision to participate was an informed one (Mason, 2018). Yet, some of them had to make sure that their colleagues agreed to the same process (of a signed agreement). This can be related to the fact that the curriculum was new; individual participants wanted to avoid the risk of being identified as the only ones talking about, and sometimes criticising, the new educational reform. Also, since participants belonged to different groups, the possibility of exposure increased; this was mainly the case for the authors and inspectors. Consequently, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, two of the participant teachers decided to drop out of the study.

d. Power relations

The issue of power unbalance between the researcher and the researched has been widely acknowledged in qualitative inquiries (Chen, 2011) and this research is no exception. As Ben-Ari and Enosh (2013) put it “that there are power differentials between

researcher and participants is an ontological fact. Seeing it as a disadvantage or an advantage is an ethical matter” (p.425). Usually, the assumption is that the interviewer exercises power over the interviewee in things like controlling data and setting the agenda which may lead participants to feel stressed or obliged to co-operate, which is deemed to affect the construction of knowledge (Ben-Ari and Enosh, 2013; Mason, 2018, p.93; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018). Further to this assumption is how the issue of power relations can be reversed when interviewing ‘very powerful people’ (Mason, 2018, p. 93). Scholars, according to Ben-Ari and Enosh (2013), suggest two ways to deal with these differences depending on their potential effect on the research. The first is to try to minimise the social gap between the researcher and the participants; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) advocate that researchers can do so through establishing rapport and trust and involving their participants in decision making. The second is to appreciate and acknowledge this gap for it may ‘enrich the interview’ rather than threaten the construction of knowledge (Ben-Ari and Enosh, 2013, p.425).

In my own experience, the hierarchy in participants’ professional backgrounds and my status as a doctoral student highly influenced the whole course of data collection; the higher in position participants were, the wider the gap was and vice versa. For example, with some of the authors and one inspector as the gatekeepers, power differentials were reversed: interviews were strictly set according to their availability (time and place) because of their busy schedules. There were cases where interviews had to be cancelled due to power relations; one author did not want to participate – anymore – after she learned that the head author was participating in the study because – according to her – I could get

all the information I needed from the head author. Another author, who expressed interest in the research, kept postponing and forgetting about arranged meetings for over three months at the end of which they asked me to ‘text’ them the interview questions instead. As for some teachers, despite attempts to build trust and keep a low profile, the fact that I was a doctoral student at a UK university and the topic of my research were all ‘markers of my power’ (Holmes, 2014, p. 110) that led to an impression that I was a ‘change agent’ (Robinson-Pant, 2009); that is, I was treated like an expert in FL education who was in the field to test and assess their performance as teachers and would initiate change later.

e. Informed consent

It was clear from the beginning that the consent form influenced potential participants’ decisions to take part in the study. In some situations, they – teachers especially – showed a great deal of interest in the research when I initially approached them in an informal way. They offered help and agreed to be interviewed. However, when I sent out the PIS and the consent form, some apologised without providing any explanation or asking any questions about the study. Sharing the same cultural background with the participants, I can state that the formal and explicit language in which the consent form was written discouraged them; this can include a feeling of being insulted or threatened (Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). In addition to being written in English, the consent form follows Lancaster University’s code of ethics. The Ethics Committee recommended revising some points in the original form I submitted in addition to making others more explicit, to ensure participants’ anonymity and confidentiality were well explained. This procedure of written agreement was new for most –if not all – participants because Algerian institutions do not have a policy of

ethical considerations, a procedure which is ‘uniquely Western’ (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p.128) or as Robinson-Pant (2009) describes it: uncommon in non-UK and non-Western contexts. Therefore, the consent form, which was designed to protect participants, was instead perceived as culturally inappropriate and threatening. One way to avoid such issues can be for ethics committees to consider the *cultural dimension* of the fieldwork as an additional criterion of approval/rejection; that is, as Holliday (2013) stresses, there is a need for Western institutions to adapt ‘to more creative research approaches both within the West and everywhere else’ (p. 549).

f. Reciprocity

“Reciprocity means giving or giving back something to the participants in the research in return for their participation” (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018; p.137); in other words, researchers have an ethical responsibility to pay their participants for the time and effort they dedicated to their study be it through material reward (i.e. cash, gifts, vouchers) or other alternatives (i.e. educational advice) (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018). At the same time, scholars suggest that instead of simply motivating participants to take part in a study, material rewards can threaten the quality of data; they may participate only to get paid (i.e. paying less attention to the information they provide, saying what they think is expected of them rather than what they really think) (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018). This puts more pressure on the researcher who wants to maintain their ethical responsibility as well as not jeopardise the quality of their data.

It is worth mentioning at this stage that participation in my study was free; that is, when approaching participants, I did not offer them any kind of material compensation as a

reward because unlike many Western contexts, offering such incentives to the participants of my study – due to cultural beliefs – can be interpreted as insulting. However, at the end of some face-to-face interviews, I gifted them a box of chocolates as an appreciation for their participation. In some cases, the situation was reversed. Also, to ensure reciprocity and avoid any misunderstandings, I promised participants – per their request – a copy of the thesis, this alternative to cash, as Patton (2015) states “can instil a deeper sense of reciprocity” (p. 500).

In the following section, I discuss the advantages and disadvantages of researching in cross-cultural and cross-language contexts relating to my experience as a multilingual researcher.

4.4.3. Researching multilingually

Language plays a significant role in this research as in most qualitative enquiries. Yet, the challenges of researching in a multilingual context have not been very well addressed in the literature of research methodology (Shkларov, 2007; Holmes et al., 2013; 2016). Therefore, novice multilingual researchers, like myself, can commence fieldwork without prior preparation or without being fully aware of the possible challenges that may arise both during data collection and the analysis process. When researching multilingually involves cross-language as well as cross-cultural contexts, the task of the researcher to collect, translate, and interpret the data becomes more challenging even if he or she is an insider to the context adequately and accurately. Agreeing with Shkларov (2007), the two processes of translation and interpretation cannot be separated or referred to differently.

Though scholars encourage researching multilingually, I argue that the difference between languages and dialects as well as the area of the research, to which this study is a perfect example, highly affect qualitative research in general, especially the way in which findings are represented. As far as the current study is concerned, I can say that being a multilingual researcher in a multilingual context like Algeria was helpful but rather challenging. Helpful because, with my participants, we were able to use three languages (Modern Standard Arabic, French, and English) in addition to the local Algerian dialects to convey meanings and avoid misunderstandings. The challenging part is due to the difference between dialects and the fact that my research is about interculturality which when translating to Arabic, can lose some of its meaning.

Thus, deciding on which language(s) to use during data collection is a very important decision any bilingual or multilingual researcher should think about thoroughly ahead of data collection. However, in my case, I developed this awareness after encountering different challenges in the field. The fact that my participants share the same professional background (teaching EFL) led me to assume that interviewing them in English would help avoid the challenge of ensuring objective translation. However, as multilinguals themselves, some struggled in using English at some points during interviews. This was noticed in the time they took to find the suitable expressions, and in their use of French or Derja when they could not find the expression that best delivered their opinions and experiences in English. The potential impact of language was even more apparent when raised by the examiners of my confirmation panel who suggested that I encourage participants to use other languages. Therefore, during the second phase of data collection, I explicitly encouraged the rest of

the participants to use the language they felt was best for them, but I asked the questions in English for two reasons: a) translating some of the terms and concepts to Arabic could affect their meaning and b) participants were from different regions in Algeria; that is, the difference between their dialects and mine can range from slight to significant; something which can pose a risk of misunderstanding. The interviewees then seemed to be more relaxed using French or Derja from time to time; MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) was rarely used.

This, however, did not change the fact that English is neither their first nor their SL and as a researcher, I could see that sometimes they were using English with less confidence. In some situations, they insisted on using English even when I explicitly stated that they could use other languages. This suggests that the fear of being judged or evaluated can make participants resist using their native language, which would obviously affect the trustworthiness of any research. However, for some, the interview was an opportunity to practice their English (See also Holmes, 2014); one participant preferred to use English even before and after the interview. Thus, when contacting participants for follow up interviews, I initiated the use of Derja as the language of communication which led them to talking and sharing their views more spontaneously than before.

Accordingly, most data were gathered, transcribed, analysed, and presented in English, with Derja and – occasionally – French and Arabic being used by participants and myself; therefore, no translation was required for the most part. However, as I mentioned in section 4.3.7. of this Chapter, initial translation of words and phrases was undertaken during and after the transcription process, but the words of participants were kept in the final transcripts that were sent to them for member checking to ensure that the meaning of their experiences

was not lost in the translation. Interestingly, they did not offer any comments on my translation; this, as Bashiruddin (2013) suggests, can be related to power relations between the researcher and the researched which I discussed earlier (see section 4.4.2.).

It is worth noting at this stage that translating from French to English was not challenging compared to that from Derja and/or MSA to English because of the non-translatability of some Derja words, poetic verse and proverbs which participants sometimes quoted. In such cases, translation becomes “above all a question of culture before being a question of vocabulary” (Mc Laughlin and Sall, 2001, p. 206); thus, when presenting interview data in Chapter 6, instead of translating, I provide the reader with a brief description that best conveys the meaning and illustrates what participants referred to when they used Derja or MSA: i.e. “*you were wearing [a] kashabiyah [traditional Algerian coat/dress for men]*”.

As for the data derived from the textbooks (MS1, MS2 and MS3), translating the introductions from MSA to English was necessary. To lower the risk of misinterpretation, I asked two friends to check my translation; one is a PhD student and a lecturer in Arabic literature, and one is a PhD student with a similar research interest. Excerpts from the introductions were presented in MSA followed by the English translation to give the reader the freedom to choose their preferred language.

These challenges (see Robinson-Pant, 2009 and Andrews et al., 2013 for further examples) show the need for developing awareness within UK academic institutions about how important, yet challenging, researching multilingually can be for doctoral students. This can happen through providing the necessary training about how to

conduct research in a multilingual context in addition to readjusting their ethical regulations to fit the particular contexts.

4.4.4. Reflexivity

Further to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) definition above (see section 4.4.1.), Mills and Birks (2014, p.25) define reflexivity as a person's "active process of systematically developing insight" into their work and stress that it is "imperative for qualitative researchers to be reflexive". Similarly, in culture related projects, Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009, p. 270) state that "it is often extremely helpful if the researchers can reflect on the ways in which their own interests, values, identities etc. may influence or bias their research, and question themselves on how they may need to change as people and as researchers, as a result of the research".

In previous sections of this chapter, when relevant, I tried to maintain a reflexive voice through highlighting how my bias and positionality (may have) affected the different stages of my research. As a doctoral student, I kept a record of all my ideas, decisions, and feelings regarding my research, particularly the fieldwork and data analysis, in a digital research journal; these ranged from reminders and simple comments to memos (Maxwell, 2013; Mills and Birks, 2014). Initially, this record of ideas was meant to help me prepare for the viva; however, as I progressed, I realised how fundamental it was for the trustworthiness and outcome of the research. In this section, I illustrate how my different positions as a researcher (insider/outsider) affected the research process and the production of knowledge. According to Berger (2015), the researcher's situatedness "may

impact the research in three major ways” (p. 220): access to the field, researcher-researched relationship, and the lens they use to interpret data.

a. Access to the field:

Like many international doctoral students who face difficulties in readjusting to the academic culture of their home institutions (Robinson-Pant, 2009), the time I spent as a student at Lancaster University without any contact with Algerian academics and educators highly affected my attitude as a researcher during the first phase of data collection. That is, in addition to the challenges of language which I explored in the preceding section, the way in which I initially approached and contacted participants (through emails and social media, during and after the interviews) was very formal, thus Westernised. I expected them to understand the principles of my research, which was not the case.

Another point related to accessing the field is the recruitment of participants; as I explained earlier (see section 4.3.4.), my participants live and work in three different cities in Algeria which made sampling very challenging and time consuming. When discussing this problem with former colleagues and participants, some suggested alternative approaches which were either not compatible with the methodology or unethical, such as interviewing teachers who do not have the specific requirements and distributing questionnaires instead of conducting interviews. This gap can be linked to the fact that there is almost no research culture in language education in general in Algeria; most Algerian lecturers devote their time to teaching rather than researching as there are no institutional requirements that

encourage them to conduct research. Also, the fact that education is free affects the universities' capability to fund research projects.

b. Researcher-researched relationship:

Despite trying to establish a friendly relationship with all participants, in some situations, I was treated like an expert academic who knows everything and whose expertise would later contribute to the development of EFL education in the country. Some participants explicitly expressed how unsatisfied they were regarding EFL policy in Algeria. Others however, assumed that I was there to criticise them and change the educational system, so they showed resistance. In both situations, as I stated above (see section 4.4.2.), I was perceived as a 'change agent' (Robinson-Pant, 2009) which I was not. Sadly, I did not realise the big gap between the British, or the Western, academic culture and the Algerian one until I started to reflect on the fieldwork in my research journal, especially while transcribing interviews.

c. The insider/outsider lens:

The overall familiarity with the context of the research (Algeria), the cultural background I share with participants, and the intercultural encounters I experienced while living in the UK were factors that (either intentionally or unintentionally) affected my position as a researcher, therefore, the lenses I used to make meaning of the experiences participants shared with me (Berger, 2015; Woodin, 2016). In other words, the multiple selves (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) I became aware of (the Algerian, the Muslim, the Arab, the Chaoui, the intercultural learner, and the researcher) were present simultaneously throughout the research process. First, my status as a cultural insider arose from the fact that I was familiar

with aspects such as participants' background (cultural and professional) and the educational system in Algeria, which facilitated the interview process. Second, my position as a temporary cultural outsider allowed me to step back and reconsider some of the aspects that I would have otherwise overlooked or taken for granted. For example, my perceptions of culture and identity, among other concepts, the questions I asked participants, and my interpretations of their answers would have been different if I conducted the same research in Algeria. The same thing is applicable to the data derived from textbooks; the fact that they were locally produced to be used by young Algerian learners meant that I would primarily be positioned as a "native" reader. That is, despite my attempts to step back and look at manuals from an outsider's perspective, there might be "blind spots" that a researcher from a different cultural background would not have. However, as much as switching lenses was helpful, overcoming my personal beliefs while analysing textbooks and interviews was very challenging.

4.5. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I provided a detailed account (description and explanation) of the current study's design. Starting with the philosophical assumptions, I explained how social constructionism and qualitative methodology informed the study's design. Then, I justified the choice of case study method to explore how the issue of ICC is addressed in the Algerian middle school curriculum of EFL. Following this, I described and justified the choice of semi-structured interviews and documents as data sources followed by a thorough outline of the different stages of the fieldwork including, but not only, accessing the field, face-to-face and online interviews, and social desirability. Subsequently, approaches

to data analysis were summarised and the difference between analysis and evaluation was highlighted. In the last part of the chapter, I addressed issues of trustworthiness and ethics that were relevant throughout the course of this study. To conclude the chapter, I outlined how researching multilingually and my position as an insider/outsider affected my relationship with the participants and the research process in general.

In the following two chapters, I present and discuss findings related to textbooks and interviews, respectively. In Chapter 5, I analyse how culture is represented in four chapters from three EFL textbooks, to identify how this representation can affect learners' development of ICC. In Chapter 6, I present and discuss findings related to participants' perceptions of culture in FL teaching, their teaching practices, and the issues that affect the development of ICC.

Part II

Chapter Five: Culture and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in the textbooks

5.1. Overview

As I mentioned in previous chapters, middle school textbooks of English are an important part of my data set for the following reasons: first, they are the conventional tool for T&L English in Algeria. The MoE (Ministry of Education) assigns a group of individuals, based on their expertise in the field, to design the curriculum which would later be used as the reference for the authors of the textbooks. Once published, all state schools – more than 90% of the schools in Algeria – are required to use the textbooks as the primary tool of instruction (the same rule is applicable to all other subjects). However, as stated previously, teachers are encouraged to be creative and design their own manuals, provided that they follow the same principles of the curriculum. Second, to answer the first and second research questions: 1. How is the cultural dimension represented in the curriculum of English and 2. How can this representation contribute to the development of learners' ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence), analysing and evaluating the textbooks in question is inevitable.

Thus, in this chapter, I present and discuss the related findings through analysing then evaluating the representation of culture in four selected chapters, one from each of MS1 and MS2 and two chapters from MS3. In doing so, I first highlight the similarities between the three textbooks in terms of form and content. Then, I analyse the artwork on the cover of each manual, from a cultural perspective. Next, I present the findings from each chapter using Littlejohn's (2011) framework of analysing FLT (Foreign Language Teaching)

materials which is composed of three levels in forms of questions: *What is there? What is required? and What is implied?* (I explained in the previous chapter how I adapted the framework to fit my research). In this part, I undertake the analysis of each chapter individually starting by MS1 (Middle School year 1) textbook through MS3 (Middle School year 3).

Part two of this chapter is dedicated to answering the second research question: Identify how the textbooks in question can contribute to the development of learners' ICC? To do so, I used Byram and Masuhara's (2013) criteria (see section 4.3.7.2.c) to evaluate the cultural references found through the analysis; it is important to note that these criteria (awareness, attitudes, skills) are derived from Byram's (1997) model of ICC discussed in the literature.

5.2. Analysis of Cultural Representation in the textbooks

5.2.1. Textbooks' Presentation

The first common point between all three textbooks is the title: *My book of English*, which, at first, does not generate any particularly interesting interpretation mainly because it does not revolve around a theme. However, upon a close examination of the table of contents of each textbook (Table 4), the title becomes more meaningful, and the reader/user of the textbooks can conclude that the theme is *the learner*.

Textbook	Chapters
MS1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Me and my friends 2. Me and my family 3. Me and my daily activities 4. Me and my school 5. Me, my country and the world
MS2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Me, my friends and my family 2. Me and my shopping 3. Me and my health 4. Me and my travels
MS3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Me, my abilities, my interests, and my personality 2. Me and my lifestyles 3. Me and the scientific world 4. Me and my environment

Table 4. Textbooks' content

My understanding here is that through the use of personal pronouns like *me* and *my*, the authors tried to stimulate learners' interest - an important criterion in the process of textbooks' selection (Yuen, 2011) - to learn English through – explicitly – associating the content of the textbooks to their everyday life while – implicitly – marking boundaries between what is important and what is less important. This can be seen through the choice of artwork on the textbooks' covers, especially **MS2** and **MS3** as can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, respectively, which feature the learner's culture to a certain extent. The

artwork of **MS1** cover (Figure 1), as I shall discuss shortly, appears to hold a different message.

In each of the textbooks, authors included a total of three projects (one for each term) for learners to do in groups. The role of the teacher as a facilitator is to introduce the project at the beginning of the term – before starting a new chapter – and help and encourage learners to present their final work. The general theme of the project is usually derived from that of the chapter it precedes but the specific topic can vary. For example, the third term project in **MS2** is derived from Chapter 4: Me and my travels, but learners are given four topics to choose from: 1) a travel leaflet of what to see in Algeria, 2) the itinerary of my next holiday, 3) a memorable holiday report, and 4) a mini-travelogue of my - the learner's - last holiday.

5.2.2. Representation of culture on the covers

Before analysing the artwork on all three covers, it should be pointed out that all three textbooks are 'glossy' (Gray, 2010); most tasks are supported with pictures, which as I argue in a later section, seem to have other objectives than simply to "support" the lesson. The first interesting observation is the type of artwork on the covers: the picture on **MS1** (see Figure 3) depicts a group of twelve children, most likely the same age as the users of the textbooks (11-year-old learners) holding hands and smiling at each other forming a circle around an image of the globe in which only Algeria is identified.

Diversity and tolerance are represented through reference to different, but unidentifiable, ethnicities (characters of different skin colours) and a disabled child; culture, however, is not addressed at any level. On the image of the globe, Algeria is positioned in the centre of

the world with arrows spreading towards South East Asia, Africa, Latin America, Northern Europe, and the USA. Together, the two images lead to two different interpretations neither of which can be directly linked to culture.



Figure 1. MS1 cover

The first is “friends around the world”: judging by how the group is captured in what appears to be a walking position around the globe and the arrows pointing outwards only, it is possible that authors want to emphasise “openness” and encourage the idea of visiting different places and interacting with and befriending people from different backgrounds. The second interpretation is based on a close reading of the

image of the globe, which raises a few questions: a) Why is Algeria in the (very) centre of the globe? b) Why are the destinations (the end of the arrows) not identified (with a political map like Algeria for example)? And most importantly c) Why are the arrows pointed in one direction only?

Unlike MS1, the artwork on the MS2 cover in Figure 2. features four photographs, three of which seem to have a cultural significance. The first example which would easily catch the eye of the learner is a photograph of a girl (participant), smiling and gazing directly at the learner (the viewer) with the Algerian flag in the background. This is a ‘demand photograph’; the learner in this situation is encouraged to feel social affinity and bond with the character (Corbett, 2003; Kress and Leeuwen, 1996), with whom they share the responsibility of being good Algerian citizens. Next is a picture of the Mount Tahat, a mountain in south-eastern Algeria, it is the highest mountain in the country and is culturally associated with the Targui region. The last culture related artwork features three famous landmarks: Tower Bridge of London, the Golden Gate Bridge of San Francisco, and the Great Bridge of Constantine, all in one picture. Two points can be made here: first, the choice of two landmarks from the inner circle countries (USA and UK) suggests that learning English is still associated with learning about NSs (Native Speakers). Second, adding an Algerian landmark to the picture – occupying more space – implicitly invites the learner to draw comparisons of ‘us’ versus ‘them’; possibly leading to a conclusion that *we, too, have a similarly distinguished bridge.*

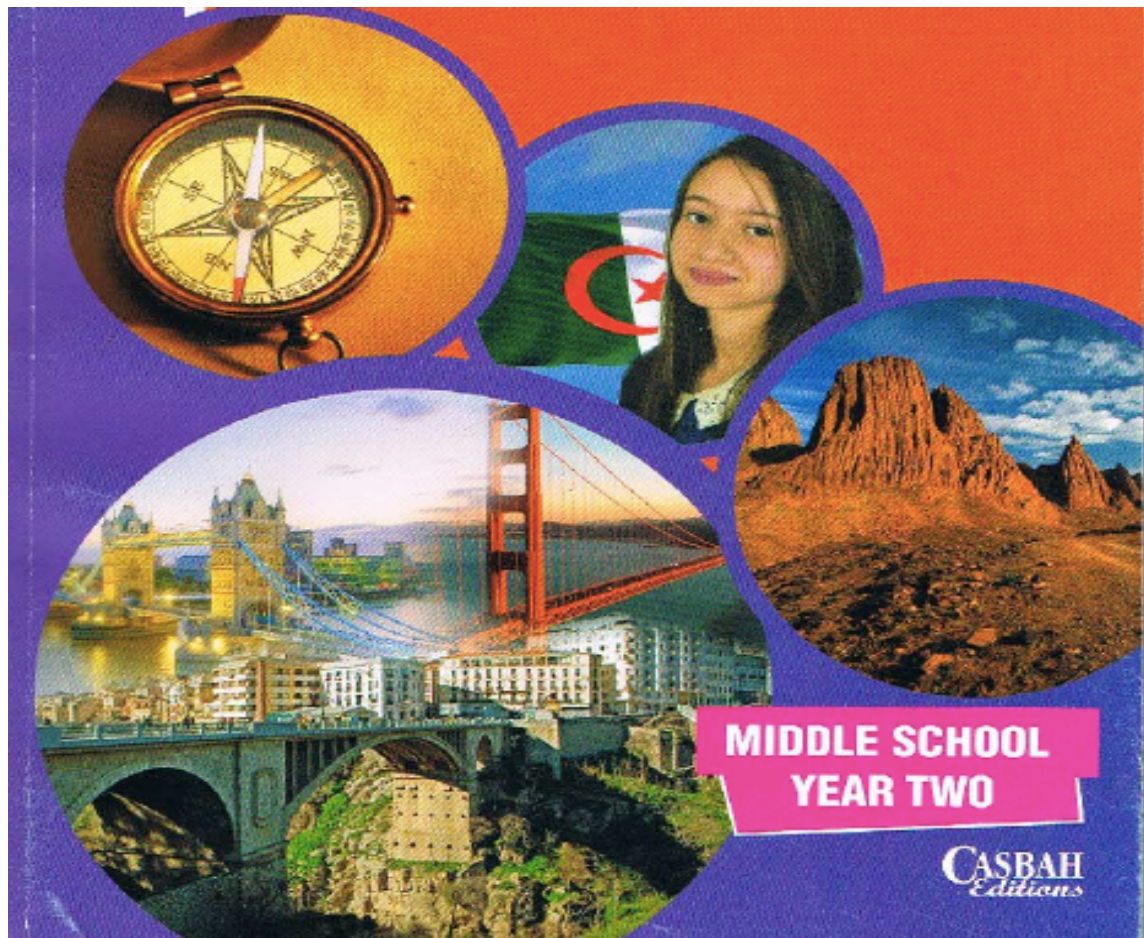


Figure 2. MS2 cover

Moving on to MS3 (Figure 3), only two of the four images (top and bottom right) can be interpreted from a cultural perspective. Both feature cultural diversity in Algeria in which cultural practices are more emphasised than, for example, cultural products (Moran, 2002). The second feature common to both images is the gender representation; the main characters represented are Chaoui (top) and Tergui (bottom) females who are meant to offer knowledge about the traditions of their regions while positioning the viewer “for a detached observation of the situation” (Gray, 2010, p. 58). The first image is a painting by *Nasr Eddine Dinet* in which two young Chaoui women in their most traditional looks

(clothes and jewellery) are represented playing El Kroud (a game more associated with Chaoui females) indoors surrounded by traditional pottery. The narrative structure of the second image (a photograph) offers even more interesting information about Tergui society, particularly the role of the female; the woman is shown playing the imzad (a musical instrument crafted and played by Tergui women only) while the men – seated behind her – are listening, a position of power and prestige which can be associated with religion as well.

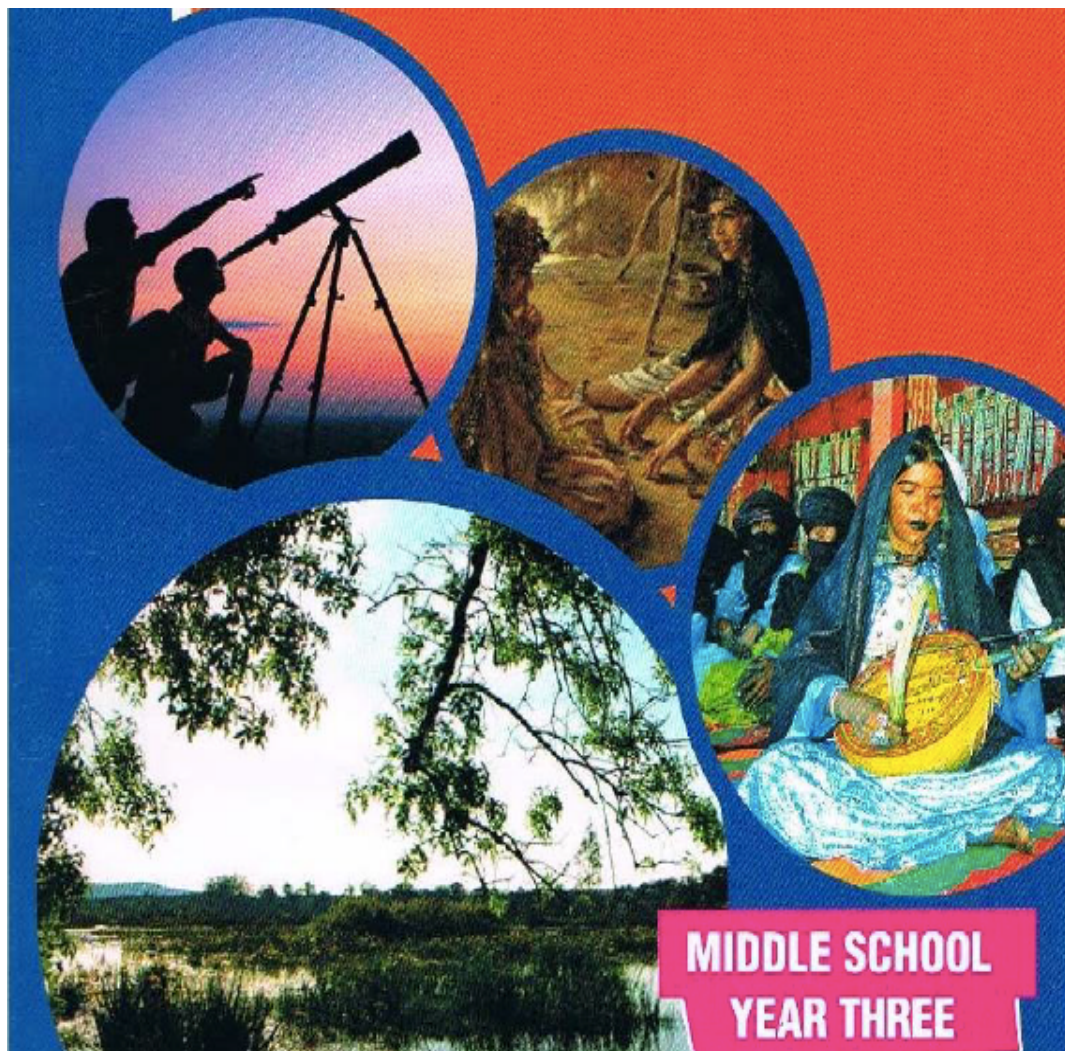


Figure 3. MS3 cover

The selection of this photograph can be interpreted as an attempt to contradict the negative stereotypes about Muslim women and women in the MENA region as oppressed and/or voiceless, most of which arise from cultural practices not from Islamic guidance and are not exclusive to non-Muslim societies. Therefore, the situation depicted in the photograph shows how Muslim women can be talented, appreciated, and respected.

As I shall discuss shortly, the visuals on the covers of the textbooks – although they seem to be merely decorative - were carefully selected to arouse the interest of the learners and to reflect, to a certain extent, the cultural content of the manuals given that each of the images is used somewhere in the textbooks to support a task. This is in contrast with Hill (2013) and Derakhshan (2021), concluding that images in EFL textbooks are space-fillers.

Another common feature in all the textbooks is how authors addressed the introduction of each manual to the learner in Arabic, unlike previous textbooks in which the introductions were addressed to teachers in English. The overall aim of the explicitly addressed points in each introduction is to make the learner (at the age of 11 years) aware of what is expected of them regarding their personal development first, and their language skills development next. The choice of Arabic and the recurrent use of the phrase “Dear learner” show how important is the message the authors want to deliver. Thus, in what follows, I present the findings (analysis) of the cultural representation in all three chapters.

5.2.3. Representation of culture in the chapters

Before discussing how culture is represented in the analysed chapters, it is important to note that the word ‘culture’ is not used in any of the three chapters except in the introductions of MS1 and MS3. Below is an extract from MS1:

اللغة الإنجليزية هي اللغة التي ستفتح أمامك موابك التطور العلمي والتكنولوجي من جهة، وتجعلك من جهة أخرى تتواصل بها مع أندادك في كل أنحاء العالم حتى تقوم بدورك معرفا بمقومات شخصيتك على ومتفحا المتنوعة، معتزا بالانتماء الى وطنك، واللغوية والثقافية الوطنية وامتداداتها التاريخية، ثقافات الغير في مختلف أنحاء المعمورة

English is the language which will allow you to keep up to date with the world of science and technology and connect with your peers around the world so that you can do your part and introduce the constituents of your national identity and its various historical, cultural, and linguistic dimensions, [be] proud of your national belonging and open to learn about other cultures from different parts of the world. (MS1)

It is interesting how in both examples (see section 5.3.2. for the second example), culture was mentioned either as a part of, or in parallel with national identity which, to some extent, reflects authors' understanding of the relationship between the two concepts in which identity seems more important. I come back to this point later in the evaluation part. As for the English language, on the one hand, it is positioned as a culturally neutral tool that allows learners to access science and technology. On the other hand, it is viewed as a vessel for learners to convey their own culture in line with the government political agenda.

a. Me, my country, and the world (MS1)

The overall structure of the individual chapters in all textbooks is very similar; each chapter consists of a minimum of nine sections, most of which are designed to target language skills, listening and speaking first, then reading and writing next. Subsequently, each section consists of several tasks which require either individual or pair work.

With regard to the representation of culture, the analysis revealed that all four chapters feature culture implicitly but in different ways. With the exception of the term projects,

which in some ways feature aspects of big C culture, the explicit nature of the tasks as I mentioned earlier (*what is there*) revolves around developing language skills only. For example, in task 2 of ‘I listen and do’ from *Me, my country, and the world* (Figure 6), learners are *required* to read, listen, and repeat short paragraphs in which fictional characters from Algeria, China, Nigeria, and the USA exchange basic information about their countries (food, currency, national and religious celebrations).

The other characters represented in the chapter are five learners: three Algerians, one British, and one American. Younes (an Algerian boy) and Margaret (a white British girl) are represented through photographs; Younes, wearing a t-shirt of the Algerian football team and Margaret (wearing a hoodie with a feature of London on it).

Reference to the national dimension of culture increases throughout the chapter; this can be seen through the use of terms and phrases like ‘my country’, ‘our national dish is couscous’, and ‘Algeria is my homeland’ and continuous reference to landmarks in Algeria, then in other English-speaking countries, mainly Britain and the USA. This can be seen through the use of flags and maps as a background to tasks. The following are referred to once or twice only in tasks that required learners to either form nationalities or state the currency and the capital of the country: France, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, China, Spain, South Africa, Georgia, Portugal, and Andorra. Interestingly, the chapter features references to England, Great Britain, and the UK but without any supporting information, except the Union Jack and the English flag.



Figure 4. Task 2 from *Me, my country, and the world* (MS1)

Overall, cultural practices are not mentioned in any of the tasks; religion, however, is mentioned three times in the chapter referencing Islam as the religion of Algerian learners. It is important to note that there are no authentic materials (i.e. texts) in this chapter, all the supporting texts were authored by the coursebook authors. For example, in task 2 of ‘I pronounce’, learners are required to identify four phonology sounds in a song written by the authors about Algeria. Similarly, the reading material for all the tasks in ‘I read and do’ is another text about Algeria: ‘Discover my wonders’; the text, on the map of Algeria, is surrounded by pictures of Algerian landmarks, nature, and food.

As to which varieties of English are represented (Gray, 2010) there are no indications of audio or video clips of the accents or the forms of pronunciation used, which is possibly because this is beginner level English.

b. Me and my travels (MS2)

The structure of *Me and my travels* is very similar to *Me, my country, and the world*; the chapter consists of ten sections, most of which target a language skill (i.e. I listen and do, I pronounce, I think and write...etc.). While all four chapters emphasise culture to some extent, in *Me and my travels*, learners are exposed to *Algerian* culture – rather than culture(s) in Algeria – in almost all tasks in different forms (artwork and text) and from different perspectives. That is, the different subcultures within the country are always projected as part of the larger, homogenic Algerian culture.

Starting with the content, as the theme of the chapter suggests, all tasks revolve around travelling around Algeria: what to do/see in Algeria (or in a specific city/region). Authors

take learners gradually from basic dialogues between two Algerian characters (a boy and a girl) about holidays in northern parts of the country (this usually includes useful tips and guides) to tasks with longer texts written by English characters about how impressive their visits to the south of Algeria have been. In both cases, the represented characters are learners of the same age as the users of the textbooks; it is worth noting, however, that none of them is featured in the artwork, only their names are used: Mounir, Keltoum, John, Peter, etc. Thus, the representation of race or nationality cannot be analysed. Seemingly, all the artwork in *Me and my travels* is used either to support the tasks or just as background information about Algeria: either from geography related concepts (map of Algeria, national parks, UNESCO heritage sites) or material culture (pottery, jewellery, and other Algerian traditional crafts). There is however, one task in the last section of the chapter, 'I read for pleasure' which introduces a 'Chinese TULOU' through a short text adapted from the UNESCO website next to an image of one. Also, the last reading material of the section: *My world travel photo Album: architecture of human dwellings and religious places* (p. 145) features nine landmarks, of England, Japan, Turkey, Tunisia, Indonesia, China, Algeria, and Greenland, with a short description of the religious/historic significance of the landmark. Unlike *Me, my country, and the world*, there are few authentic texts in the later sections of *My and my travels* all of which are centred around cultural heritage in Algeria, with the exception of the Chinese TULOU mentioned above. Interestingly however, the authenticity of one text in 'I read and do' could not be verified as the website is not available. The text (p.132 and 133 tasks 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), supposedly retrieved from the *London School Online Magazine*, is a two-part itinerary of a group of English middle school learners to the south of Algeria, in which historical and cultural facts about the southern region are highlighted; each part is

supported with pictures of the mentioned site. Although ‘I read and do’ is the richest section of the chapter in terms of text and artwork, the representation of culture is – like the rest of the chapter – superficial because authors projected culture as a series of accessible products (i.e. sites, architecture, crafts, etc.) which are separated from the individuals of that culture. In other words, cultural practices, beliefs, and values were totally excluded, even religion. However, in comparison to *Me, my country and the world*, *Me and my travels* sheds light on different parts of Algeria although it is not clear if the intent of the authors is to project diversity or draw a picture of the culturally rich Algeria.

c. *Me and lifestyles (MS3)*

Me and lifestyles is the second and longest chapter of MS3 consisting of more than fifty tasks grouped in ten sections as shown in Figure 8. Unlike the other chapters I analysed, this one is not coherent in terms of how the content is presented. Initial readings of the chapter suggest that past and modern lifestyles in England and Algeria are highlighted, inviting learners explicitly to compare “us” and “them”. However, like previous chapters, the reader ends up learning more about Algeria than other contexts.

As might be expected, the topics of the term project are derived from the theme of the chapter; learners are required to design either a photograph album (with descriptive texts) of their birthplace 100 years ago, or a wall display of teenage lifestyle around the world. As I mentioned previously, the general instructions of how to complete the project are the same in all three textbooks; only this time, the authors added a short description to each topic. For example, for the teenage lifestyle topic:

I search the Internet to find information about teenage clothes, fashionable hairstyles, games, music, food, etc. in sample countries from different continents. Then, I compare with trends in my country and report the results to my class in the form of a wall display. (MS3, p. 46)

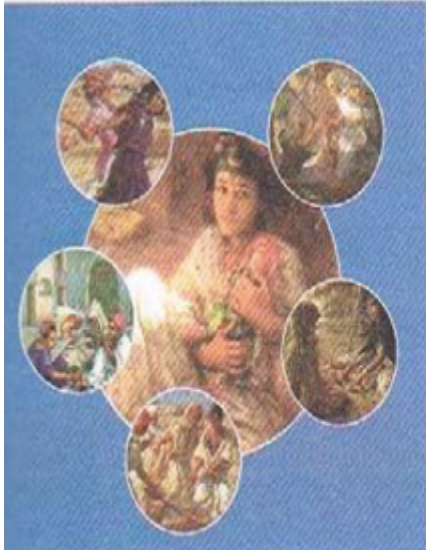
MY SECOND TERM PROJECT		46
<p>Sequence 2</p> <p>Me and lifestyles</p> 	I listen and do.	48
	I pronounce.	60
	My grammar tools	63
	I practise.	66
	I read and do.	73
	I learn to integrate.	75
	I think and write.	77
	Now, I can	80
	I play and enjoy.	81
	I read for pleasure.	82

Figure 5. Presentation of *Me and lifestyles* (MS3)

Overall, the cultural dimension in *Me and lifestyles* can be said to be represented through audio scripts, texts, and artwork. Part one of the chapter highlights several aspects of *female lifestyle* in England, between the past and the present, in a fictional text based on an interview between two fictional characters, Jenny (a 14-year-old) and her grandmother Elizabeth for a school project about Grandparents Day. In the interview (which the teacher is supposed to play for learners several times), Jenny tackles different topics with her grandmother about her life in the past (diet, hobbies, clothing, etc.) then

comments on how different her modern lifestyle is. After each part of the interview is played, learners are required to fill in gaps, match pictures with corresponding words, tick boxes, then answer similar questions about Algerian lifestyle, for example: *I answer my partner's questions about what boys and girls wear (task 24, p. 54)*. Tasks require learners to work individually, in pairs, and in groups. The last six sections of *Me and lifestyles* feature similar topics as the first sections (traditional food, clothing, and hobbies in Algeria) but in more detail. Also, the section about Algeria extends to include descriptions of two cultural sites using images, fictional and authentic texts.

Reading the interview transcript, several culture related points stand out. First is how historical and geographical information was casually brought up in the beginning of the interview: for example: *Elizabeth: I was born in 1939, the same year WW2 began... I was born in the north, in a farmhouse five miles away from the nearest village in the Lake District, now a very famous national park*. Second is the overall representation of a typical past lifestyle versus an ideal modern one; the grandmother talks about how they used to live and Jenny replies with how she lives. For example, young Jenny appears to have a healthy diet based on vegetarian meals (with no definition of what vegetarian means) and what can be labelled as educational hobbies like reading and playing board games (scrabble and chess). Another interesting representation in the interview is that of gender roles and identities. Similar to the previously analysed chapters, *Me and lifestyle* does not explicitly address topics related to gender issues; most of the characters in part one are females; yet, the sentence '*Mom used to serve dad first, then us*' can be viewed differently. First, it is not clear how the statement is relevant to the context; second, the gender role. Also, reference to Queen Elizabeth 2 (the only non-fictional character) as a

fashion icon in the interview is worth mentioning: '*We also used to wear hats on special occasions, not headscarves. I loved hats; I still love them today. They're so classy and elegant, just look at Queen Elizabeth*'. This is followed by a task which requires learners to match pictures of items of clothing with the right words; two of the pictures feature Queen Elizabeth wearing a headscarf in one and a hat in the other. This representation serves two purposes: depicting women in a position of power and prestige and introducing the most senior member of the British royal family.

Part two of *Me and my lifestyles* is slightly different; most tasks cover one theme of cultural heritage through reference to aspects derived from big C culture, which most Algerian learners can identify with: traditional dishes and traditional female clothing, and a past versus present textual and visual representation of two Algerian cities (Setif and Constantine). There are no characters represented in this part of the chapter except in the sections *I play and enjoy* and *I read for pleasure* (which I discuss later), where authors used the learner's voice in all tasks and the reading texts are adapted from online resources. Below, I discuss how culture is represented through each of the three topics.

First is the detailed description of two cities in north-east Algeria as cultural sites. To do so, authors used three authentic texts written by foreign individuals who visited either one, or both cities, and were fascinated by what each one represented. The style and content of each text are very similar to the reading texts in *Me and my travels* in which a tourist talks about an impressive visit to a particular Algerian city, describing historical and cultural information: '*Djemila was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site thirty years ago*' (task 1, p. 66) and '*I was glad to see the town of Setif standing on bare hills in the*

middle of a plain[...] in the Middle Ages, the Arab traveller El-Bekri described the cotton plantations and corn fields that used to flourish on this plain' (text 1, p. 73). Reference to the Arab as opposed to the Algerian, North African, or Middle Eastern in these texts is new: *'Constantine is divided into two distinct towns, of which I need not say that the Arab is the only one which is interesting'* (text 2, p. 74). At the end of this section, learners are required to create 'a postcard exhibition' comparing the past and present lifestyle in Constantine and Setif, using supporting photographs and the reading texts.

The second featured topic is food. Learners are provided with pictures of six traditional Algerian dishes alongside the name, its equivalent in English (translation), and a short description of each dish (its origin, ingredients, and how it is served). Tasks revolving around food involve writing short sentences about how often students eat each dish at home and filling in gaps using grammar tools like *used to* and *ago*. One particularly interesting example is:

All these traditional dishes appeared a long time... in my country, but no one knows exactly when or how. Our ancestors... prepared them in their mountains, plains, or Sahara deserts. It is now my turn to preserve these dishes because they are part of my cultural heritage. (MS3, task 14, p. 72)

Authors used the same approach to tackle the last topic 'Algerian female traditional dresses'; tasks were supported with pictures, description, and definition of each dress (what it is made of, where, who wears it) and learners were required to use grammar tools to fill in gaps.

On the subject of comparison, all tasks in 'I learn to integrate' revolve around Grandparents Day in Algeria:

It is Grandparents Day in Algeria. To celebrate the event, I am going to make a video interview of my grandfather or grandmother. I will then post the video on the school website and my personal blog to share it with other people around the world. (I learn to integrate, p. 75)

Learners were required to use Jenny's interview as a reference to prepare the questions. It is worth noting at this stage that Grandparents Day is not celebrated in Algeria.

An Algerian Artist

Alphonse-Étienne Dinét was born in Paris on March 28, 1861 and died on December 24, 1929 in the same city. From 1871, he studied at the Lycée Henry IV. Upon graduation in 1881 he enrolled in the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts. Dinét made his first trip to Bou Saâda in southern Algeria in 1884. The following year he made a second trip on a government scholarship, this time to Laghouat. At that time he painted his first two Algerian pictures: "les Terrasses de Laghouat" and "l'Oued M'Sila après l'orage". He won the silver medal for painting at the Exposition Universelle in 1889. In 1903 he bought a house in Bou Saâda and spent three quarters of each year there. He announced his conversion to Islam in a private letter of 1908, and completed his formal conversion in 1913, upon which he changed his name to Nasr'Eddine Dinét. In 1929 he and his wife undertook the Hajj to Mecca. The respect he earned from the natives of Algeria was reflected by the 5,000 who attended his funeral on 12 January 1930 in Bou Saâda.

Adapted from:
<http://www.goodreads.com>

Figure 6. Reading text from *Me and lifestyles*

Religion was mentioned once in the chapter in a section labelled ‘I read for pleasure’, a short biography featured the French born painter *Nasr'Eddine Dinet* (born as Alphonse-Etienne Dinet) who converted to Islam upon his visits to the south of Algeria after which he started to paint more religious subjects. Two interesting points worth discussion here are the title of the text and the type of knowledge the whole section promotes. As Figure 9 shows, the text is entitled *An Algerian Artist* while it is clearly stated that Nasr Eddine is of a French origin. The second point is related to how Islam is explicitly highlighted in the text, the biography card learners were asked to complete, and the supporting artwork conveying an image of Islamic Algeria.

Travel was repeatedly highlighted in *Me and lifestyles* through texts similar in style to the ones in *Me and my travels*; each of the four texts features a visit of a foreigner to Algeria. The relevance of travel to the theme of the chapter is unclear.

d. Me and my environment (MS3)

Me and my environment is slightly different than the previously analysed chapters in terms of content as it addresses global environmental issues in Algeria from the perspective of English-speaking countries. These include pollution, wildlife, and biodiversity. For the term project preceding the chapter, learners are required to either create a wildlife pictiography of animal and plant species native to their region or conduct a short survey on litter in their neighbourhood. Similar to *Me, my country and the world* and *Me and my travels*, all sections revolve around the theme of the chapter, meaning there is some kind of coherence in how the content is distributed over the tasks. What characterises *Me and my environment* is the choice of artwork and the represented characters, neither of

which learners can relate to immediately. For example, the artwork consists of images of rare animals and trees, traffic signs, and maps; and all but one (Algerian journalists) of the characters are fictional foreign professionals (i.e. a BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) representative, a Durham professor, UNESCO (United Nations, Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation) representative, etc.) whose gender is not identified. Further to referencing such characters, phrases like ‘Oxford dictionary’, ‘Cambridge dictionary’, ‘English eco-school’, along with the recorded transcript, indicate a representation of standard English.

The representation of culture in *Me and my environment* is barely visible in comparison to the other chapters; however, the selected issues (i.e. wildlife in Algeria, litter in the UK) and the geographical references (Algeria and the UK) suggest us-them dichotomies. Each section addresses global environmental issues, providing informative examples either from the learners’ native context, Algeria, or the target language countries (UK, Australia, USA). The aim of such examples is twofold: to raise learners’ awareness about caring for the environment and to broaden their knowledge about the ecological diversity of their country, first and foremost. For example, all tasks in *I listen and do* require learners to listen to three interviews about national parks and endangered animals in Algeria, then fill in gaps, tables, and cards. While the written outcome of the task shown in Figure 10 is both informative and culture-free, the setting of the interview, and the characters, and parts of the transcript involved suggest otherwise: a UNESCO representative speaking on BBC radio about biodiversity in Algeria: ‘*Algeria is home to a number of national parks with great ecological and cultural significance*’ listening to this, and other similar

statements, learners are likely to associate cultural diversity in Algeria with national parks and endangered animals which adds another dimension to the view of material culture reinforced in previous chapters.

Task 3. I listen again to the UNESCO representative speaking on BBC radio (Part 1) and complete the information in the fact file. The first answer is given.

FACT FILE	
Algeria's Biodiversity	
Continental Location:North Africa.....
Bordering Countries: and
Sea:
Area:, 381,741 square kilometres
Number of National Parks:
Importance of National Parks: and
Reason for establishing National Parks:

Figure 7. Example task from *Me and my environment* (MS3)

Another environmental issue was highlighted; England and UK schoolchildren were used as an example to raise learners' awareness about litter. Tasks are based on a fictional interview with the UK Eco-School representative on BBC Radio, during which they touch upon several problems caused by litter, and possible solutions including the actions individuals, communities, and schools can take. In one task, learners were required to reflect on littering laws in England: *'If you drop litter in a public place in England, the*

police will make you pay a fine of between £50 and £80, and a school that doesn't pick litter on its grounds can be fined up to £2500. What do you think of this solution?' (MS3, task 41, p. 123).

The same issue was addressed in *I read and do*; below is an extract from the reading text followed by two example questions:

Many Scottish schools have given rewards to pupils who have helped with tidying their classrooms or schoolyard at the end of the day... In many Scottish towns and villages, pupils have conducted a litter pick up in neighbouring streets and asked the council to add more bins. Organising a regular litter pick up in the community gives young people an understanding that the litter problem and putting litter in the bin doesn't just happen in school but should happen everywhere. (MS3, task 1, p. 139)

1. Why have many Scottish schools rewarded their pupils?

2. Do you think that picking up litter in school or in the streets isn't a good thing to do? Discuss with your class.

As I mentioned previously, out of the four analysed chapters, only in *Me and my environment* individuals, groups, and organisations other than Algerians are set as action models, and the first time – as I will discuss shortly – learners are provoked and asked to reflect. Interestingly however, what is set as an example is a practice (not a product) which a) is not exclusive to England and Scotland (other countries like Singapore have stricter littering laws) and b) would not affect learners' sense of pride or belonging; on the contrary in the following task, they are explicitly encouraged to take similar actions as responsible citizens:

Our school has applied to become a member of the International Eco-School programme. Therefore, I am going to write a list of ten eco-principles that should be discussed by my class and included in our School Eco-Charter. The School Eco-Charter is a document that lists all the fundamental principles related to the clearing of the environment from litter and the protection of endangered animals and plant species in my country. (MS3, I learn to integrate, p. 141)

Comparisons continue throughout *Me and my environment* but depict Algeria as a country which takes environmental issues more seriously than other neighbouring countries. The concluding section *I read for pleasure* features an adapted text in which Algeria's effort to deal with environmental issues are explicitly compared against Morocco and Tunisia. Below is an extract from the text:

Algeria is more advanced in nature conservation than its neighbours Morocco or Tunisia, with a comprehensive environmental law that includes nature conservation, a system of protected reserves and parks, and universities and institutions with specialised training in conservation. (MS3, p. 146)

The extract (and the text) suggests that although Algeria's measures are not as advanced and serious as those of England and Scotland, it is doing better than countries with similar economies. It is also interesting to look at how Algeria and Algerian organisations are referred to in the reading texts and listening scripts. Algeria is repeatedly represented as a diverse and organised country while individuals and organisations are always invited to take better actions.

The most interesting point about cultural representation that is common in the last three chapters (travels, lifestyles, and environment) is the voice

authors consistently used to refer to Algeria: the foreigner stating interesting facts about Algeria's nature and culture or reflecting on visits to Algeria. More often than not, these are English, both fictional and real; for example, one reading text was adapted from the *National Geographic* website in which one of the co-authors, Sarah Durant from the Zoological Society of London starts her notes with: *I am travelling through the magnificent red mountains and sandy plains in the Hoggar National Park in south central Algeria with my PhD students Farid Belbachir and Amel Belbach-Zadi.* (MS3, task 2, p. 140). Although Farid Belbachir is the lead author of the original article, Sarah Durant is featured as the only author, leading learners to draw conclusions about foreigners' knowledge of the cultural and ecological diversity of their country.

As the above analysis shows, the representation of culture in the four chapters is very much knowledge oriented. That is, besides developing language skills (the ultimate goals of all sections), most tasks encourage knowledge acquisition through providing learners with 'facts' about their first and to some extent the foreign cultures. For example, learners are frequently asked to listen to the same audio script or read the same text a few times and: fill in gaps, complete different types of 'fact files' and 'profiles', and act out dialogues. The main focus of such a strategy, as Risager (2018) points out, is to make sure that the cultural information is both understood and remembered. The construction of knowledge, with the exception of the term projects, is very limited; only occasionally, learners are asked to work independently and rely on other sources like the internet. Even the cooperative learning method which characterises the construction of knowledge (Risager, 2018) does not encourage learners to be active; tasks require them to work in pairs

and groups mostly to check and correct each other's answers, not discuss (see S1 for more examples).

In what follows, I provide a summary of findings referring to Littejohn's (2011) framework through answering the questions: what is there? What is required? and what is implied?

5.2.4. Summary of findings and discussion:

What is there?

As I stated earlier (see section 5.2.3.), the word 'culture' is not used in any of the analysed chapters; instead, learners are introduced to a variety of cultural aspects and references that are linked to countries, in this case: Algeria, the United Kingdom and other English and non-English speaking countries, respectively. These aspects include products and places and to a much lesser extent: practices and perspectives, all of which are represented in the form of factual knowledge. All of the represented cultures are portrayed as having some kind of homogeneity; Algerian culture in particular, is rich, diverse, and static. This echoes Sercu et al. (2005) and Ait-Aissa and Said (2015) and shows that the textbooks are heavily guided by the traditional approach of teaching culture which I explored in the literature review (see section 3.4.1.). It is also important to mention that a gradual increase in representation of culture was identified (from MS1 to MS3) which can be explained by the development in the language level of the learners. Regarding the use of artwork, overall, there is a good balance between the use of text and image in all four chapters; almost every other task is supported with an image that does not always relate to the specific topic of the lesson but to the broader theme of the chapter. Interestingly, most of these images are photographs, which, in line with Stranger-Johannessen (2015) and Efron (2020), are a more

accurate rendition of reality than drawings. Findings counter previous research conducted in similar contexts (Messekher, 2014; Ait-Aissa and Said, 2015; Abid, 2019; Abid and Moalla; 2019; 2021) which reported that foreign cultures predominate the Algerian and Tunisian EFL textbooks.

What is required?

In general terms, the chapters adopt a cross-cultural approach; learners are constantly required to work individually or in pairs to draw comparisons between their culture (Algerian) and the foreign one(s) highlighting differences first, and similarities - if there are any - next. This is consistent with Hermawan and Noerkhasanah's (2012) study, which investigated the representation of foreign culture(s) in Indonesian EFL textbooks, demonstrating that learners are continuously encouraged to compare between the native and the target culture on a superficial level. This means that cultural diversity in its broader sense (between cultures) is not 'presented as a normal element of human reality [...] but as something to be evaluated from one's own cultural perspective' (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p. 91).

Another key finding echoing previous research (Wenninger and Kiss, 2013; Stranger-Johannessen, 2015; Efron, 2020; Derakhshan, 2021) is that tasks hardly invite reflections and discussions, instead, they are time and space limited. It should be added here that the teacher's role as a 'facilitator' is passive; there is no mention of how they can use the help of the teacher. Instead, as the breakdown of the tasks shows, they are required to work in pairs or in small groups which can be interpreted as an attempt to promote learners' autonomy.

What is implied?

In line with previous research (Gulliver, 2011; Cheng and Beigi, 2012; Stranger-Johannessen, 2015; Efron, 2020), this study shows that the representation of culture in the textbooks is highly biased. More importantly, findings revealed that the main function of the textbooks is to strengthen national unity and belonging; this is seen in the excessive use of and reference to markers of Algerian culture and identity through texts but mostly through images. Learners are expected to acquire and transmit factual knowledge about their – national - culture to their foreign friends.

Analysis of tasks and text-image relationship demonstrated that the internal cultural diversity (within Algeria) was - to some extent - included but not acknowledged which echoes Efron (2020), who points to the importance of highlighting diversity within cultures in language textbooks. In the case of the current manuals, there are occasional mentions of cultural products from different regional cultures but are posited as part of the Algerian culture. Also, by foregrounding aspects that are related to big C culture and backgrounding those linked to small c culture, learners are likely to focus on what ‘they have’ rather than what ‘they do’ which can lead them to view culture as a static end-product rather than a dynamic process.

To sum up, data analysed in this section not only answered the first research question through examining the status of culture in the new textbooks of English, but also provided a “thorough basis” for the evaluation (Gray, 2010; Littlejohn, 2011, p. 201).

5.3. Evaluation: Approaches to ICC

Having analysed how culture is represented in the four chapters, I now evaluate how this representation can contribute to the development of learners' ICC. Thus, below I discuss how each of Byram and Masuhara's (2013) criteria (Awareness, Skills, Attitudes introduced in section 4.3.8.2) is addressed, supporting my evaluation with, mostly visual examples, from the three textbooks.

5.3.1. Awareness (Aw)

(Aw1) To what extent do the analysed chapters help learners to become aware of assumptions, values, and attitudes of the self and of others beneath utterances and behaviours?

The above analysis shows that some of the tasks and supporting material can be credited for encouraging learners to develop awareness of the different values and attitudes of the self *only*, and see beneath behaviours and utterances (Aw1); however, applying the criterion to the cultural representation of others revealed that some utterances and behaviours were left unexplained, raising questions about the real purpose behind selecting them. An example of the latter can be found in *Me and lifestyles* when foreign characters: Queen Elizabeth II and Elizabeth the grandmother (fictional) were pictured wearing headscarves without any indication of their significance. The headscarf has a religious significance for Muslim women, so these images may confuse the learners, especially since the task does not require them to interpret or reflect. I will come back to this point later.

In another example, Meriem (Algerian) asks Margaret (British) about celebration days in her country and Margaret answers: '*We have Christmas and Easter*' (MS1, p. 132) without providing the learners with illustrations about the value and significance of these events (Aw1). Linking Christmas and Easter to Britain may invite learners 'to make assumptions about culture and place' (Canale, 2016); thus, reinforce essentialist perspectives on culture.

Figure 6 (p. 155) shows an example of how knowledge-acquisition tasks are structured. The figure is taken from a task in *Me, my country, and the world* (MS1) where different characters – presumably the same age as the learners – from Algeria, Nigeria, China, and the USA share some information about their countries. This task a) adopts a cross-cultural approach linking the information to 'national cultures' inviting learners implicitly to draw comparisons (Canale, 2016) and b) depicts culture as a static phenomenon that can lead learners to conclude that all Nigerians, Chinese, or Americans share the same cultural aspects. Given the age and the language level (11-year-old beginners) of the learners, the textbook content is expected to ease them into developing a cultural and intercultural awareness rather than ICC through providing them with basic cultural tasks which are not confusing. Thus, for this purpose, tasks should not be challenging or overloaded with information; instead, a careful choice of language, artwork, and content can help raise awareness and avoid stereotypes.

Another important point about this task related to (Aw1) is the reference to religion in the Algerian text only and the clear distinction between 'national' and 'religious' aspects which can be interpreted from two different perspectives. First is the fact that in Algeria, unlike the other three countries illustrated, Islam is the main religion and is a fundamental aspect of people's life; thus, mentioning religious practices and beliefs when introducing

oneself seems normal. The second possible reason for the exclusion of other religious references is, as Al-Asmari (2008) points out, to protect learners from the potential influence of any sensitive practices that might be allowed in other religions but frowned upon or strictly prohibited in Islam. This indicates that for authors, religion is, to use Canale's (2016) terms, a 'heated' topic which requires a great deal of emotional investment on the part of the learners who, in the current case, might be perceived as too young.

Another point worth mentioning here is how the authors focused on material culture like artefacts, monuments, food, and jewellery, amongst others. Other aspects of culture like beliefs, values, and practices are more or less marginalised (see Appendix 7 for more examples on how culture is manifested in the textbooks through visuals depicting products, places, and people; these were extracted from the textbooks to show the reader how what can be identified as 'decorative images' are also there to reinforce the notion of culture as tangible static rather than raise learners' cultural and intercultural awareness). That is, cultural texts in all four chapters were mainly concerned with what cultural groups – or nations – have, rather than what they do or believe in (Yuen, 2011; Canale, 2016), which may reflect authors' big C view of culture. Most tasks feature a travel related topic treating the learner as 'superficial tourists' whose aim is to look at the outer layer of cultures (Elissondo, 2001, p.74). Research on cultural representation in FL textbooks shows that the touristic lens continues to dominate other aspects of ICC despite the continuous efforts and the explicit claims of authors and publishing companies (Kramsch and Vinall, 2015; Canale, 2016; Risager, 2018; Efron, 2020).

As illustrated in the analysis above, authors referred to the Algerian context in the vast majority of tasks. This extensive reference to source cultures in EFL textbooks, as McKay, (2000) points out, can be linked to learners' unfamiliarity with aspects of their own culture(s), or ability to discuss them in English; in which case featuring learners' culture(s) would not be seen as negative. What is even more interesting in the case of the current textbooks is how the source culture (portrayed as homogenous) is represented; I shall come back to this point in the following section.

5.3.2. Attitudes

(At1) To what extent do the materials help learners to treat cultures including their own in a relative or decentralised way?

And

(At2) To what extent do the materials help learners to be empathetic?

Developing - and reinforcing - positive attitudes about the Algerian self is one of the main, and apparent objectives of all four chapters. That is, instead of encouraging learners to decentre and try to look at their culture(s) from the perspective(s) of the other (At1), tasks aim at constructing a positive image of the national identity, possibly to promote banal nationalism in relation to that of the other. In a similar study, Liu (2005) notes that textbooks of English in China were designed to deliver a particular image of local Chinese culture rather than those of the English-speaking world; this highlights the debate about whose culture should be represented in FL textbooks.

Task 14. I listen again to the UNESCO representative (part 4) and write down the English name of each rare or endangered species mentioned in the table (task 11) under its corresponding picture.















Figure 8. Example of the use of artwork in *Me and my environment* (MS3)

The importance of “positive” attitudes can be spotted in the careful selection and distribution of artwork throughout the chapters even when the objective of the task is not, or is less cultural. For example, in the task illustrated in Figure 11 the use of Algerian postage stamps as a background to the pictures of endangered animals was not necessary, especially since the theme of the chapter is about environmental issues. It is also clear that the authors are inviting learners to think of Algeria as a country with a rich and outstanding heritage that is well recognised by the other and very appreciated by the self. This can be depicted through reference to international organisations like UNESCO whenever the Algerian map is illustrated (see appendices for more examples).

Looking at how these national references and other aspects of culture, like museums, monuments and crafts are addressed, the essentialist view of culture stands out and reinforces the idea of culture as a static entity (Canale, 2016). Also, learners are not explicitly exposed to the aspects of regional or subcultures in Algeria; apart from mentioning a few historical facts about the north and the south, the image of local cultures and communities is blurred. Instead, an image of a homogenous Algerian culture is projected. Foreign cultures, on the other hand, namely the English or British culture is perceived as changing and, in some cases, multifaceted. Although this is presented as ‘a series of simple contrasts’ (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p. 89) of what people used to do as opposed to what people do now; the recurrent use of ‘we used to’ and ‘I do/don’t’ instead of ‘we do’ indicates that certain cultural aspects may be perceived differently by members of the same group.

(At3) To what extent do the materials help learners to be wary of stereotypes?

Another very important criterion under the umbrella of attitudes is how FL textbooks are supposed to help learners avoid or at least be aware of stereotypes (At3) about the aforementioned hetero-stereotypes (others) and/or auto-stereotype (self). This issue was not addressed in any of the selected chapters; if anything, stereotypes were reinforced in some parts. Hetero-stereotypes are especially reinforced in *Me and lifestyles* (MS3) through the constant comparisons between and within cultures (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Canale, 2016) and through projecting a typical lifestyle of the other.

For example, in an attempt to address environmental issues and raise learners' awareness about rare animal species, in *Me and my environment* (MS3), Europeans were referred to from a rather negative point of view as illegal customers of certain monkey species native to Algeria (Barbary macaques). Equally interesting is the voice authors used to express this point of view: the task features an interview during which an English professor states that '*many Barbary macaques are smuggled by tourists from Morocco to Europe. We must put an end to this illegal trade of wild animals*'. The main purpose of this task and others is to show how rich and diverse Algeria is. In addition, the authors' choice to use the apologetic tone of the English *Professor Waters* to highlight an illegal act by other foreigners is better than using an Algerian character to make the point, which can be interpreted as an accusation, especially since the interview is written by the authors. Thus, the values authors intended to represent and highlight – animal care – can be interpreted as an act of stereotyping (Hinton, 2019).

(At4) To what extent do the materials help learners to retain their identity and acknowledge that of others?

The answer to this question depends on what type of identity Byram and Masuhara (2013) meant. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, several aspects of the textbooks (their names, introductions, titles of chapters, artwork, and texts) indicate that authors' attention was focused on the learner as an Algerian citizen rather than an intercultural or a world citizen; even their multifaceted identities – except the religious – are left under-represented. However, the analysis of *Me and my environment* may suggest that authors want learners to develop a sense of 'global responsibility'; therefore, see themselves as world citizens and act accordingly (Risager, 2018, p.197). This can be seen in the tasks revolving around litter, by reference to a UK school as a part of the Eco-School programme, asking learners to write a proposal to request membership in the programme, depicting the environment-friendly behaviour of Scottish pupils, etc. These examples indicate that the authors do not mind promoting global citizenship (although relying solely on English speaking countries call for us/them dichotomies) once there is a shared interest and when learners' national identity is not at stake.

Also, it is very important to note that the authors use every opportunity to remind learners of who they are and/or who they *should* be. In the following excerpts from the introductions of *MS3* and *MS3*, the authors were explicit in expressing their *hopes* about how learners can use English outside the school setting. This is what Risager (2018) refers to as indications of the 'imagined use' of textbooks:

ستتحكم في تقنيات التكنولوجيا الحديثة وتستثمرها للتعريف بتراث بلدك المادي وغير المادي لباقي اندادك في العالم حتى تكون لك مشارك فعالة في رفع راية وطنك خفاقة بين رايات دول العالم، وكن على يقين أنه لن يأتي ذلك اليوم الا إذا كنت متشبعا بقيمك الاصلية، واثقا من نفسك ومعتزا لهذا الوطن الغالي بالانتماء.

You will learn how to use ICTs to introduce the heritage of your country to the rest of your peers in the world so that you actively raise your country's flag among the ones of the other countries in the world but be sure that this day will not come unless you are immersed in your original values, and proud of your belonging to this dear country. (MS2)

Similarly,

ان تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال كتابك هذا سيتيح لك التحكم بكل احترافية ومهارة في استخدام وسائل التكنولوجيا الحديثة وكذا وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بكافة أنواعها، مبرزاً تميزك بصفات المواطنة العالمية وقابليتك للتعايش مع شعوب العالم بأسره في ظل القيم والمبادئ العالمية معتزاً وفخوراً بهويتك وثقافتك.

Learning English through this book will allow you to effectively use ICTs and social media platforms to show your global citizenship and your willingness to live among the world nations under global values and principles while proud of your own identity and culture. (MS3)

It is clear here that EFL is being looked at as a medium to present and represent Algeria to the rest of the world which Byram and Masuhara (2013) relate to being open to self-criticism. Also, reference to global citizenship as something learners already have and are ready to use, raises questions.

As already mentioned, learners' multifaceted identities are barely dealt with. For example, amongst the several ethnic groups in Algeria (see Chapter 2), a passage on traditional foods in Algeria only briefly mentions the Tuareg region. Religious identity on

the other hand, is depicted a few times in a “sleek” and almost invisible way. That is, tasks do not address it explicitly; rather, a short text would include a maximum of two aspects, or facts about Islam. Besides the example I discussed under the criterion of awareness (Aw1), the concluding section of *Me and lifestyles* (Figure 9) is an example of how one task can help learners retain their identity through including facts about the artist’s - *Alphonse-Etienne Dinet* - conversion to Islam and pilgrimage to Mecca, but fails to help them acknowledge that of others, through the title of the text ‘*An Algerian Artist*’. Bearing in mind the Algerian-French history, particularly Algerians’ struggle to re-establish a national identity post-independence, and the fact that the artist was a French national raise questions about the intentions of the authors.

Others’ identities are acknowledged, briefly and from a purely national perspective (using nationalities, flags, and maps). As discussed previously, in each of the four chapters, learners are repeatedly – either explicitly or implicitly – invited to compare what they (as Algerians) and their peers from the English-speaking world do or have. Interestingly however, the political dimensions and the relationships between the countries of England and Scotland or the union of Great Britain or the UK were not explained (Risager, 2018); tasks refer to ‘Jenny, a 14-year-old English girl’ (MS3), Scottish pupils (MS3), Margaret from Great Britain (MS1), or a group of English middle school pupils (MS2). Also, such references supported with images and photographs of *white* characters not only blurs the other types of identity but presents learners with an image of a homogenous, all-white England/Britain and leaves out all other ethnicities.

5.3.3. Skills

As far as skills are concerned, it is safe to report that the four chapters are not equipped with enough tasks that could help learners develop any of the four skills Byram and Masuhara (2013) identified.

(S1) To what extent do the materials help the learner to interact effectively with people from different cultures?

The type of interaction MS2 and MS3 encourage does not involve the teacher or any element of discussion; most tasks in MS1 are to be done individually. The teacher is not represented in any of the textbooks; instead, the authors used the learner's voice (*I do... I listen... I use the information... I check my answers, etc.*) in all tasks which suggests an attempt to develop their autonomy and help them to engage more in the lesson. Also, group and pair work are limited to *true or false* dialogues which do not encourage learners to “think outside the box” or build and express their own understanding (Pulverness and Tomlinson, 2013; Efron, 2020); instead, the approach positions them as passive consumers (Elissondo, 2001) of language and culture and focuses heavily on the comprehension of information (McConachy, 2009). Overall, most tasks provide learners with very limited opportunities of interpretation and reflection; at most, they are asked to identify “superficial issues of locating information in texts” (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p. 103).

Furthermore, tasks are supposed to be done within the classroom setting under the supervision of the teacher, so there is limited time and space for learners to explore and do research outside the classroom; as McConachy (2018, p. 86) points out, homework tasks can help to get learners “into the practice of reflecting on cultural representations”. The

term project (in all chapters) is the only prolonged task in which learners are instructed to work in groups.

The structure of all the interactive tasks is shown in Figure 12 below (it is repeated for every other task throughout MS2 and MS3). As can be seen from task 8, there is no room for learners' output; they are not encouraged to discuss their answers with their classmates or their teacher; instead, they are asked to compare and correct each other only. Subsequently, learners find themselves "practising a pattern rather than moving into a conversation" (Efron, 2020).

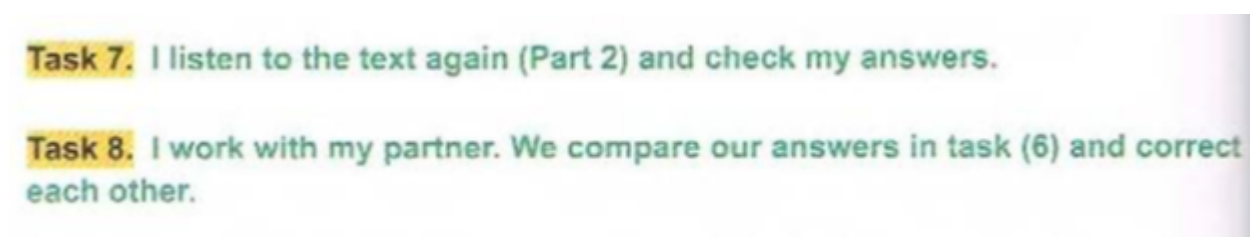


Figure 9. Structure of interactive tasks MS2 p. 114

On the few occasions where foreign characters are involved, their role is relatively passive with very limited interaction. In most scenarios, these are mainly fictional English individuals (pupils, students, journalists, researchers) who are either very impressed about what they encountered during their visits to Algeria or interested to learn about Algeria. Accordingly, learners act as informative, tourist guides, or like in most settings, the role of the Algerian citizens who are happy and proud to share the knowledge they have about their country with their friends around the world. Thus, at first, tasks may seem to encourage interaction with people from different cultures (S1), however, when looking at who is taking part in the dialogue and their roles, it can be concluded that the authors tend

to present only one side of the conversation, either the Algerian, or the foreign one, which means that there is no actual interaction. Similarly, Shimako (2000) found that Japanese high school textbooks of English emphasise Japanese culture and present the foreigner as a visitor learning about Japanese culture from Japanese individuals. The following is the main task in *I learn to integrate* taken from *Me and my travels* (MS3):

Andrew Williams, my Australian friend, is going to visit Algeria next summer. I'll be his guide. So, I organise a three-day tour for him to visit the most interesting places in the region where I live (museums, parks, forests, mountains, old medinas, souks, "ksours", traditional craft shops, etc.) I prepare a detailed itinerary of his tour using a map of my region with the necessary icons. Then, I send him his itinerary and the map by email. (MS3, p. 138)

Therefore, age and language level cannot be used to explain why third year (MS3) learners in *Me and lifestyles* or *Me and my environment* are not encouraged to take part in longer, less basic interactions with both their peers and the foreign (imaginative or real) characters introduced in the tasks.

(S2) To what extent do the materials help the learner to identify options for preventing or solving cultural conflicts?

The analysis of the chapters revealed that the authors did not include a single situation where learners can identify options to solve or prevent cultural conflicts (S2). On the contrary, all the situations are drawn from an ethnocentric perspective which is expected to comfort rather than challenge them. This is because, in most cases, texts are written to sound like non-negotiable sets of facts (Canale, 2016; Efron, 2020) about the culture of

Algeria rather than subjective statements and experiences which strongly reflect the aforementioned description of superficial tourists. Interestingly, however, and unlike what similar studies revealed (Risager, 2018; Efron, 2020; Canale, 2016) learners are positioned as tourists in Algeria; that is, the majority of tasks are designed to attract learners' attention and take them "on a journey" to discover the wonders of Algeria.

(S3) To what extent do the materials help the learner to acquire appropriate language from exposure to language in use in various cultures?

and

(S4) To what extent do the materials help the learner to acquire effective language from purposeful opportunities to use it in various cultural contexts?

Looking at how most tasks are set, criteria S3 and S4 are not met because learners are exposed to language use in only one cultural setting: Algeria. Even when this use involves the presence of the other, the interaction usually takes place within the learners' own context and from the perspective of the self vis a vis an individual from a different cultural background – the other. There are no examples of the language being used in diverse settings and contexts where learners would be perceived as guests, for example; this might lead learners to think that language use is the same regardless of the context in which it is used. Also, the situations and topics that are featured in the chapters are virtual and do not depict real-life interactions that learners may encounter. The use of emails to communicate with 'friends around the world' as opposed to other communication platforms like Facebook and Skype, and the selection of topics turn the supposedly natural interaction into what Abid and Moalla (2020) describe as 'formal correspondence'.

It is interesting here how interaction, or what Fenner (2015) refers to as dialogue, is presented. Referring to characters like English journalists, researchers, and students in situations such as interviews, emails, and radio talks might mislead the reader to assume that an intercultural dialogue between them (the self) and the foreign characters (the other) is taking place. However, when analysing the content of the tasks, the setting, the role each part plays, and the information (knowledge) exchanged, it becomes clear that it is merely an exchange of ‘factual’ knowledge which in some cases is biased (Canale, 2016). Dialogue in the FL classroom in all its forms is essential to the development of ICC; textbooks should encourage learners to discuss with both their classmates and their teacher (Fenner, 2015), and later, an internal dialogue should take place.

5.3.4. Summary of findings and discussion:

When applying Byram and Masuhara’s (2013) evaluation criteria one by one, the textbooks do not seem to help the learners develop ICC. In addition to primarily portraying Algerian culture and heavily focusing on transmitting ‘factual knowledge’, the manuals do not encourage learners to ‘decentre’ or find ‘a third space’ (Kramsch, 1993a); instead, they are expected to act as insiders and representatives of their culture which can lead to acts of stereotyping (Spence-Oatey and Franklin, 2009). Findings also suggest that a careful selection of artwork has been made to encourage positive attitudes towards the self and strengthen a sense of ‘banal nationalism’ rather than, for example, ‘intercultural citizenship’; this is in line with Byram and Masuhara (2013), stating that it is not an uncommon function of state-funded educational institutions which live within a paradox of “looking inwards to ‘our own’ group and looking outwards to ‘other’” (Byram, 2020, p. 26).

As for skills, the textbooks fail to provide the learners with rich opportunities for direct and indirect interaction with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The inclusion of foreign characters throughout the chapters might give the impression that exposure to language in use and various cultural contexts is achieved; however, upon a close examination of the roles of characters, it is concluded that the function of such representation is to deepen their knowledge about Algeria from a tourist-centred perspective. This mirrors Ait-Aissa and Said (2015) who reported that overloading EFL Algerian textbooks with tasks in which learners' culture is at the centre aimed to prepare them "to talk about their own culture" (p. 33).

Moving on, the evaluation revealed that the tasks do not invite learners to engage in guided class reflections or discussions of any sort; they are, instead, expected to acquire non-negotiable facts about their culture and the foreign one(s). This lack in discussion "fail[s] to foster the appreciation of cultural differences in a constructive manner and are inappropriate for the development of intercultural awareness" (Dendrinos, 2015, p. 36). It is not clear whether this exclusion of aspects related to CCA is due to hidden ideologies of the authors or the age and language level of the learners; whatever the reason is, Byram (1997) and Guilheme (2002), among others, call for language educators to implement CCA in all levels of FLL.

These accounts support previous research (Gulliver, 2011; Yuen, 2011; Hermawan and Noerkhasanah, 2012; Stranger-Johannessen, 2015; Davidson and Liu, 2020; Efron, 2020) which concluded that a strong focus on learners' culture comes at the expense of ICC. In the Algerian context, findings echo Messekher (2014), whose analysis of the cultural representation in the EFL textbooks of the previous curriculum showed that the type of cultural knowledge and the nature of tasks did not raise learners' awareness of the role of

culture in communication; therefore, did not prepare them to engage in intercultural communication. However, the findings counter Yassine (2006; 2015; 2015a), who concluded that there is an emerging intercultural approach to English language education based on a comparative analysis and evaluation of a series of middle and secondary school textbooks that were used in the late 1990s and early 2000s which raises concerns about the direction of EFL education in Algeria. Combined, findings from the analysis and evaluation show that the issue lies further than the representation of culture and the balance between the native and foreign cultures in the textbooks; it is in ‘how’ culture is represented; this is consistent with Abid and Moalla (2019; 2021) whose research revealed that prioritising foreign culture(s) did not contribute to the development of learners’ intercultural identity.

5.4. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I presented and discussed the findings related to the status of culture in textbooks and its potential impact on learners’ development of ICC; both are addressed through the first two research questions: How is the cultural dimension represented in the textbooks? And how can this representation contribute to the development of learners’ ICC? The analysis and evaluation of the chapters revealed that culture has been deployed from a rather essentialist perspective, restricting the difference between various cultures to geographical boundaries. In addition to hardly implementing tasks that promote ICC, the chapters focus a great deal on the Algerian context and project culture in Algeria as rich, static, and most importantly, homogenous.

Bearing in mind that these textbooks are not global but are locally designed by Algerian authors for Algerian learners, the focus on the Algerian culture should not be surprising; it is the underlying reasons, principles and implications that are worth interpreting. Thus, looking at how culture is represented in the selected chapters leads to concluding that the authors have specific objectives other than simply teaching English: 1. *To broaden learners' knowledge about Algeria*, 2. *To develop their sense of pride and belonging*, and 3. *To introduce and inform the other about Algeria*. Respectively, these would clarify why it is important to learn English at this stage.

In the succeeding chapter, I present and discuss the findings from the interviews with the participants. As I will discuss, the analysis of the authors' interviews shows that the textbooks do not exactly reflect their perceptions and goals and that there is a noticeable gap between their goals, how they think they illustrated them, and teachers' interpretations; and therefore, use of the manuals.

Chapter Six: Algerian EFL educators' perceptions and practices

6.1. Overview

In the previous chapter, I analysed and evaluated the cultural representations in four chapters selected from three textbooks of English that have been used in Algerian middle schools since September 2016, in order to answer the first set of research questions: 1. How is the cultural dimension represented in the textbooks of English? and 2. How can this representation contribute to the development of learners' ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence)?

In this chapter, I present and discuss the second part of the findings related to participants' perceptions and their teaching practices regarding the implementation of culture in the FL (Foreign Language) classroom, which answer the second set of research questions: 3. How do participants perceive the implementation of the cultural dimension in the English language classroom? and 4. How can these perceptions affect the development of learners' ICC?

An important point to mention again in this chapter is the relevance of textbooks to participants and to the study in general. Algerian teachers and learners of all subjects are instructed to use the textbooks designed by the MoE (Ministry of Education). However, if teachers decide to use different materials, they must make sure that they fit the principles of the curriculum. Given that the new textbooks had been recently launched at the time when I conducted this study, the interview questions focused on participants' own perspectives and practices without an explicit reference to any curriculum, apart from the

introductory question. However, all of them illustrated their views with examples and extracts from the new books and only rarely did they refer to the old ones.

I identified four core themes in the interview data: 1. Participants' definitions of culture, 2. Participants' goals related to the teaching of culture, 3. Participants' teaching practices, and 4. The obstacles affecting the development of ICC. The first two themes relate to the third research question and the last two relate to the fourth question. When relevant, I discuss the extent to which the professional background of participants in addition to their cultural background (three different regions) might influence their perceptions and practices. From here on, participant authors will be identified as **Aus**, participant inspectors as **Ins**, and participant teachers as **Ts**; **A**, **B**, and **C** will be used to refer to the research sites; for example, **B**, **T1** refers to participant teacher 1 from the research site B.

6.2. Participants' definitions of culture

As I mentioned previously in the thesis, culture is the main concept around which this study revolves; therefore, finding out how participants view culture was crucial since it is most likely to shape their practices (materials' selection, teaching methods, and assessment techniques) (Sercu *et al.* 2005). Yet, when asked, all participants without exception found the question of defining culture challenging, either due to the complexity of the term, or because of the language barrier (despite being encouraged to express their ideas in Arabic, French, and the Algerian dialects whenever needed). Consequently, their definitions, or their answers to the question: *How can you define culture?* were either very short or ambiguous at first: *'the culture for me, what is the culture for me, the culture for me is those beautiful things which make your mind wider without hurting your feelings'* (**B**,

T2). However, later during the interview, they would describe and name aspects and characteristics of culture which were more related to them and their regional culture(s). In most cases, these were related to concepts of big C culture: traditions, monuments, and food among others. For example, one teacher referred to the famous sights and traditions in her city to support her definition: *'For example here in Bejaia we have Gouraya, we have Amazigh [Tamazigh] beaches, we have Yenneyer. We prepare couscous'* (C, T1). Overall, participants' initial responses to the question were very similar to Simin's (2018) research participants who agreed that the concept is highly complex to define.

Also, it was very interesting how one teacher asked me what culture I wanted her to define, the Algerian culture, or the general definition of the concept: *'Algerian culture you mean?'* (A, T3). Similarly, another teacher was thinking out loud: *'How can I define culture as I am Algerian?'* (B, T3). For these two participants, and maybe others, the definition of culture can be customised according to geographical and national boundaries, both of which are among the common aspects of essentialism (Holliday, 2010; Baker, 2015). In some other cases, participants would ask me to share my definition of culture straight after they shared theirs as if to check whether they did well or not: *'You tell me, what is culture?'* (B, T1). This suggests that these participants might believe in the existence of a fixed, 'right' definition of the concept. That being said, in the following sections, I present and discuss the different standpoints from which participants define culture. In doing so, I grouped their definitions under five categories: culture as **the way of life, the behaviour, the heritage, the fifth skill, and knowledge.**

6.2.1. Culture as the way of life

The majority of participants, at different stages of the interviews, agreed that culture stands for the way of life of a particular community; first, they tended to state that culture was ‘*everything*’ after which most of them took as much time as possible to list all the different aspects that they thought constitutes ‘*everything*’. Consequently, the definitions they shared consisted of lists of various aspects which – according to them – distinguished the way of life of people but in no specific order or priority, a point which I will come back to later. For example, one teacher stated:

Culture is everything, how can I put it, it's the way of life of people, it's their identity, religion, history, geography, music, their food, the way they dress... you name it. (B, T4)

In addition to the tendency of listing aspects of culture, participants leaned towards the aspects which are considered as tangible, visible and accessible; thus, can be learned and transferred. Also, it was very common amongst teachers and authors to link culture to identity and religion, using the three concepts interchangeably. This view is further illustrated in the coming sections.

Only two participants declared that culture is complex and is more than the observable aspects. In what follows, a teacher shares her understanding of culture as a set of accessible and inaccessible features and emphasises the need to teach culture alongside language:

Culture for me is a whole, it is customs, traditions, behaviour, you know... it's everything. When we say culture, we are talking about something that you can observe, of course we have, let's say, the top of the iceberg, those that we can see, and we have the bottom of it, those that we cannot see and we need to go really, really slowly to explore; and for me as a language teacher, you should definitely be teaching culture with the language in the classroom, they cannot be separated. (B, T2)

Reference to Hall's (1976) influential metaphor of the cultural iceberg suggests that Teacher 2 is aware of the complexity and the different layers of culture discussed previously in the literature. Yet, as Baker (2015) argues, these conceptions and characteristics of culture as something that people 'have' and 'share' can easily lead to the formation of essentialist depictions of others, therefore, hinder rather than help the development of intercultural communication. Similarly, one inspector said:

Culture I think is everything. It's about the way of life, customs, traditions, beliefs... etc. it's not just about art, theatre, cinema and so on; the way people live, the way they get dressed... I don't know, sometimes you just look through the window and you see culture moving, the way people communicate, food, I think food is very important. (C, In)

This finding is in line with Pena-dix's (2018) conclusion, whose study aimed at investigating the teaching profiles of Colombian English language teachers, noting participants' reference to culture as 'the whole' can be interpreted as a 'shortcut' to avoid exploring the complexity of the concept (Risager, 2007).

6.2.2. Culture as behaviour

Second to perceiving culture as 'everything', two authors defined the concept as the 'behaviour of people'. They believe that culture is the factor that dictates and determines how individuals behave and react to everything; an assumption which Al-Omari (2015) disagrees with adding that there are 'myriads of factors' which can justify how people behave. To this end, one author summarised his definition as follows: *'I live culture I don't define it because where I go, I adapt myself. Culture is not a definition; culture is a behaviour' (Au1)*. Similarly, the second author stated: *'For me, culture is the behaviour of a person according to his tradition, religion, and environment' (Au3)*.

It is interesting to note that although both participants defined culture as a behaviour, their illustrations can be said to be very different: *Au1* for instance does not link culture to any specific aspect but draws on the ability to mediate and negotiate in different contexts which characterise the IS (Intercultural Speaker). *Au3* on the other hand, referred to a set of prior determined fixed rules and conventions which dictate individuals' behaviour; thus, their culture. In other words, *Au1* definition can be interpreted as what the individual as a member of a community *can* do and *Au3* definition as what the individual *has* to do.

6.2.3. Culture as 'the heritage' (Big 'C' culture)

One participant said, '*Culture in fact is the heritage of a community*' (*A, In*), which can be seen and observed, thus, should be protected. This view is closely related to the humanistic concept of culture (Alcón Soler and Safont Jordà, 2007) as a static element, or a product; thus, a big C aspect of culture that is visible and somehow fixed. This view of culture as a valued finished product overlooks the dynamic nature of the concept and is likely to lead to the formation of essentialist definitions of the concept (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Baker, 2015).

6.2.4. Culture as the fifth skill

Although few participants mentioned the relationship between culture and language, only one emphasised this in his definition. He linked the learning of culture to the learning of language through referring to one of the common notions about the status of culture in language learning. This notion perceives culture as a fifth skill (in addition to the other four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing) that should be taught in the classroom. The author said:

Language itself is culture, do you understand? If you use your higher order thinking, some people say it is the fifth skill, don't you think so? This is why I say that when you master a language you master the culture: the way we greet and congratulate one another, the way we listen to others, this is culture. (Au2)

Looking at culture as an 'expandable' fifth skill, Kramsch (1993, p.1) argues, reduces its significance to the process of FLT&L because culture is "always in the background, right from day one". However, according to Pulverness and Tomlinson (2013), cultural awareness is the first skill not the fifth. The participant (Au2) also acknowledged that culture 'manifests itself through language' (Kramsch, 2015); however, he believes that learning how to communicate effectively and appropriately automatically results in the learning of culture and vice versa. This is more congruent with Hymes's (1972) framework of Communicative Competence and what he refers to as the 'rules of use' (1979) of the SL (Second Language) which suggest that sociocultural knowledge is important for the success of any communication. This finding supports previous research conducted by Larzén-Östermark (2008), stating that the notion of culture as a skill can be considered as a type of knowledge, a 'knowledge how' to act and behave in an appropriate manner.

6.2.5. Culture as knowledge/knowing

This was most common amongst teachers of city A; they defined culture as a broad body of knowledge and sometimes as the process of knowing (learning). To explain what they mean by knowledge, participants provided examples of what constitutes culture; these included fields such as history, religion, and geography among others. In this respect, Teacher 2 stated:

Culture for me is a part of knowledge, a broader one. It concerns everything surrounding us, all sides of life: politics, sports, psychology, history,

geography, food etc. Culture is there to widen ones' knowledge about everything in life. (A, T2)

As the extract shows, Teacher 2 referred to culture as a body of knowledge that is out there accessible to anyone who wants to learn it. Sharing the same regional cultural background with the participants (Algerian/Chaoui), I can argue that relating culture to knowledge, both as a process and an end product (Goodenough, 1964), is highly influenced by the frequent use of the concept in Arabic. Often, when Arabs refer to culture or to a person who is cultivated, they mean the knowledge this person has as a result of learning; this teacher's statement is an example *'They will be cultivated, they will know more'* (A, T1). Also, it is interesting to note how Teacher 2 did not relate culture to any specific group, which supports my argument about the problems of translating perceptions from Arabic to English. This finding is consistent with Bouslama and Benaissi (2018) and Cuartas Álvarez (2020), noting that EFL teachers' understanding of culture is inspired by factual-based touristic perspectives related to the nation. These "deficiencies" in Algerian EFL teachers' perceptions of the concept of culture, according to Bouslama and Benaissi (2018), directly affect their perceptions of ICC (p. 130).

Defining culture as the process of acquiring knowledge, one teacher highlighted the differential concept of the term which says that culture is what differentiates people:

'Culture is knowing, it's knowing something that is different, or some points which are different from our own culture, knowing about other people's ideas, behaviours, and their way of life' (A, T3).

In her definition, Teacher 3, unlike Teacher, 2 covered to some extent the anthropological view of culture (Alcón Soler and Safont Jordà, 2007) which refers to the 'overall way of life' of a particular society without attaching any essentialist labels (i.e. geographical

boundaries) to the concept. However, highlighting differences in the classroom, in line with Cuartas Álvarez (2020), is likely to create ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomies and steer the learners away from acceptance and appreciation.

There was one distinctive definition in the data in which one participant, unlike the rest, did not emphasise any of the aforementioned perceptions, but related culture to how individuals perceive themselves and others:

Culture I think is the way of living, of viewing the world, viewing yourself and your society. You know, when you get to know yourself very well, and then the different views of the others: how people think, live, and behave; and how you think, live, and behave, you start to make comparisons, only then you can find yourself. Culture is how you see things. (B, In)

Although he mentioned the way of living and behaviour of people, the participant clearly believes that understanding diverse cultures allows for a better understanding of the self (Ryan, 2006); the ‘comparative juxtaposition’ (Byram, 2006). Also, it is important to note how the notion of culture as ‘product’ was absent from the definition.

Next, I set out the goals that participants want to achieve through implementing culture in the curriculum of English.

6.3. Participants’ further goals regarding the teaching of culture

The analysis of the interviews revealed that all participants are aware of the importance of addressing culture (either native, or foreign, or both) in the teaching of EFL. Even their objectives seemed similar at first; for example, they all share a vision of how the future Algerian citizen should be. For most of them, English is first and foremost a medium through which they can help learners to construct and reinforce their national identity and

boost in them a sense of pride and belonging. Second, but not always, other objectives – like learning to accept differences – can be discussed. Thus, under the umbrella of “a good citizen”, participants shared six objectives which I divided into two main goals: bringing up a “good” Algerian citizen and bringing up an intercultural citizen. Within each goal, I try to set out individual objectives by order of priority for the participants, from the most to the least important one. Also, it is important to mention that most of these objectives were captured in authors’ answers because unlike teachers and inspectors, they tended to explain and illustrate all of their decisions and choices regarding the implementation of foreign and local culture(s) in the curriculum and the textbooks they authored. Below I present and discuss the relevant data to each goal.

6.3.1. Bringing up “good” Algerian citizens

It was clear from the analysis of the textbooks that the main theme around which the selected chapters revolve is Algeria; what was not clear then was why the authors chose to overtly prioritise the Algerian context in the textbooks of English and how this is perceived, and applied, by teachers and inspectors in the field. The common explanation that all participants, except one teacher, agreed on linked emphasising the Algerian context in the textbooks to the development of a “good” Algerian citizen. To achieve this goal, they shared three objectives which I shall discuss in the following sections: **developing and protecting learners’ multiple identities, representing the self, and using English in real life.**

a. Developing and protecting learners’ multiple identities

Identity was the most prominent concept in all interviews. All except one participant expressed the view that helping learners to construct and strengthen

their national identity first, and their religious and ethnic identities next, were amongst the main goals of the new curriculum of English in Algeria. For them, English, in addition to Arabic and French, is yet another medium that should be used to remind learners of who they are. This means that teaching EFL should not exclude the Algerian contexts completely; instead, textbooks should be used to strengthen learners' sense of belonging. This can be done either explicitly through including tasks and activities which address the specific topic of national identity, or implicitly through adding symbols which represent learners' national identity to the background of activities (see Chapter 5 and Appendix C).

This reference to identity was brought up several times during the interviews; for example, one of the textbooks' authors drew on the lack of national identity markers in the previous textbooks to answer one of the introductory questions: 'What is the difference between the previous textbooks and the current ones?'

If we take for example the previous textbook of first year, I couldn't find one Algerian flag. It means here that the books were published without taking into consideration how we can include the core values of nationality and loving the country. (Au3)

This suggests that one of the main aims of the reform was to make national identity (and culture) more visible to EFL learners, which the analysis of some textbook chapters revealed was well achieved (see Chapter 5). Throughout the interviews, all participants, especially teachers, spoke repeatedly about how the new curriculum focuses heavily on the Algerian culture(s) in comparison to foreign ones. Yet, from the perspective of some, this strong emphasis is due of the fact that young learners do not know enough about their culture(s). In the following excerpt, the participant explains why she prefers to address British culture in her lessons:

I am telling you, to know the difference between the two cultures so the pupils will know more about their culture than what they know today. I see this is the purpose of the new curriculum, to make the pupils aware of their identity, their culture and to love their country, especially this, love their country. The new curriculum includes and focuses on the Algerian culture so that Algerian pupils will be proud of belonging to Algeria, or to a nation that has a rich culture because the young children now they do not know their culture, they do not know their tradition, so we are making them know this, let's say to get some identity marks (B, T4)

Then she added:

This is good but I am interested also interested in teaching foreign cultures; I would prefer a textbook which includes more information about British culture and tradition so that pupils know more about British people. You know now that they have Facebook, they can interact with English people and exchange information about culture and occasions.

Combining a sense of belonging with a sense of detachment in relation to the cultural dimension of FL is crucial (Guilherme, 2002). That is, learning about other cultures can indeed help learners learn about themselves and their culture(s) if the ultimate objective is to raise their awareness about the differences between cultures and promote attitudes of openness. Yet, according to Teacher 4, the more pupils learn about foreign cultures, the more they are able to distinguish and see themselves as members of the Algerian culture(s), and the more they become proud of their belonging. Thus, instead of making the strange familiar and the familiar strange (B, T4) appears to favour making the familiar more familiar. Also, the two quotations show that this participant and others (A, T4; B, T2) are experiencing “the apparent paradox of, on the one hand, being expected to reinforce national identity and, on the other hand, trying to make learners aware of, interested in and perhaps ready to identify with the world beyond the nation state, two perspectives often seen as incompatible” (Byram and Masuhara, 2013, p. 144).

Also, the teacher's reference to British culture as the foreign culture is a reflection of native speakerism which gives very limited space to learners to explore other cultures that are not associated to the English-speaking countries.

Unlike the participants who are in favour of what the curriculum and the textbooks address, two teachers declared that they feel a responsibility towards learners, one that leads them to use English classes as a platform to reinforce their multifaceted identities. One of them said:

This is our identity, our Algerian identity, this is our purpose as teachers of English, to let the pupils be proud of our country Algeria. It is a responsibility as we are teachers, "the teacher nearly became a prophet" yes, you don't forget this as we are Muslims and Algerians. (B, T3)

This and other extensive references to how the new curriculum of English should contribute to the strengthening of learners' national identity can be linked to what Bauman (2004) refers to as 'the crisis of belonging' in the global age which suggests that the textbooks' authors want to avoid the threat of globalism and the construction of multiple identities (Block, 2014) through focusing on representing national values (see Chapter 5).

Identity is an important factor in the development of IC (Deardorff, 2009). Using language textbooks to address topics of national identity is not new (see Efron, 2020) and should not be considered as an issue in developing ICC, provided that it is introduced carefully because learners, and individuals in general, need to develop a secure and inclusive identity before learning how to engage in an intercultural communication (Kim, 2009). The problem here is in the way the national self is represented by the textbooks' authors and addressed by teachers in the classroom; that is, whether this representation aims to promote

patriotism or nationalism. According to Ashwil and Huang (2009, p. 144), what distinguishes patriotism from nationalism is that the former “does not exclude openness to and even embrace other cultures” while the latter promotes and emphasises the interests of the national cultures. Another issue is the close relationship between identity and culture that sometimes leads to confusion and the use of the two concepts interchangeably, for example, in the way the teacher switches between Algerian culture and Algerian identity as if to highlight the ‘fundamental sameness’ (Cooper and Brubaker, 2000) of Algerians and mark the boundaries between them and others.

b. Protecting learners’ religious identity

As mentioned earlier, national identity was the most frequent, yet not the only identity participants were concerned about; religious identity is considered almost as important as the national one for all participants. That is, they are both fundamental, collective, and non-negotiable; but the religious identity should be protected and not necessarily strengthened. This can be explained by the clear and strong status of religion in Algeria and the role that learners’ environment outside and inside the classroom can play in protecting their religious beliefs and deepening their understanding of Islam; religion is taught throughout primary, middle, and secondary education.

Interestingly, all participants but one (author) brought up religion at some point during the interview but from different perspectives and for different purposes: to draw explicit and strong links between religion and culture, to highlight religion as a problem that affects culture teaching practices, and to declare that learners’ religion should be protected. About the last one, one author states:

I will tell you something: sometimes there is too much censorship, with my team we had a question which was very debatable, it was about using the word 'hamburger' in the coursebook. I said why not use it but one of my colleagues said: 'no, no, no, no, our religion does not allow use of the word ham!', and I said you are not going to use hamburger to eat hamburgers. The problem here in Algeria is that they use the words hamburger in Arabic which means a sandwich, but this child can go outside and ask for a hamburger which is not Halal (allowed in Islam) meat. (Au1)

The significance of religion to both authors is very much the same; both believe that learners' religious beliefs should be protected; however, their dealing with what appears to be a problem is different. *Au1* shows flexibility and acknowledges that the problem is in the misinterpretation and misuse of similar examples within the society; his colleague on the other hand, seems to strongly believe that anything that may confuse, contradict, or threaten learners' religion should not be discussed but immediately removed instead. In such situations, the textbooks can be used as a medium to raise learners' awareness about religious diversity which can promote attitudes of openness and curiosity rather than attitudes of approval and disapproval. Also, the different standpoints of the two authors are indicators of the heavy filtering process cultural representations in the textbooks went through, which in some ways explains the exclusion of any religious references in the textbooks except the occasional references to Islam.

c. Representing the (national) self

Following the main objective, which is learning and developing a solid foundation about the national self, the three textbooks' authors shared a similar objective which is learning how to talk about or represent the self to the other. They want learners to act as good representatives of the Algerian culture(s) in general; thus, for them, teaching

learners how to introduce the different dimensions of their culture(s) is necessary. This can be related to the description of the IS as a representative of his or her culture(s) which I argued against earlier in the literature.

English in the middle school aims to use a language which is new for them [the learners] so that they can [be] themselves without being shy of their origin, their country which is Algeria. They will be proud to speak about their flag, their country, their religion, their customs. Through this book, the pupil should be able, I would say, to know who he is first, in order to be able to explain to foreigners who he is, what is his own culture. (Au2)

In a similar vein, one teacher said: *‘So that they can speak about their culture and identity in English. To make it worldwide, they can tell them about the Algerian traditions, even occasions El-Eid and etcetera and what they do’ (C, T3)*. Clearly, both consider language learning as an opportunity for learners to “present themselves to the world” (Byram and Masuhara, 2013, p. 145); a standpoint which McKay (2000, p. 11) supports, stressing that there is a “need to acknowledge the value of including information about the students’ own culture”. Similarly, Modiano (2005) argues if learners’ distinct identities are not promoted in ELT, ELT&L will continue to be used as a medium of cultural and linguistic imperialism.

Seemingly, another author explained how they (the authors) want to reach a balance in the exchange of knowledge between Algerian learners and others from different backgrounds.

In the following extract, Author 3 explains his position:

In the curriculum, there are three core values that we should include in every sequence and task we suggest in the textbooks, these are: openness to the world, national conscience, and national identity. It means when a pupil could express himself or introduce himself to a foreigner saying: ‘I am Algerian, I am Muslim, my flag is... I love my country’ and so on. So here it is fitting the first principle of the new curriculum which is that now we are teaching and learning

English not just in one way, it is a two-way communication. It means we are to express ourselves and know the others, not just knowing the others. (Au3)

6.3.2. Using English in real life

One of the recurrent objectives amongst participants was the use of English in real-life settings; they believe that learners should be taught the language that is transferable and can be used in their everyday contexts. In this case, language learners are perceived as language users who are expected to express their personal experiences in the FL (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). Ideally, this positioning of learners as users is supposed to encourage both teachers and curriculum designers to teach and introduce both the linguistic and cultural components necessary for successful communication, in which case learners would act as ISs (Kramsch, 1999). However, for the participants of the current study, the context in which learners are expected to act as users of English is a predefined one; this can explain – to some extent – the great emphasis on the Algerian context in the textbooks (see Chapter 5 for more details). This indicates that Algerian EFL educators still prioritise communicative competence over ICC; authors, in particular, seemed confident about how they want learners to use English:

The question that is raised in Algeria: what is English for? Why do we study English... what type of English do we want in Algeria... what is the objective of knowing how to say this and that in English? how can I relate the curriculum to real life? (Au1)

This is congruent with Sercu *et al.* (2005) study that was conducted in six European countries and Mexico about culture in EFL teaching and the research questions for the current study. Sercu *et al.* found that the vast majority of teachers define the objectives of

FL education, according to its use for ‘practical purposes’ (2005, p. 23). On the same objective, one teacher added:

For example, on page 97, the first part of the activity is about pets in America and the second part is about horoscopes, the Chinese ones: the monkey year, the goat year, the horse year... etc. Here I don't really see the relation, it is cultural yeah, but what for? What is the use of it? But if we talk about pets, we can compare between how the British or Americans take good care of animals and how here in Algeria you would find kids chasing cats in the streets. You can raise their awareness about animals' rights and so on, but horoscopes, I personally don't teach it, never did anyway. (B, T2)

This extract shows that Teacher 2's decisions of inclusion and exclusion of cultural aspects is highly related to how learners can use and relate to them outside the class; that is, she includes what she believes is useful and beneficial and excludes the less useful, or even useless ones. Although the teacher acknowledges that both activities address cultural aspects, she explains how she prioritises and prefers to teach learners about the ones that they can, from her perspective, benefit from, arguing that learning about Chinese horoscopes will not contribute to their everyday practices. Another important point to highlight here is the reference to British and Americans as ideal pet carers which can be related to the notion of the NS. Such tasks are likely to promote positive stereotypes and attitudes towards the other. Also, it is important to note that the teacher did not adapt and move beyond the textbooks as it is encouraged in such situations (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013); instead, she decided to exclude what was not relevant to her teaching goals. Next, I present and discuss the data related to the second goal: intercultural citizens.

6.3.3. Bringing up intercultural citizens

Next to bringing up good Algerian citizens, textbooks' authors, and one teacher, shared other qualities which they hope their learners acquire; all of which characterise the IS, or

in this case, the intercultural citizen. Through the examples they shared, authors, in particular, expressed the need to shift from focusing on how learners can and should communicate in local contexts to preparing them to successfully interact in broader contexts, especially foreign ones. Accordingly, three objectives were identified: **accepting the other**, **deconstructing stereotypes**, and **global citizenship**.

d. Accepting the other

Developing attitudes of tolerance and acceptance is vital for the success of intercultural communication which only a minority of participants (Au3; C, Ins; Au1; A T1; A, Ins) highlighted; only they did not explicitly refer to ICC but to communication between the self and the other, who happens to be from the English-speaking world. According to one author (Au3), learners should not judge and/or show attitudes of disapproval towards the cultural practices of others just because they are different from theirs:

Here we have to prepare our learners or our kids to accept the others.... For example, when we say that a Scottish man is wearing a skirt, we should not laugh at him, because if you were in another case and you were wearing [a] kashabiyah [traditional Algerian coat/dress for men] for example, other people will laugh at you too, but you should not laugh, it is their culture. I am not asking you to wear a skirt as a boy, but in Scotland, they wear skirts, it is their culture, and we have our culture. But this does not mean that we have to forget our culture and behave as the others. (Au3)

The participant's illustration of attitudes of acceptance indicates his hope for learners to act like "diplomats able to view the different culture from a perspective of informed understanding" (Corbett, 2003, p. 2) and decentre when necessary. To further illustrate his view the participant added:

Last year a teacher asked me why we introduced Christmas and Easter in the new book, I asked her did you read the curriculum and I was sure she didn't, then I told her that it is mentioned in the ninth guiding principle of the curriculum, that teaching and learning English in Algeria is a two-way communication, we have to respect their celebration days as they have to respect ours. (Au3)

This situation is an example of how authors' objectives are interpreted by teachers, who in practice, have the authority to change the learning material, provided that they keep the objectives of the lesson. It is therefore clear that authors' objectives and grounds for highlighting difference are not well communicated to teachers, which can hinder the development of ICC regardless of how it is presented. This example also sheds light on the influence of teachers' perceptions and attitudes on their practices. From a similar perspective, one inspector explained how the 'core values' of the new curriculum of English are meant to help learners to accept differences:

This year we have something called 'core values', so learners are supposed to know themselves and their country in order to learn about others; we do not want a citizen hating the others without knowing why, so we want learners to know their identity and to be proud of it, and as well to understand the others, they live differently, they have different views about things, [this] does not mean they are enemies, but they... you can understand them, if you understand them, it is their way of doing things and you have your own way of doing things. (C, In)

Participants' focus on attitudes of openness and acceptance is in line with Petosi and Karras (2020), noting that EFL teachers tend to lean towards the dimension of attitudes when asked about how they implement ICC in their praxis. However, this is to some extent in contrast with Atay et al.'s (2009) findings which revealed that Turkish EFL teachers

support their learners to move beyond accepting differences and more towards looking inwards and understanding their own culture better.

e. Deconstructing stereotypes

One of the authors expressed his concern about the potential effect of stereotypes on learners' willingness to learn about and accept the other, which suggests that the curriculum of English should be aiming at deconstructing, or at least avoiding stereotypes. He said:

What kind of citizens do we want in Algeria? a citizen who does not live with stereotypes, a citizen who does not throw allegations, a citizen who does not think he is always right... because we tend to label people, always in my mind [are the words of] the Turkish writer, Orhan Pamuk: 'I am the other'. (Aul)

Stereotypes are considered as one of main factors that affect the development of ICC; Jandt (2013) reports that they are the 'major barrier' in the intercultural communication between American and Arab people. That is, the stereotypes people construct, or learn about each other can have a long-lasting effect on their interaction. However, when stereotypes are discussed, more often than not, it is the negative hetero ones that are perceived as problematic, so they are prioritised, although deconstructing auto stereotypes can have better impacts on the development of learners' attitudes. This means looking at the self, or the native culture(s) from a more critical lens and going beyond accepting things as they are. This is very close to developing CCA which I discuss further at the end of the chapter.

f. Global citizenship

It is interesting to note that in all the interviews, only a few participants referred to ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) or as a language of communication without implicitly or explicitly referring to NSs. This suggests that, for them, English language relates to the countries where English is the native language: the UK, US, and Australia. Amongst all participants, only one acknowledged the impact of globalisation on FLT and argued against using English to raise active Algerian citizens. This teacher did not see the implementation of foreign culture(s) as a threat to the development of Algerian learners' multiple identities. The teacher summarised his objective as follows:

You know, I'm not building a pupil who can write and speak, I am building a citizen, a future citizen okay, a citizen of the world. I am not trying to build a citizen of Algeria, this is culture. If you take from culture what you need to build a citizen, an international citizen, a world citizen... this is the best thing that you can do for pupils. If you go wherever in the world, everybody is looking for this, every educational system is trying to build a world citizen except us, or except the Arab world, we are trying to you know, we say 'we are Arabs, we are Muslims, we are not...' no no no. They (the occidental) have very important very interesting things; we can take this from here and this from there and build a world citizen. A world citizen means a citizen who accepts the differences, a citizen who is at peace with himself. (B, T1)

As observed in the first part of the extract, *BT1* argues against perceiving linguistic competence as the aim of language education and expresses the need to move beyond perceiving learners as active citizens, to preparing them to act as international citizens. The definition of a world citizen as someone who accepts differences and is at peace with himself indicates the teacher's awareness of the importance

of decentring. The rest of the quote sends different, almost contradictory messages; on the one hand, the teacher states that there is an urgent need for the educational system in Algeria to cope with the change of education on the global level, explaining how this is hindered by the ideological distinction of 'us' vs 'them' in this case 'the Oriental' versus 'the Occidental'. On the other hand, the statement *'They have interesting things... we can take this from here and this from there and build a world citizen'* others the Occidental and reduces foreign cultures to sets of good and bad aspects that can be borrowed.

Before moving to the next theme, I want to shed light on two points. The first is related to participants' constant use of the term 'citizens' instead of other terms, like individuals or persons suggests that they always identify learners as Algerian. For these participants (Au2, Au3, BT3, BT4), education for citizenship is still focused on the nation-state (Byram, 2006) which corresponds with Anderson's (1991) notion of 'imagined communities'.

The second, more important, point is about the gap between the objectives of the authors and the inspectors, and those of the teachers. At first, they all seemed to have the same goal of developing and protecting the learner's multifaceted identities. However, the examples and experiences each group of participants shared in the interviews indicate that what the authors aim and believe they achieve is not the same as what teachers interpreted, believed in and delivered in their classes. For example, all three authors and two inspectors were aware of the importance of IC for learners, this was not explicitly stated but was rather depicted from their answers where they addressed objectives like accepting the other and deconstructing stereotypes. Also, it is interesting to note that unlike teachers, authors did not emphasise religion in their definitions and perceptions of culture, which

again shows that there is a gap in how the new curriculum of English is interpreted and used.

Teachers' responses indicate that they are still committed to the traditional approach of teaching culture which aims at transmitting information and factual knowledge about the culture of foreign language (mainly the US, the UK, and Australia). This can be explained by the lack of clarity of the authors' goals in the curriculum, the teacher guide, and the textbooks (as addressed in the previous chapter), and the lack of teacher training, which two inspectors flagged: *'The challenge is in the way it (culture) is taught by teachers, teachers lack training. But in theory, I think everything is in favour of intercultural competence' (C, Ins)*.

Next, I present and discuss the relevant data to answer my final research question: 'How do participants' perceptions affect their pedagogical practices?' To do so, I first set out teachers' practices regarding the teaching of culture in the FL lesson; I try to answer the related questions: what culture(s) do they teach and how? Then, I address the obstacles which seem to affect the promotion of ICC in the classroom; the obstacles I identified are related to both participants and learners.

6.4. Participants' culture teaching practices (the what and how?)

In this section, I shed light on teachers' pedagogical practices regarding how foreign culture(s) are introduced in the classroom. These are related to two questions: what culture(s) (native or foreign) do they teach and what approaches do they use to do this? In the beginning of the interviews, all teachers and two inspectors agreed on the importance

of implementing culture in the lessons; yet, not all of them agreed on which culture(s) should be prioritised or how. Some of them acknowledged the relationship between culture and language and referred to the common debate about their inseparability to explain their views. For example, one teacher said: *'culture and language, it's like two sides of the same coin... they exist together, you cannot separate them'* (B, T2); similarly, one inspector declared: *'I think we cannot really extract a language from its culture'* (C, Ins). Similar responses were shared by other participants which initially suggested that teachers, particularly, would transfer their beliefs to the classroom (Sercu *et al.*, 2005).

However, the examples they shared were not always congruent with what they believe which indicates that there are two types of teachers. First are those whose practices are directly linked to their beliefs; these are the teachers who stated that learners need to *know* about other people's cultures. Thus, when asked to share examples from the classroom, they referred to the traditional approach which relies on transmitting factual knowledge 'about' the culture or the country concerned (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993) with little or no reference to the other components of ICC. Second are the teachers whose practices do not reflect their beliefs. Most of them emphasised ICC related objectives and talked about how they want to promote attitudes of openness to the world and accepting the other; yet in practice, their approaches are very similar to the first group of teachers who focus on the knowledge dimension only.

As to the question of which culture(s) they introduce in the classroom, most teachers leaned more towards the local culture(s), mainly for reasons of familiarity and suitability. Therefore, when foreign cultures were mentioned, teachers explained that they are very careful in selecting the materials they

want to use and mostly try to adjust materials to suit the learners' (mainly religious) environment; I will discuss this point in more details in the coming sections. It is important to note that when interviewing participants, I made sure to always refer to 'foreign' culture rather than 'target' culture; however, as I shall illustrate shortly, all but one, associated foreign cultures with the national cultures of inner circle countries (UK, US, Australia); the remaining participant referred to an aspect of Spanish culture.

In what follows, only the question of what cultures are being taught is explicitly addressed through stating the three common options teachers shared: **native culture(s) only, native culture(s) first, and foreign culture first**; the methods they use are discussed and illustrated within each option.

6.4.1. Emphasising learners' culture(s) only

A group of teachers explained that they are in favour of the new textbooks because of the fact that they focus more on the local contexts than the foreign ones, arguing that once learners are familiar with the context of the lesson, it is easy for them as teachers to get the lesson going and achieve their objectives, since learners cannot be motivated to learn about something they cannot relate to or identify.

It is a natural thing when someone talks about something related to him or his country, I mean in general to his identity. It encourages him to be more involved, it encourages him to communicate and to interact in the class using English but when you talk about something the pupil does not know, for example monuments in England or the USA or Australia, you do not really find interaction and motivation in the class. You are asking him to talk about something he doesn't know [about], there is a lack of motivation and encouragement. But when he talks about something related to his country and

identity, he is more motivated, if I can use this word, he is more stimulated, you stimulate him to talk about something he knows[about], hence, he will use English to do that. (B, T2)

Beside the fact that a good number of participants seemed in favour of the new textbooks' way of representing the native culture for reasons related to national belonging and identity, others, like B, T2, seem to look at the learners' culture as a motivational factor to achieve a primary goal, that is develop learners' communicative competence which suggests that if the learners were to show interest in the foreign culture, the participant would incorporate more foreign culture aspects. This finding is in line with previous research conducted in similar contexts (Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi,1990; Mahmoud, 2015; Shah and Elyas, 2019), which revealed that EFL teachers believe that their learners can be more motivated to learn English if the context of learning is related to their lives rather than the English-speaking world. Shah and Elyas (2019) argue that one of the main reasons why the teaching of English is not successful in the MENA region is the lack in the representation of learners' culture. Although this approach - focusing on the local culture(s) solely - may help learners adapt to the language in the beginning (Mahmud, 2019), as learners' linguistic competence develops, their ICC is less likely to develop due to the dominance of their native culture(s) both outside and inside the classroom. Therefore, the teaching of language should be associated with the teaching of some cultural aspects of the language in order to achieve what Byram (2013) refers to as "humanistic goals".

6.4.2. Emphasising learners' culture(s) first

A few teachers advocated that comparison is the main and most effective approach through which they can get learners motivated to learn about other cultures. They stated that

whenever they want to introduce a new cultural aspect in the classroom, they would first try to introduce a similar aspect from the learners' native culture(s) to draw their attention and make them feel comfortable. Then, they would introduce the new ones and ask learners to compare between the two cultures, an approach Sercu *et al.* (2005) found common amongst FL teachers. For example, Teacher 2 states:

I will start with the Algerian culture because I need to start with something familiar which learners can identify themselves with; then I move step by step to the other cultures. (A, T2)

Similarly, another teacher added:

Well, I first start by their own background, it makes it easier to know about... to move to another culture. I can't present directly to them something that is strange. I try to present our own culture, then move to other cultures, they are still beginners so they can't make the difference easily. (A, T3)

Starting with the familiar context can help ease learners into the foreign one because then they can relate it to their own (Kramsch, 1993; Mahmud, 2019) and look for similarities or differences. This approach is especially helpful for young learners who may not be familiar with aspects of their own culture and may experience culture shock when they come across new aspects without any introductions from the teacher. However, research suggests that comparing 'national cultures' (Canale, 2016) eventually leads to drawing stereotypical conclusions. Thus, comparison can help to promote ICC only if it is followed by other activities through which learners can "empathise with the foreign cultures' points of view" (Sercu et al., 2005, p. 13) and reflect on their own as well as the foreign one(s).

One teacher provided a different explanation to why learners' native culture(s) should be prioritised. He believes that as a teacher, he should first develop a sense of pride in learners and teach them all about their native culture(s) before moving to introduce any new aspects:

We try to make them proud of being Algerians, we teach them about their own culture first; then we try to make them aware of and open to the world and teach them more about other cultures like the American and the British (B,T3).

This extract suggests that Teacher 2 wants to avoid the 'crisis of belonging' I introduced earlier, through focusing on introducing Algerian values first. I believe this approach can be useful in one situation, if the teacher thinks that learners might lean toward and prefer the aspects of the foreign cultures as opposed to their own. Yet, what one teacher believes to be a threat to the learners' belonging might be seen as normal by other teachers which again bring up the issue of suitability of materials and who and on what basis this is decided.

6.4.3. Emphasising foreign culture(s) first

Some teachers chose to focus on the native culture(s), others showed interest in implementing aspects of foreign culture(s) that did not clash with the learners' own culture(s) and religion. Most of these teachers reported that they did not want to compromise learners' religious identity through presenting what can be considered sensitive or inappropriate topics, even if they are addressed in the curriculum. Therefore, they would carefully evaluate the suitability of any culture related materials before bringing them into the classroom. This is congruent with Jandt's (c2013) statement that "religion and tradition are probably the strongest influencing predictors of Arab attitudes".

To this end, Teacher 2 explained how she selects the suitable materials to address aspects related to foreign cultures based on how suitable they are in terms of religion:

I would opt for the foreign one first, but I won't take it as it is, I will tell you why, I will go back to adaptation because I believe that everything should be adapted, according to our religion, background, and traditions too. I will take English material for example, but when I reach a point which contradicts with my religion or my traditions, I drop it and change it immediately... you know in some texts in the books we've got now, we've got texts which talk about boyfriends; boyfriends in my culture is forbidden, only marriage is the right relationship between men and women. (A, T2)

Similarly, another teacher illustrated:

There has to be a lot of selection and adaptation to be honest. I mean I can't teach something that does not go hand in hand with the learners' own culture. I can teach them about other countries' food, religion, history, especially history, heritage, even geography but not something that seems to contradict their cultural or religious beliefs. Let's go to Japan as an example, schoolgirls wear miniskirts as a uniform and boys wear suits; I can't show pictures of miniskirts to middle school pupils in Algeria with that cultural and religious background, [it is] not really OK. Sometimes I look for authentic materials and I find difficulties showing learners some pictures and videos because of people's way of dressing, this is my point of view of course, other teachers here in Algeria have no problem doing this Can you imagine, once I made copies of a lesson which contains a swimming outfit, after a lot of thinking I decided that it is not appropriate at all for MS2 or 12 year [old] learners to see these pictures, they don't need it, I can draw it, this is just an example... the idea is, if something contradicts your learners' cultural background or religious beliefs, it is better not to teach it at all. (A, T4)

Both extracts show that the teachers are happy to implement aspects of foreign culture that do not affect learners' religious and cultural backgrounds. *A, T4* appears to be more flexible and willing to look for alternative methods and materials to introduce culture in the classroom, which indicates that he is aware of the importance of the cultural dimension in language teaching. Also, stressing that this is his way of selecting materials and mentioning that other teachers do not have a problem in teaching cultural aspects which do not exactly fit with the Algerian learners' religious and cultural beliefs shows that he is aware of and respects the different approaches to addressing foreign culture(s).

A, T2 however, appears to always evaluate any culture related materials from a religious lens. Religion, of course, is regarded by many as an integral aspect of culture (Zaharna, 2009); yet, in other situations where the majority of a society share the same religious beliefs, religion and culture are inseparable, and sometimes would be used interchangeably to mean the same thing. In Algeria, like in other Arab Muslim countries, religion plays a fundamental role in shaping people's way of life (Al-Kandari and Gaither, 2011) which explains why these two teachers, and others, prefer to adapt aspects of foreign culture(s) to fit the learners' cultural, thus religious, background. Byram (1997) refers to the 'fear of western values' Arabs and Muslims usually have. A fear which suggests that the main difference between Arab and Western culture is religion; thus, everything should be analysed and evaluated from a religious perspective. Clearly, teachers choose to adapt their teaching materials to fit their teaching contexts and the needs of their learners which shows the importance of selecting and adapting resources in FLT (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013).

The continuous implicit and explicit reference to religion by the participants supports previous research (Shah and Elyas, 2019), revealing that the use of what can be described as ‘inappropriate images’ in language textbooks that are designed for Muslim learners is a “fundamental flaw” (p. 13). This can also explain the lack of representation of foreign cultures and foreign characters in the textbooks as discussed in Chapter 5.

When participants were asked how they would introduce a new, not necessarily foreign culture in the classroom without using textbooks, they took a moral approach based on religious beliefs, which again highlights the thin line between culture and religion. As this teacher explains:

I can refer to the tomato festival in Spain for instance; I would show them a video where people run in the streets playing and having fun with tomatoes. This I think is going to provoke them and they will say ‘Ah Miss! They are playing with food, they should not play with food, it’s haram (forbidden)’. I can provoke them by asking, ‘What do you think? do you agree or disagree?’ (B, T2)

The previous teachers explained how they select materials according to what should and should not be taught. B, T2 brings the discussion to the classroom and together with the learners, she talks about cultural diversity as something to be evaluated from one’s own cultural, in this case religious, perspective (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013), thus provoking attitudes of disapproval. According to Kramch (2015), culture has always been linked to these notions of right and wrong. However, the use of these references with young learners who are still in the process of learning about themselves can result in them constructing negative stereotypes just because they do not share the same religious beliefs. Even if the intention of the teacher is only to get learners engaged in the lesson, such sensitive examples

can affect their reflection on the self and their readiness and willingness to learn about and accept the other (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). Instead, the teacher's job, according to Byram (2008), is to make sure that learners have a good understanding of the custom as it is perceived by the people who practise it. That said, religion should not be used to only criticise and evaluate the other (Wringe, 2007) regardless of its status. Teachers, curriculum designers and textbook authors should carefully choose the cultural topics they want to address and the methods they want to use. Participants' perceptions of 'good' and 'bad' cultural references are in accord with Elarbash's (2019) findings, which revealed that despite their interest in and willingness to implement foreign cultures in their praxis, EFL teachers prefer to focus on positive aspects and exclude anything that contradicts or does not go with the learners' values and beliefs.

Amongst all participants, only one teacher (C, T1) did not refer to religion or to the adaptation of materials in her examples.

For example, last year I asked my students to gather information about the most important monuments in the world: Taj Mahal, Eiffel Tower, Maqam El-shahid (Martyrs' Memorial),. We have discussed their wishes to visit Turkey, India, or to attend the international rugby match in Australia, and I let them make projects about their hobbies, not only Algeria but overseas. I did not oblige them to write about my topic, when they write about their topics they enjoy this, when they write about their own subject they enjoy it, and I display it in the class during the whole year. (C, T1)

Even though participants responded in three different ways, it was clear that the native culture(s) has a significant impact on the FLT&L process in Algeria and this can be linked first and foremost to the distance between the cultures, which can also be the reason why

all teachers chose to focus on highlighting the differences rather than the commonalities, if there are any. This assumption can lead learners to resist and fear interacting with the other (Secru *et al.*, 2005).

As observed, teachers' practices reflect their assumptions about the internal homogeneity of national cultures and that there is 'a definite Self and a definite Other', leading to the formation of stereotypes and prejudices (Guilherme, 2002, p. 126). This can be seen through the constant reference to national as opposed to minority/regional cultures. Overall, the findings of my study are similar to Secru *et al.* (2005) with respect to what FL teachers prioritise and the extent to which their practices reflect their perceptions. What I consider different from the previous studies is that I tried to uncover the reasons behind this. Next, I present and discuss the findings related to the factors that affect the teaching of culture, hence the development of ICC in the classroom.

6.5. Factors affecting the development of ICC

In this section, I set out the factors which affect the teaching of culture, therefore the development of ICC, in the classroom; these are related to both participants and learners. Some of the factors were explicitly mentioned by the participants during the interviews while others were inferred from their perceptions and the classroom examples they referred to, to defend their views as to why foreign culture was not their first-choice content of the lessons. To this end, the issues I discuss below are related to the **perceptions and experiences of participants, their pedagogical practices and the learners**, respectively (their level and the fear of acculturation).

6.5.1. The tourist lens

As discussed in previous sections, it is clear that participants, teachers mostly, tend to refer to culture teaching approaches common to the touristic approach rather than knowledge transmission process. The former can be more superficial and more likely to result in the formation of cultural stereotypes for learners. Kramsch insists this is ‘no longer appropriate’ (2006, p. 251). In the following example, the teacher shares her culture related classroom activities on the theme of food:

I am really interested in teaching foreign cultures, especially British culture. For example, in MS4 we have a lesson about traditional dishes in Algeria, Couscous and Thrída and so on, In the lesson, I have prepared the text about the Sunday roast which is a traditional British meal. Then when we start the lesson with photos and so on I ask them: ‘Do you know any British traditional dish?’, they give me some names and it was very good: Yorkshire pudding and it was included in the text and some pupils tell me that there is very famous chef, Jamie Oliver and he is British, it was very good. One pupil told me that there is a conflict between the French and the British about pancakes, the French say it is ours - les crepes, and the British say it is pancakes. It was very interesting. (B, T3)

Interestingly, the tourist-like approach is not exclusive to the foreign – in this case British – culture; rather, as the teacher’s example and the textbooks’ analysis in Chapter 5 show, it can be even more common when addressing learners’ culture(s) so that the teaching of English enables learners to learn about and discover the different aspects of the Algerian culture. This finding is supported by previous research which labelled this tourist-inspired approach as deficient (Cuartas Alvares, 2020), concluding that it hinders the development of ICC.

6.5.2. Religion

In previous sections I referred to religion as an important criterion in determining how the teaching of culture takes place. Teachers tend to perceive and evaluate foreign cultures from a religious point of view (Croucher, 2017). This, I believe, is due to the importance of religion in Algeria and its effect on people's way of life. As I mentioned earlier, for Muslims, Islam is perceived as a way of life; a perception which is very similar to the common definition of culture. This can explain why culture and religion can sometimes overlap and cause confusion amongst individuals who do not share the same religious beliefs. I now refer to religion as a sensitive, and 'heated' topic (Canale, 2016) that affects participants' understanding of culture (especially teachers), therefore, their willingness and readiness to introduce foreign cultures and promote ICC among learners.

In line with Miliani (2011), reference to Islam and the Quran is a constant feature of all educational matters in Algeria. Going through the examples in which religion was mentioned (either explicitly or implicitly), I identified three groups of teachers: **the first** group consists of the ones who believe that religion and culture are synonymous; therefore, view every aspect of foreign culture through a religious lens before deciding whether it is suitable to be introduced to young Muslim learners or not. Teachers prefer to drop the part of the lesson related to culture instead of looking for other aspects which do not compromise Islamic beliefs. Mahmoud (2015) amongst others, supports this approach and calls for the need to implement Islamic Arabic culture in textbooks of English, arguing that incorporating foreign cultures can cause a 'serious fear of losing identity'.

The second type consists of the teachers who are aware of the importance of religion in their environment and also evaluate cultural materials through a religious lens. However, they showed a willingness to address different cultural aspects that do not challenge learners' religious beliefs. One teacher said:

I am not against, but you know, we are Algerians, we are Muslims. The thing is, in every culture there is something good and something bad. So, what should we do, I am going again to improvising and to modifying. If you think it is suitable and it is right, you teach it, or you introduce it, you try to make people aware about it. But if you think it doesn't serve your culture, it doesn't serve your religion, just put it aside okay. For example, drinking wine is a culture of the occidental alright, it is occidental, it is in their culture. In England, did you count how many pubs they have? It's incredible, they have pubs in every corner. I will not tell my kids about the pubs in every corner. I will tell them about the green spaces they have everywhere, they have museums in every corner, theatres, music. This is what I can show my pupils, I will not talk about homosexuality, I will not talk about pubs and all the bad things that I... you know, we are still Muslims. (B, T1)

Last is the group of teachers who unintentionally tackle religious topics within the cultural activities and invite learners to reflect on them. This approach, I believe, can have a serious effect on learners' decision to accept or reject foreign cultures, mostly because they are the ones who conclude that the other is religiously different. The teacher's lesson about the tomato festival is a good illustration of how religion can interfere in the teaching of culture and the development of ICC; the teacher's intention was to introduce the tomato festival, one of the cultural traditions in Spain, instead, she unintentionally shed light on the act of wasting food which diverted learners' attention from the cultural practice to the religiously unacceptable act.

One isolated view on the impact of religion on EFL teaching was noticeable; when asked about why teachers tend to set aside culture related tasks in favour of language skills tasks, the participant advocated that some religious aspects fall under the category of traditions, therefore, can be interpreted differently, according to the home region of the learners:

The problem is not...it's not only religion, but traditions too. Sometimes they come across things that are against their traditions like girlfriends, boyfriends talks for example, you can't teach it, maybe you can teach it here in the city of Bejaia, but in rural areas you can't; otherwise you may have parents coming in asking 'what is this?' (B, In)

Sharing the same religious background with the participants, I can understand both their perceptions and practices because at some point when I was in Algeria, I used to have similar views of the foreign culture(s), particularly Western ones. This can be explained by the effect of local media, Algerian and Arab, which focuses on presenting the other as a religiously different other rather than just a different other.

6.5.3. Participants' intercultural encounters

Two participants brought up how their intercultural experiences outside Algeria, namely in Western and East Asian countries, have helped them realise the importance of introducing foreign cultures in the classroom. However, the angle from which they perceived these experiences was religious, which led them to use the good/bad criteria I discussed in previous sections. In the following example, B,T1 talks about how fascinating his experience in Japan was mainly because he found that Japanese people apply what he refers to as Islamic principles which he believed should have been applied in Algeria:

Let me tell you about something I found in Japan which I think is very interesting because normally it is ours. When you go to Japan, people are very respectful to the tiny things in life: water, flowers, leaves...the things that normally we as Muslims are aware of. (B, T1)

As important as teachers' intercultural encounters are for their professional development and the teaching of ICC (Sercu et al., 2005), they - encounters - can function as a barrier if not followed with reflection and negotiation. In this case, feelings of appreciation and respect for the 'other' were associated with feelings of anger and frustration towards the 'self'. Although the participant did not refer to any interaction or encounter that occurred during his time in Japan, his interpretation of his experience – although appreciative – sharpens rather than blurs the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' and reduces the differences between two very distant cultural groups to religion (Staszak, 2008).

6.5.4. Lack of CCA (Critical Cultural Awareness) tasks

When I asked teachers about their pedagogical practices and how they introduce native and foreign cultural aspects in their lessons, most of the examples and approaches they recalled do not promote CCA. The most common approach, as I discussed earlier, is the transmission of cultural knowledge and facts about countries where the FL is considered as the first language (mainly the UK and US). In this situation, learners are passive agents who receive knowledge but do not discuss or reflect on what is given to them. Amongst the many examples, one teacher said:

I go online and bring new material, new songs, and short movies to make them understand more, and facilitate transmitting the knowledge to them. (A,

T3)

Teachers, therefore, focus more on enhancing learners' familiarity with the foreign culture(s) and to a much lesser extent on promoting reflection on the culture and identity of the self and the other (Sercu *et al.*, 2005). Another common approach that teachers referred to is the use of culture related activities in which learners are provided with multiple choice questions or asked to agree or disagree with specific situations. B, T2 said:

I can provoke them by asking 'what do you think? Do you agree or disagree?' (B, T2)

Both approaches of A, T3 and B, T2 eliminate the discussion part which consequently would limit learners' ability to reflect on, and possibly criticise values, attitudes and practices of both the self and the other. Reflection is a fundamental aspect of the IS because it allows one to decentre and look at the familiar from the perspective of the stranger (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013), what Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002, p.19) describe as "the ability to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange". It is the second part of the description that most FL teachers in similar contexts struggle with and tend to avoid because it can raise challenging questions for the learners. For example, taking the situation B, T2 shared, learners may reflect on and evaluate (perhaps judge) the other either voluntarily or upon the request of the teacher. This indicates that learners' CCA, the most important dimension in ICC (Byram, 1997; 2012), is not encouraged or developed in both textbooks (see Chapter 5) and the materials teachers create. This research finding is in line with Ashfar and Yousefi (2019) who explained that

Iranian EFL teachers tend to avoid CCA due to the “uncritical nature” of the educational system and the dominance of traditional, non-reflective teaching practices (Ashfar and Yousefi, 2019, p. 332). This also sheds light on teachers’ training and professional development; the fact that amongst all participants only one inspector referred to teacher training as an issue suggests that some teachers (like B, T2 and A, T3) fail to implement CCA for no other reason than the lack of training. Therefore, in line with conclusions from previous research (Zamanian and Saedi, 2017; Estaji and Rahimi, 2018; Petosi and Karras, 2020), ICC needs to be incorporated in pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes and dimensions other than knowledge and attitudes need to be highlighted.

6.5.5. Learners’ age and level of English

When participants tried to explain why they prefer not to include cultural aspects in their lessons, a few of them referred to the language level of the learners as the main obstacle. They believe that factors like learners’ age, their level of English, and their different regional cultures can contribute to the rejection, or the failure of understanding new, thus, different cultures. For instance, one of the authors stated that learners’ level and the different cultures surrounding them are one of the main reasons why they decided not to prioritise the cultural dimension in the new textbooks:

It is not easy for us, it is not easy for middle school teachers and beginner learners, one must be careful, and don’t forget, including too much culture in textbooks would never help learners achieve very good results... Let’s go to Khenchela (research site A) for example, the pupils are born with an original culture: Amazigh or Chawi, then the Arab, another culture, then the French, another culture, then the English another culture, this is what we call cultural overload, and when pupils are overloaded... (Au2)

The literature suggests that FL learners need to achieve a certain level of linguistic and communicative competence before becoming ISs (Corbett, 2003; Camerer, 2014; Yesil and Demiroz, 2017) simply because language is an important factor in ICC and is foreign to them. What the participant said about the various cultures young learners in Algeria are exposed to is true; the difference between the regional cultures within the country includes aspects like values, dialects, traditions, food, and clothing, to name but a few; this is in addition to other aspects that are borrowed from the Arab and French cultures. Thus, learning about different cultural aspects can be overwhelming and confusing for learners even if their linguistic competence is relatively good. However, studies suggest that young learners are able to think and reflect and can develop awareness of their cultures and that of the others (Klefsstad and Martinez, 2013; Deardorff, 2019). McConachy (2018, p. 86) highlights the important role of the teacher to help learners, gradually, become “able to make sense of the cultural representations”. Also, as Risager (2007) argues, when necessary and when it is difficult to overcome learner’s low level of linguistic competence, teachers can use other tools like visual aids or even the learners’ first language.

6.5.6. Fear of acculturation

Some participants stated that despite the fact that they want learners to explore and accept the other, they are primarily concerned with how much their young learners can learn about and accept the other without copying and borrowing from them. In other words, participants fear learners may deny or demean their culture once in contact with the

foreign one(s). Below, one of the authors shares his goal including what to look for and what to avoid in the textbooks:

The world is changing at a terrible speed, there is globalisation in the world, and the question raised here is: where are we? How can we get easily integrated in this world with the maximum of gain and the minimum of risk? Of course without of course falling in acculturation, you remain yourself but at the same time you launch bridges with the world. (Au1)

This comment is probably the most intriguing in all the data because it summarises the different, yet related, objectives of the new middle school curriculum of English in Algeria; acknowledging the fact that the world is changing, and the status of globalisation reflects the participant's high level of intercultural sensitivity (see Bennet, 1993). However, bringing up acculturation as a threat to be avoided – at all costs – indicates that the authors of the textbooks have a clear vision of where they want learners to go through learning language and culture. This, therefore, can – to some extent – explain the extensive reference to Algerian culture(s) in the textbooks.

Another important point to discuss here is the process of acculturation which the author described. Although any cultural groups can experience acculturation (Sam and Berry, 2010), in this context, it is clear that the possibility of the other being acculturated is not considered. Instead, it is always assumed that Algerian learners are the ones whose cultural beliefs and practices are weaker, thus, are more likely to change, which suggests a fear of being dominated by the other. In this case, the author seems to confuse acculturation with assimilation which is often referred to as a phase or a strategy of acculturation (Berry, 1997; 2008). Integration on the other hand, is the most common strategy because it

allows individuals to maintain their cultural heritage while interacting with the foreign culture (Sam and Berry, 2010). It should be noted that research on acculturation indicates that direct and continuous contact between the different cultural groups is required, which sheds light on the role of FLT&L in exposing learners to foreign cultures without having to bring the two groups together.

A second, and probably one of the main reasons why participants prefer to avoid introducing foreign cultures in the classroom, is due to the French influence embedded in Algerian society. This influence is the result of 132 years of colonisation during which education in Algeria was mostly French oriented; and the Arabic language, culture(s) and history were excluded from the curricula (Masoud, Reynolds and Brownlee, 2015); and this extended to influence the aspects of daily life. It is interesting to note that amongst all the participants, only one teacher explicitly complained about the French language influence on her learners; the rest did not refer to any specific other:

The biggest problem I face with my learners is the use of language outside the classroom because it is not enough. They and their parents speak French and you know this is because of the historical background, France colonised Algeria for more than 100 years and you can still see the influence of that in our society today. (A, T3)

Similarly, but from a rather explicit standpoint, one teacher added:

We must protect them... yes, they need some protection and normally the one responsible about that is the book designer. If the book designer couldn't do that, we as teachers can (A, T2).

The teachers (A, T2 and A, T4) therefore, consider it as their task, to protect learners from what they believe can threaten their culture(s) and religion, regardless of what the authors included/excluded. This raises the question of how Algerian EFL teachers with similar perceptions could implement ICC in their practices in ways that do not challenge and compromise their principles. This indicates that there is a need for more teacher development and training programmes in Algeria because teachers “have to rearrange their knowledge into a new perspective” (Guilherme, 2002, p. 206) before facing such challenges in practice.

6.7. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I presented and discussed the data relevant to participants’ perceptions and practices regarding the implementation of culture and the potential of promoting ICC in the English language classroom in Algerian middle schools. Overall, the findings showed that teachers do not promote or prioritise developing ICC among their learners. Not only that, they focus on the traditional approach of transmitting factual culture related knowledge in their lessons, prioritise other objectives and design their lessons to achieve them. These activities are mostly related to learners’ national identity. Teachers mentioned how they want to use English to help learners construct and strengthen their multifaceted identities especially because they are addressed in the textbooks. Authors, on the other hand, seem to have slightly different and broader goals, ones that are in favour of ICC. Despite agreeing with teachers on the importance of learning about one’s identity at this stage, they made clear that they want learners to be more tolerant and open to learning about the other and accepting the

differences between the self and others. The only problem in this situation is that the authors believe that their goals are well illustrated in the textbooks and that teachers can easily use them; something which the teachers and myself are not able to conclude from reading the textbooks (see Chapter 5). As for the third category of participants, inspectors, being the mediators between the teachers and authors, only one seemed to acknowledge the gap between authors' intentions and teachers' practices.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

7.1. Overview

In this final chapter, I present the main conclusions of the study. First, I provide a summary of the study followed by answers to the research questions. Next, I state the contribution to knowledge and discuss the implications of the study and last, the study's limitations and directions for further research are presented.

7.2. Summary of the study

This qualitative exploratory study aimed to provide an understanding of the second-generation curriculum of EFL in Algeria in relation to the development of ICC. To do so, an instrumental case study based on social constructionism, in which documents and semi-structured interviews were used as data sources, was employed. The documents that were used as textual data are three middle school textbooks of English that have been recently launched by the Algerian MoE (Ministry of Education) in September 2016 and 2017 to be used nationwide by both teachers and learners. To achieve my aim and answer the research questions, I selected a sample of four chapters, one from each of MS1 and MS2, and two chapters from MS3, then I analysed and evaluated the cultural representations in each chapter to find out if and how ICC is addressed and promoted (see Chapter 5). The selection of these chapters was based on their order in the textbooks and the theme they claim to cover. Subsequently, 15 semi-structured interviews with the three categories of participants across three research sites were conducted and analysed thematically; the research sites are home to 'regional' cultures that slightly vary in practices, beliefs, and values. In doing so, I tried to understand participants' perceptions of culture in relation to EFL and the potential

influence of such perceptions on their practices and the development of ICC (see Chapter 6). In other words, how participant teachers implement culture in their teaching practices, how inspectors, as supervisors who cascade the authors' instructions, think of and address the issue, and how the authors think they addressed the issue in the textbooks. Through the insights all the participants shared, I identified challenges that affect the development of ICC, some of which have already been identified in the textbooks.

7.3. Answering the research questions

The key findings that address the research questions are summarised below.

RQ1: How is the cultural dimension represented in the Algerian middle school textbooks of English?

Part one of the data analysis in Chapter 5 shows that culture is highlighted, to varying degrees, in the chapters in the three textbooks (MS1, MS2, MS3) implicitly and explicitly through both text and artwork; but there are no sections or lessons dedicated solely to learning about culture; cultural representation is embedded within tasks that are primarily designed to develop language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). The type of representation, however, is widely characterised by banal nationalism. That is, from year one (MS1), learners are exposed to visual markers of the Algerian identity in almost every lesson (e.g., flag, geopolitical map) and on the covers of the textbooks as constant reminders of who they are. Subsequently, analysis of the selected chapters revealed that the cultural content is predominantly Algerian-centred, taking learners through tasks and supplementary material, on a journey of discovery of their country and their culture. In doing so, Algerian culture is represented as fixed, homogenous, yet rich and diverse, which

means that even when aspects of regional cultures are projected, they are to be understood as a part of the wider Algerian context.

Moreover, the overall approach used to address culture related topics is rather essentialist for it reduces cultural differences to geographical boundaries between countries through depicting ‘what we have and do’ versus ‘what they have and do’ with an emphasis on portraying either cultures from a factual/objectivist perspective. Learners, therefore, are repeatedly encouraged rather than required to acquire knowledge about themselves and their culture first, and to a much lesser extent, knowledge about other culture(s), inviting cross-cultural comparisons between both or all cultures involved. More often than not, this knowledge is about cultural products and observable aspects, as opposed to beliefs and values; the majority of these products are described as markers of Algerian culture that learners should continue to protect.

Participant authors used a similar approach to address mainly British culture, which suggests that the ideology of native speakerism is still at the heart of ELT in Algeria. Neither culture is depicted as superior or inferior, but learners are constantly reminded that they have similar, yet distinguishable features in their culture. Interestingly however, when it comes to global issues, they are explicitly advised to look and learn from their peers in the UK and take action as responsible citizens. Also, references to the lifestyles of foreigners and Algerians can be linked to the ideologies of individualism and collectivism.

As regards other aspects, the analysis showed that although religion, class, and gender roles are not in any way prioritised in the chapters, there are occasional references to them in the

tasks. Gender roles are fairly distributed but references to religions, other than Islam, are practically absent.

RQ2: How can this representation contribute to the development of learners' ICC?

The evaluation of the cultural representation showed that new textbooks of English do not favour ICC; instead, the overall approach is on the acquisition of knowledge (Risager, 2018) – tourist type information about the self and the other. Knowledge construction on the other hand, is barely emphasised. Amongst the three evaluation criteria - awareness, attitudes, and skills (Byram and Masuhara, 2013) - that I used as a checklist, awareness is only partly addressed and the others are not supported in any of the chapters analysed.

As discussed in part two of Chapter 5, representations of the source culture are sometimes drawn to raise learners' awareness of implicit assumptions, values, and attitudes of the self; this is particularly relevant to national and religious aspects, presented in forms of simplified statements. Tasks do not require learners to engage in learning activities to discover, in groups or with the help of the teacher, these underlying assumptions. The evaluation also showed when foreign individuals are featured, the values and attitudes beneath their utterances and behaviours are usually left unexplained, leading to the formation of hetero-stereotypes.

Along similar lines, the evaluation showed that the manuals do not encourage learners to develop attitudes of openness and curiosity; rather, the development of positive attitudes about the self (within the Algerian context) is one of the main objectives of the textbooks; the majority of tasks in all four chapters are structured from an ethnocentric rather than a relative or a decentralised perspective. Learners are implicitly encouraged to develop a non-

questioning positive image of Algerian culture that is presented as static and homogenous; this was especially apparent in the careful selection and distribution of artwork and texts which depict the “richness” of Algeria, one that is recognised and appreciated even by individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

The textbooks claim to help learners develop the necessary skills to be able to interact effectively with the outside world; however, a close examination of the interactive tasks revealed that learners are not exposed to language use in various cultures, nor are they required or encouraged to take part in ongoing interactions with individuals from different cultural backgrounds (real or fictional). Rather, tasks always show only one side of the interaction, positioning learners as passive consumers (Elissondo, 2001) of language and culture. Another very important point is related to the topics of interaction which reinforce the tourist perspective through inviting learners to “educate” their foreign friends about Algeria through reference to an oversimplified essentialist perspective of culture. Also, the fact that all tasks (except the term projects) are to be done in the classroom limits learners’ ability to interpret and reflect.

Last, but most importantly, is the absence of any type of interpretation and reflective tasks that can help learners to develop a CCA (Critical Cultural Awareness). None of the tasks seem to encourage learners to step back and look at their culture from the perspective of the other. They are always positioned at the centre of every cultural situation.

RQ3: What are Algerian EFL educators’ perceptions of culture in language teaching?

The findings discussed in Chapter 6 suggest that Algerian EFL educators consider culture as an important aspect of ELT&L. However, only a few advocated that language and culture

are interrelated; that is, participants tended to highlight the source, target, and foreign culture, respectively.

Their perceptions revolved around the notion of culture as a static and coherent whole. However, there was a slight difference in how each category of participants answered the questions; teachers, in particular, emphasised the material aspect of culture through relating their definitions to products and places that construct culture. Also, there was a common tendency among teachers to highlight identity and religion as two main constituents of culture. The participant authors on the other hand saw culture as a process that determines people's behaviour.

The findings demonstrated that teachers do not deal with foreign culture frequently in their teaching practices; rather, they consider it as an optional and additional aspect of FL teaching that is not as important as teaching language skills; focusing on the source culture, however, is very important according to most teachers. To further illustrate their views, participants shared a set of objectives linking the implementation of culture in EFL teaching to learners' personal development; the majority of these objectives are directly related to how they perceive and understand the concept; and national and international citizenship were the further goals which participants aim to inculcate through introducing cultures. Most teachers believe that English is a medium that should be used to teach learners about their culture first; once they are proud of their national and religious belonging and are able to – linguistically – represent their Algerian self to the world, they can then learn about foreign cultures.

Inspectors and mainly authors share a broader vision of a learner as an international citizen who is proud of their identity but at the same time aware of cultural differences and willing to accept the other and deconstruct stereotypes. This difference in participants' perceptions, especially between teachers and authors and the recurring reference to religion and identity amongst teachers indicates that authors' goals are neither well illustrated in the curriculum (see Chapter 5) nor well interpreted by teachers in the classroom.

RQ4: What is the potential impact of these perceptions on teachers' practices and learners' ICC?

Participant teachers' responses to some questions and their interpretations of different actual and potential culture related tasks showed enthusiasm to teach the source, or native culture, and hesitation to teach foreign cultures. The majority of teachers prioritise the source culture because of its familiarity and the claim that it boosts learners' motivation to acquire and use the English language effectively. The remaining minority favour the target culture because it increases learners' knowledge about and familiarity with the so-called NSs of English. In both cases, the acquisition of communicative competence and the traditional approach of teaching culture, which relies on transferring knowledge, predominate. That is, teachers' perceptions are directly reflected in their instructions; in other words, their perceptions shape – to a large extent – their teaching practices (Sercu *et al.*, 2005) which concludes that Algerian middle school learners of English are not yet prepared to become ISs and ICC is not yet on the horizon.

It is important to highlight again that authors and inspectors tend to define the objectives of the new curriculum of English from an intercultural perspective despite not directly

relating to aspects of ICC. Authors, in particular, believe that the textbooks and the curriculum are designed to help learners accept and respect diversity, develop tolerance towards other cultures, and become aware of the self and the other. However, the analysis of the sample chapters from the textbooks (see Chapter 5) and the evidence discussed in Chapter 6 revealed a gap between authors' objectives and how they were communicated to both teachers and learners through the textbooks, which means that it is not possible for Algerian EFL teachers to move from the cultural to the intercultural without the help, resources, and instructions from either their inspectors or the authors or both. This also highlights the need for teacher education programmes and pre-service training to help teachers become interculturally aware.

Last, hesitation to implement ICC was attributed to several challenges that were repeatedly mentioned by the participants as reasons for keeping learners away from foreign culture(s); religion and fear of acculturation were their main concerns. On the one hand, they hope for the new curriculum of English to be used to launch bridges with the world, yet they do not want learners to be influenced by other religions and cultures. To some extent, this explains the heavy focus on Algerian/Muslim culture in the textbooks and teachers' positive attitudes towards this.

7.4. Contributions of the study

The overall aim of this study is to provide an understanding of the current EFL teaching practices vis-a-vis the teaching of culture and the development of ICC in Algerian middle schools. This was attained through analysing the representation of culture in the new curriculum and evaluating its potential to develop ICC along with creating space for Algerian EFL educators (authors, inspectors, and teachers) to share their experiences and

voice their perceptions. Based on the data presented in Chapters 5 and 6, this qualitative case study makes several contributions to the existing literature; these are discussed below. First, regarding the setting of the study, the majority of the relevant studies on ICC and FL learning focused on learners in secondary and post-secondary education; research on younger learners, however, is still underdeveloped. This study contributes in filling this gap and highlights the importance of the careful selection of materials, topics and tasks (text and image) to compliment the age and language level of the learners.

Second, in regard to the context, the vast majority of empirical studies on ICC have been conducted in Western and, more recently, East Asian contexts which fails to adequately capture EFL educators' perceptions in regard to culture and ICC in other cultural contexts. This study, therefore, contributes to the literature and theories of culture and ICC within the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region and beyond and sheds lights on the specific challenges that identity and religion present in contexts similar to Algeria; that is, while I stress the uniqueness of the case and argue against the generalisation of the findings, I also stress that religion (here Islam) is a fundamental aspect in the lives of FL learners and educators beyond Algeria and that such importance can blur the development of ICC if not addressed carefully. Given that the field of intercultural education is typically dominated by theories that originated in the West, the study showed that there is a need for further research on the intertwining relationship between culture, religion and identity.

The third contribution of the study touches on Byram's (1997) model of ICC, particularly the dimension of CCA. The findings of the study show that there are conflicting interests amongst Algerian EFL educators, particularly between what they want to achieve through the teaching of English versus how they translate their aims through materials and practices. The main problem is related to the criticality that is on the one hand central to ICC, and on

the other hand, very sensitive to the current participants due to the potential threat on national and religious identities, among others. This, I believe, is an outcome of the blurred boundaries between religion and culture in certain contexts that are not acknowledged in the literature. Consequently, the study clarified that the lack of methods, materials and guidelines is not the only reason behind ‘failed’ attempts to develop ICC. The study also sheds light on the internal diversity (cultural and sociolinguistic) within Algeria and its influence on teachers’ perceptions and practices, a factor which previous studies have overlooked.

7.5. Implications of the study

Through this study, I tried to develop an understanding of the new middle curriculum of English in Algeria vis a vis the development of ICC; in what follows, I present the methodological, educational and pedagogical implications of the study.

7.4.1. Methodological implications

Drawing on a social constructionism paradigm, this qualitative enquiry enabled me to construct meaning and form an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon through exploring the perceptions and lived experiences of Algerian EFL educators and analysing the status of culture and ICC in chapters in the new textbooks of English.

The main methodological implication of this study stems from the process of data collection and is addressed to international researchers and (UK) Higher Education Institutions, particularly Lancaster University. As a novice researcher, I was able to overcome several unanticipated ethical challenges in the field despite previously immersing myself in the

literature about ethical research and attending research training programmes provided by the University on ethics and qualitative interviews. As I discussed in Chapter 4, researchers' safety was not sufficiently highlighted either in the literature or in the ethical approval applications which led me at a certain point to prioritise data over my own safety.

Also, constant reflection on my role as an insider/outsider both to the culture(s) of the participants and their institutions facilitated the process of data collection and analysis. Without such reflection and awareness and the ability to switch between the insider and the outsider lenses, establishing rapport could have been difficult and my interpretation of participants' shared experiences would have been clouded by my judgment.

7.4.2. Implications for teacher education and policy makers

Educational implications entail a revision of HE curricula vis-a-vis teacher education and training, and a recognition among policy makers of the importance of ICC for learners' personal development. ICC should be made a compulsory subject at the HE level: **Bachelor-Master-Doctorate** (Licence-Master-Doctorat) and **Higher Normal Schools** (Ecole Normale Supérieure). Particular emphasis should be put on the former for two reasons: first, over 80% of the teachers graduate with either a bachelor or a master's degree (**HNSs** are few and very competitive) which makes them equal teacher candidates for middle school level. Second, unlike in **HNSs**, bachelor students in some universities can choose to start their major in their final year instead of the master's level as it is the case in most universities; generally, the top three majors in Algerian universities are: Applied Linguistics, Literature and Civilisation, and Didactics of Foreign Languages and Cultures, meaning that the development of ICC is likely to depend on the major.

Concomitantly, there should be a coordination between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of National Education as the two institutions responsible for teacher education and teacher training to minimise challenges for pre-service teachers. Also, this study has shown that participant teachers did not refer (at all) to knowledge from their previous education and/or training which stresses the importance of revising the teacher education curriculum; most importantly, policy makers and language education stakeholders in Algeria need to acknowledge the significance of the intercultural dimension as teachers are required to help learners become citizens of the world. Also, ongoing teacher training programmes (pre- and post-implementing educational reforms) in which aspects other than teachers' practices should be emphasised; that is, these programmes can be used to highlight, challenge and re-shape teachers' perceptions and promote awareness of the importance of CCA among other factors.

Lastly, the findings suggest that the role of the inspectors in guiding and encouraging teachers towards implementing an intercultural approach is rather passive. Therefore, it is particularly important for policy makers, curriculum and textbooks' authors and other training bodies (i.e. the British Council) to pay more attention to the training of inspectors who then can add the intercultural dimension to their agenda while training and visiting teachers in the classroom. The role of inspector becomes even more crucial when taking into consideration the gap between authors' objectives and teachers' interpretations and use of the textbooks. That being said, curriculum designers and textbooks' authors should make sure that their aims and objectives are clearly defined and communicated to the teachers either through the textbooks themselves or through the teacher's guide. This can be done

through outlining practical guidelines that can help teachers in the selection and adaptation of materials.

7.4.2. Pedagogical implications

The data presented and discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 have important implications for EFL educators in Algeria, mainly teachers. As the findings in Chapter 6 showed, the majority of teachers rely almost completely on the textbooks provided by the MoE despite being encouraged to use other resources; the findings also showed that the textbooks are not an accurate translation of their authors' objectives. Therefore, teachers are expected to select, design, and adapt other materials that both fit with the ultimate objective(s) of the lesson and address Byram's *savoirs*. For this to take place, teachers themselves should become intercultural mediators and be willing to alter their previously acquired knowledge and strategies regarding the teaching and importance of culture in EFL; that is to move from the cultural to the intercultural.

With regard to teaching strategies, this study has revealed that reflection and criticality, which are central to critical cultural awareness, are exactly what teachers want to avoid rather than achieve. Their sense of responsibility and protection towards learners discourage them from including tasks and activities that provoke the learners and require them to explicitly evaluate products and practices of their own culture. In this case, teachers should first realise that CCA is not a threat to the national and religious (and other) identities of the learners. Second, when and if sensing rejection from learners towards certain aspects, being familiar with their level, needs and cultures, teachers should improvise around their materials and design lessons that facilitate the transition from basic language learners to intercultural speakers.

7.6. Research limitations

Like all research, this study has its limitations. First, the selection of participants was particularly challenging and time consuming because I wanted the sample – of 19 participants – to consist of three categories of middle school EFL educators, two of which (inspectors and teachers) had to be recruited across three Algerian cities that are known for their relatively different cultural values and practices. The recruitment of teachers was the most challenging as I tried to avoid interviewing the ones who seemed to be either handpicked or appointed by their inspectors. Despite this, this was the case of one teacher who mentioned at the end of the interview that their inspector had asked them to take part in the study. Also, it was difficult to get access to potential participants from city C, Bejaia, which was the most demanding research site in terms of researcher-participant communication. Despite attempts to fully explain my study and the reasons behind selecting it as one of the research sites, most of the teachers I contacted refused to participate after asking a few questions about my cultural – regional – background and my institution in the UK. One teacher was upset that I spelled the city incorrectly in an informal web chat before the interview, and during the interview they seemed less interested in the questions that I asked and started asking personal questions. Eventually, I conducted 17 interviews instead of 19 but only 15 were used because I decided to drop two interviews in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the study: in one of the two interviews, the participant seemed uncomfortable and despite attempts to steer the interview, they kept asking personal questions about my background, research and life in the UK and enquiring about reasons I decided to include their city as a research site; the decision to drop this interview was in line with the guidelines of Lancaster University Ethics Committee. In the second interview,

the participant was more interested in learning about job opportunities in the UK and towards the end of the meeting, they made it clear that they agreed to participate because their inspector asked them to which suggested that their participation was not entirely voluntary.

Although considering one research site may have resulted in a less complicated process and would have still provided rich data, it would have limited the understanding of participants' practices and there would still be assumptions about the potential impact of regional cultures on Algerian teachers' perceptions of and willingness to address foreign cultures. Similarly, the choice of three different categories of participants may be considered as a limitation which adds another layer of complexity to the study. Focusing exclusively on one category of EFL educators, such as teachers, could have provided an in-depth exploration of their perceptions, teaching practices, and interpretation and use of the curriculum in relation to culture.

The second salient limitation is related to the language of interviews. As discussed in the methodology chapter, being a novice researcher, I initially used English with all participants (from the first online contacts through to the thank-you notes) based on the assumption that – as EFL educators – they would not have difficulty communicating their thoughts in English. However, after the first few interviews I realised that language was a barrier that was likely to affect participants' responses and their interest in the study; so, I encouraged the rest of the participants to use their preferred language, to which they protested at first but ended up switching between English, MSA (Modern Standard Arabic), Derja, and French when necessary. Still, some of them preferred to use English which led me to initiate the use of Derja in the follow-up interviews. As a result, it is possible that

some participants could not share their thoughts and experiences in the way they wanted which may have affected the findings and interpretations of this study.

Another limitation that has probably affected the results of this study is related to the findings derived from the documents. Textbooks as data are as important as the interview transcripts for they are the primary and main resource available to both teachers and learners; however, the fact that I was interested in analysing (and evaluating) cultural representation in manuals throughout four levels (MS1, MS2, MS3, MS4) made the selection of sample chapters rather challenging. It was practically impossible, in a PhD thesis, to cover all levels and analyse all four textbooks as well as interview transcripts. Consequently, I decided to purposefully select a chapter from each manual based on its theme which means that the selection of sample chapters was directly influenced by my understanding of culture and not by the authors' claim that certain chapters address culture related topics. The findings discussed in Chapter 5 show that the individual chapters offered very interesting insights into the cultural representations in Algerian EFL textbooks which then helped me to understand authors' perceptions and identify a gap in the teaching of English. This, however, does not suggest that other chapters would not have provided the same, or even richer insights had I focused on one level (one textbook) or had the criteria of selection been different from those I addressed (see section 4.3.6.).

Last, employing only two data collection methods (semi-structured interviews and documents) and the absence of participant observation may be considered as a limitation by some researchers, particularly since observation is often pre-eminent in case study research (Cohen et al., 2018). It is important to mention that I planned to observe teacher-inspector seminars to find out how they tackle cultural and/or intercultural issues. However,

after attending two seminars I decided to rely on data gathered from interviews and documents for two reasons: the first one is the feasibility of the method; these meetings take place once, sometimes twice a month, so it was not possible to do multiple observations across the three research sites. Second, the topics of the meetings were (and probably still are) set by the MoE to further familiarise teachers with the new curriculum. Usually, these are related to teaching and assessing language skills. For example, the two seminars I attended (in city A and city B) were dedicated to providing in-service teachers with new assessment techniques to ensure effective use of the new curriculum and textbooks. Throughout each of the meetings, inspectors delivered new instructions and guidelines and encouraged teachers to share suggestions and/or reflections; by the end of both meetings, no culture related teaching/learning practices or issues were mentioned by either the inspectors or the teachers.

Further to these limitations are issues of trustworthiness, mainly credibility and reliability. Establishing credibility has been a priority throughout the course of the study and has been achieved through strategies such as strict principles of good practice (ethics), prolonged engagement in the field, peer debriefing and member checking as well as a continuous articulation of my positionality as a researcher. As for transferability, the findings of my study cannot be overgeneralised due to their qualitative, interpretive nature, the uniqueness of the context, and the small sample of participants, that is by no means representative of all middle school EFL educators in Algeria. I have, however, provided thick descriptions to allow readers to make judgements about the likely transferability of the findings to other contexts (Bryman, 2016; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

7.7. Future research

As stated in the introductory chapter, the trend of ICC in FL education is yet to be adopted in Algerian FL education; thus, further research is needed to investigate issues affecting this delay. Future research carried out by myself and others can develop the analytical framework used in this study to further explore the status of ICC in EFL education vis a vis Algerian middle schools, from different angles. The most interesting, yet demanding, approach would involve an analysis of the curriculum document, the textbooks, and the teacher guides as the three main resources for EFL teachers to reveal what authors and policy makers require and expect from EFL teachers, and fundamentally, learners. Such analysis can draw on Risager's (2018) readings and analyses of different FL language textbooks for which she used five different approaches.

Particularly interesting research would involve a comparative study of French and English language textbooks for middle and secondary school to find out how the cultural and intercultural dimensions (Byram's *savoirs*) are addressed within and across levels and subjects. Although French is still the SL in all educational settings, English is officially heading towards replacing it in HE, it would be interesting to identify how CCA among other dimensions, is addressed.

Last, further research could address Algerian EFL teachers' multiple identities; namely the national, the religious, and the regional. This study has shown that identity was the most recurring theme in the interviews of all participants, but teachers tended to emphasise the national identity more.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet



Participant information sheet

I am a PhD student at Lancaster University, and I would like to invite you to take part in a research study about the status of culture and ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence) in the new (second-generation) curriculum of English for middle schools. Please take your time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to participate.

This study aims to find out how culture and ICC are addressed in the newly designed textbooks of English. I am approaching you because I am also trying to understand how Algerian EFL educators, (teachers, inspectors and textbooks' authors) perceive the teaching of culture and the development of ICC through the new textbooks of English (Second Generation Programme).

If you accept to participate in this study, you would be interviewed for a period of 30 to 45 minutes. Your participation is totally voluntary, this means that you can withdraw at any stage of the interview without providing any explanations and I will destroy any data related to you. It is also important for you to know that no one except myself and my supervisor Dr Sue Cranmer will have access to or share the data. All your personal information (your name, the name of the organisation you work in) will be confidential, and no one except me, the researcher, would be able to access them. All audio recordings and hard copies of any data will be anonymous. Also, any data related to you will be stored in encrypted files (that is no-one other than me, will be able to access them) and on password-protected computers. I will store hard copies of any data securely in locked cabinets in my office; and in accordance with University guidelines, data will be kept securely for a minimum of ten years.

The data that you will share with me will be used for academic purposes only, this includes my PhD thesis, journal articles, and academic conference in which I may present some results of my study. When writing up the findings from this study, I may reproduce some of the views and ideas you will share with me. When doing so, I will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from my interview with you), so that although I will use your exact words, you cannot be identified in my publications. Data will also be deposited in Lancaster University's institutional data repository and made freely available with an appropriate data license. Lancaster University uses Pure as the data repository which will hold, manage, preserve and provide access to datasets produced by Lancaster University research.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee. If you have any further queries, please feel free to contact me through a.rabehi@lancaster.ac.uk, you can also contact my supervisor Dr Sue Cranmer via s.cranmer@lancaster.ac.uk; we are both happy to hear from you.

Thank you for considering your participation in this project

Appendix 2: Consent form

CONSENT FORM



Project Title: An investigation of the obstacles of using ICTs as a means to broaden cultural and intercultural awareness amongst Algerian middle school learners of English.

Name of the researcher: Afaf Rabehi

Email: a.rabehi@lancaster.ac.uk

Please read the statements and tick each box:

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet of the above study, and that I had the opportunity to consider information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during the interview without giving any reason. If I withdraw, my data will be removed.
3. I understand that I will be able to withdraw from the study up to two weeks after the interview, and that there is absolutely no obligation to continue, or penalty when withdrawing. If I decide to withdraw, all relevant data (notes, recordings) related to me will be destroyed and references will be removed.
4. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher; however, my personal information –my name- will not be included and I will not be identifiable.
5. I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations without my consent.
6. I understand that interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed, and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.
7. I understand that data will be kept according to University guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.
8. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant _____ Date _____ Signature _____

I confirm that the participant was given the time and opportunity to read and ask questions about the study, and that all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been forced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____

Appendix 3: Interview guide

Interview Guide (Teachers)

Opening questions:

1. For how long have you been teaching English?
2. What is the part, if there is any, you like the most about being a teacher of English?

Focused questions:

Part One (Textbooks)

1. How do you find the new textbook of first year?
2. Which one do you think is better for you and your pupils, the new or the previous one?

Part Two (Culture and ICC in textbooks)

1. How can you describe the status of culture in the new textbooks of English?
2. What do you think of this representation?
3. How can you define culture?

Part Three (Factors affecting the implementation culture in the syllabus)

1. How important it is for your pupils to learn about other cultures in this stage? Why?
2. How would you implement culture in your teaching practices?

Closing questions:

1. Is there anything you think you would like to tell me about?

Thank you very much for talking to me today and sharing your experience and thoughts.

Interview Schedule (Inspectors)

Opening questions:

1. How long have you been working as inspector?
2. What is the part, if there is any, you like the most about your job?
3. As an inspector, what are the important things you insist on during your visits to teachers or during the trainings you do to teachers?

Focused questions:

Part One (Textbooks)

1. How do you find the new textbook of first year?
2. Which one do you think is better for teachers and your pupils, the new or the previous one?

Part Two (Culture in textbooks)

1. How can you define culture?
2. How can you describe the status of culture in the new textbooks of English?

Part Three (Factors affecting the implementation culture in the syllabus)

1. Do you think it is important for pupils to learn about other cultures in this stage?
2. How would you train teachers to introduce culture to their pupils?

Closing questions:

1. Is there anything you think you would like to add?

Thank you very much for talking to me today and sharing your experience and thoughts.

Interview Schedule (Textbooks' Designers)

Opening questions:

1. How the idea of this project has been initiated?
2. How were you assigned to take part in this project?

Focus questions:

Part One (Textbooks)

1. On what basis have you designed the new textbook?
2. What was your main part in this project?
3. What parts of the textbooks have been changed, or improved?

Part Two (Culture)

1. How can you define culture?
3. Do you think it is important for pupils to learn about other cultures in this stage? Why?

Part Three (Teachers' perceptions and practices)

1. What are, according to you, teacher's perceptions and practices regarding the teaching of culture?
2. How do you cater to the different needs of teachers and learners?

Closing questions:

1. Do you think there will be future changes to the textbooks in terms of the contentt?

Thank you very much for talking to me today and sharing your experience and thoughts.

Appendix 4: Sample interview transcript

Ee: Interviewee

Er: Interviewer

Ee: Right, the world is changing, there is globalisation in the world, and the question that is raised, where are we? how can we get easily integrated in this world? with the maximum of gain and the minimum of risk? of course without falling in acculturation? you remain yourself, but at the same time you launch bridges with the world right and the cultural awareness, let me just while speaking now, you remind me of the famous writer 'Orhan Pamuk' who got, I don't remember very well, the Nobel prize for literature, and one of the something in the book that struck me when he said "I am the other" right, it means in this world we have a lot of differences and similarities but we do have a lot of commonalities

Er: Yeah

Ee: And that leads me to talk about your research about technology let me tell you it's like money technologies, it's a good master but a bad servant, hmmm, we should be at the same level of understanding when it comes to using technology right if you have read the curriculum, the question that was raised in Algeria what is English for? why do we teach English? why do we study English? is it for the sake just of making good sentences of falling in what we call the previous year that we called grammar fatigue right, but, as I understood from your project is how English can launch bridges of understanding with other cultures right, we should stop throwing allegations to each other without knowing who you are, that's why I'm quoting Orhan Pamuk 'I am the other' now the world has become a village, it should not be a stereotype this, but whether you are from a different faith Muslim Christian, Jewish, or even agnostic, right, what do we have in common, but technology should not be used as a slogan, right, I was once in England in Britain in 2010 and I attended the Bath conference, it's a conference about technology, and I asked a question to the minister of education of the UK, and I said it's a very good point to speak about technology, but do you know that many countries, mainly in Africa,

are left behind? and among them my country, so, here perhaps because also technology should be linked to the economy to the kind of economy we shifted from a centralised economy in Algeria to a free market, free market means opening windows to the world and getting acquainted with other culture, right, now we say that English is the international language, and now people say football has become the international language because it could bring the world as one right, so now I visit classes and just keep asking questions to young learners: 'Do you have friends?' and they say 'yes', 'where are they from?' and they start naming countries, most of the time you will find out countries from whose main language is English, and they use social media they use it's the mobile generation, right, so, it's the curriculum that should adapt to the new needs of the learners, because what you know today, what you think is true will become useless.

Er: Old fashioned?

Ee: Old fashioned, right, the world is changing at a terrible speed, right, so if now, first of all, the curriculum of English, like all the curriculum, it derives from the law of orientation so now with this globalisation, what kind of citizens do we want in Algeria? right a citizen who does not live with stereotypes, a citizen who accepts differences, a citizen who does not throw allegation, a citizen who does not think that he is always right, right, a citizen who is building the basis of democracy, for example, democracy is not a slogan, when you ask students to work on a project, the main objective is not only English, but the main objective is to socialise, how they can work together, right, you know that you are young perhaps, the Berlin wall has fallen, but yet, the Berlin wall in I call it the pedagogical Berlin wall has not fallen yet, right to some extent some boys refuse to work with girls, but the project has brought them together, right, and now we say 'Kamal, Mohammed, do you chat in English?' 'yes' 'do you have a friend from, yes, a boy or a girl, if it is a boy he says 'I have a girl' a girlfriend it does not mean as it has no connotations, it is just a friend, right, and English is developing, but we wanted to be developed in the academic way, because now we are overwhelmed by the language of technology right, we are afraid of English or French or Arabic using the right, now technology is a must, provided that you know how to use it in the right way, it is not just writing in the curriculum you must use technology, right, now when you give a project to students they present it using power point, they technology will help to develop the documentary skills, the research skills.

Appendix 5: An example of coding in Atlas.ti

Code Manager

Codes View Search

Free Code(s) Duplicate Code(s) Create Snapshot New

New Code Group Create Smart Group

Change Color Merge Codes Split Code Code Tree Rename Code Delete Code(s) Manage

Edit Comment Open Network Open Group Manager

Edit Smart Code Organize Word Cloud Frequencies Report

Word Cruncher Output

Search Code Groups

Code Groups

- Authors (0)
- Culture in textbooks (23)
- Curriculum aims (28)
- Definition of Culture (15)
- Goals (hopes) (44)
- Issues (obstacles) (24)
- Teaching culture (77)

Search Codes

Name	Grounded	Density	Groups	Owner	Author	Created	Modified
• "Cultural overload"	1	0	[Issues (obstacles)]	GIRL	GIRL	07/02/2019 17:54	07/02/2019
• "who am I?"	2	0	[Goals (hopes)]	GIRL	GIRL	07/02/2019 17:47	07/02/2019
○ Accepting the Other	1	0		GIRL	GIRL	12/04/2019 16:54	12/04/2019
○ Acquisition of values	1	0	[Curriculum aims] [Goals (hopes)] [Teaching culture]	GIRL	GIRL	24/04/2018 11:14	24/04/2018
• adaptation	10	0	[Teaching culture]	GIRL	GIRL	05/02/2019 11:49	05/02/2019
• age problems	5	0		GIRL	GIRL	11/03/2019 17:39	11/03/2019
○ Algerian contexts	2	0	[Teaching culture]	GIRL	GIRL	06/02/2019 11:35	06/02/2019
○ Algerian culture First	3	0	[Culture in textbooks] [Teaching culture]	GIRL	GIRL	20/07/2017 09:33	10/04/2019
○ Algerianised	2	0	[Culture in textbooks] [Teaching culture]	GIRL	GIRL	07/02/2019 16:42	07/02/2019
○ AR	1191	0		GIRL	GIRL	19/07/2017 12:02	19/07/2017
○ aspects of culture	2	0	[Definition of Culture]	GIRL	GIRL	15/02/2019 17:16	15/02/2019
○ attitudes	1	0	[Teaching culture]	GIRL	GIRL	18/02/2019 09:41	18/02/2019
○ autonomy	1	0	[Goals (hopes)]	GIRL	GIRL	07/02/2019 16:46	07/02/2019
○ avoiding accultura...	2	0	[Goals (hopes)] [Issues (obstacles)] [Teaching culture]	GIRL	GIRL	13/02/2019 10:50	13/02/2019
• Awareness	8	0	[Curriculum aims] [Goals (hopes)] [Teaching culture]	GIRL	GIRL	24/04/2018 11:01	24/04/2018
○ bridge	1	0	[Culture in textbooks]	GIRL	GIRL	05/02/2019 11:53	05/02/2019

Comment:

No item or more than one items selected.

203 Codes

Appendix 6: An example of coded transcript (excerpt)

The screenshot displays a software interface for managing a transcript. The main window shows a transcript with time-coded segments. On the right, a list of coded entities is visible, including 'Core values', 'Values', 'Culture in textbooks', 'Curriculum aims', 'Goals (hopes)', and 'Teaching culture'. The transcript text is as follows:

Ee: It's Britain #00:22:56-0#

Er: I totally agreea with that #00:22:56-0#

Ee: Right, and I'm telling you this from my heart, right. Well, they should also have think that the stereotypes about us #00:23:09-6#

Er: Of course they so #00:23:09-6#

Ee: They should differe, right. For those who has travelled, they know, they know about our values, that's why in the new curriculum we have introduced some core values, right, not as slogan, right, for example, if you have a classical teacher, they say: "what's the objective of teaching the imperatives?" right, what's the ob.. this is just a knowledge, you have to turn it into a skill then an attitude. I teach the imperatives to make, to enable students to make recommendation, to protect the environment. I use technology to make my country well known in the world, and to know about the other. This is the first principle in the new curriculum #00:24:05-3#

Er: Values #00:24:05-3#

Ee: Yes, the core values. If you enter any school in Britain, you will find the core values, right. #00:24:14-6#

Er: Okay, yeah, and wan I ask what, what has been changed from the old let's say coursebook to the new one? #00:24:29-3#

Ee: I would like it to ask me differently. Firstly, what has been changed compared with the curriculum. Right, the previous curricular, right, the previous curriculum was merely an inventory of knowledge, right, and then with the experience, with the training we had, because in fact we are not curriculum writers, it's the training I said I worked a lot with the school for international training in Vermont in USA, and I was trained by Catherine..... and I met..... great coursebook writers, and then I developped the skills, but yet I'm still learning, right, so the curriculum has changed because Algeria has channed, right, the curriculum has changed after each 10 years in

The right-hand panel shows a list of coded entities with checkboxes and labels:

- Core values
- Values
- Culture in textbooks
- Curriculum aims
- Goals (hopes)
- Teaching culture

The bottom status bar shows a zoom level of 100%.

Appendix 7: Artwork Samples from textbooks

 **I play and enjoy.**

Can I guess the country where I can see these people?
 I use the vocabulary clues and circle the right name of the country. If I can't guess, I search the Internet to know more about each country.

 <p>hat</p> <p>shoulder blanket</p> <p>colourful skirt</p> <p>Peru – Mexico</p>	 <p>burnous (burnoose)</p> <p>hood</p> <p>Yemen – Algeria</p>	 <p>parka</p> <p>mitten (mitt)</p> <p>slanted eyes</p> <p>Antarctica – Nunavut</p>
 <p>sombrero</p> <p>poncho</p> <p>Peru – Mexico</p>	 <p>sari</p> <p>turban</p> <p>kurta</p> <p>pyjama</p> <p>Malaysia – India</p>	 <p>conical hat (coolie hat)</p> <p>slanted eyes</p> <p>Australia – China</p>
 <p>belt</p> <p>kaftan (caftan)</p> <p>India – Morocco</p>	 <p>fan</p> <p>layered dress</p> <p>Mexico – Spain</p>	 <p>kimono</p> <p>clogs</p> <p>China – Japan</p>

43

MS2: Me, my friends and my family



I play and enjoy.

I write the name of each of these traditional Algerian children's games in its corresponding box: swing ("jaalaila"); jackstones ("kroud"); back-to-back (al-kourkba); up-you-go (alilou); rag doll ("arayass"); skipping rope ("lahbel").

Childhood Memories: Children of Bou-Saada, Children of Algeria



1



2



3



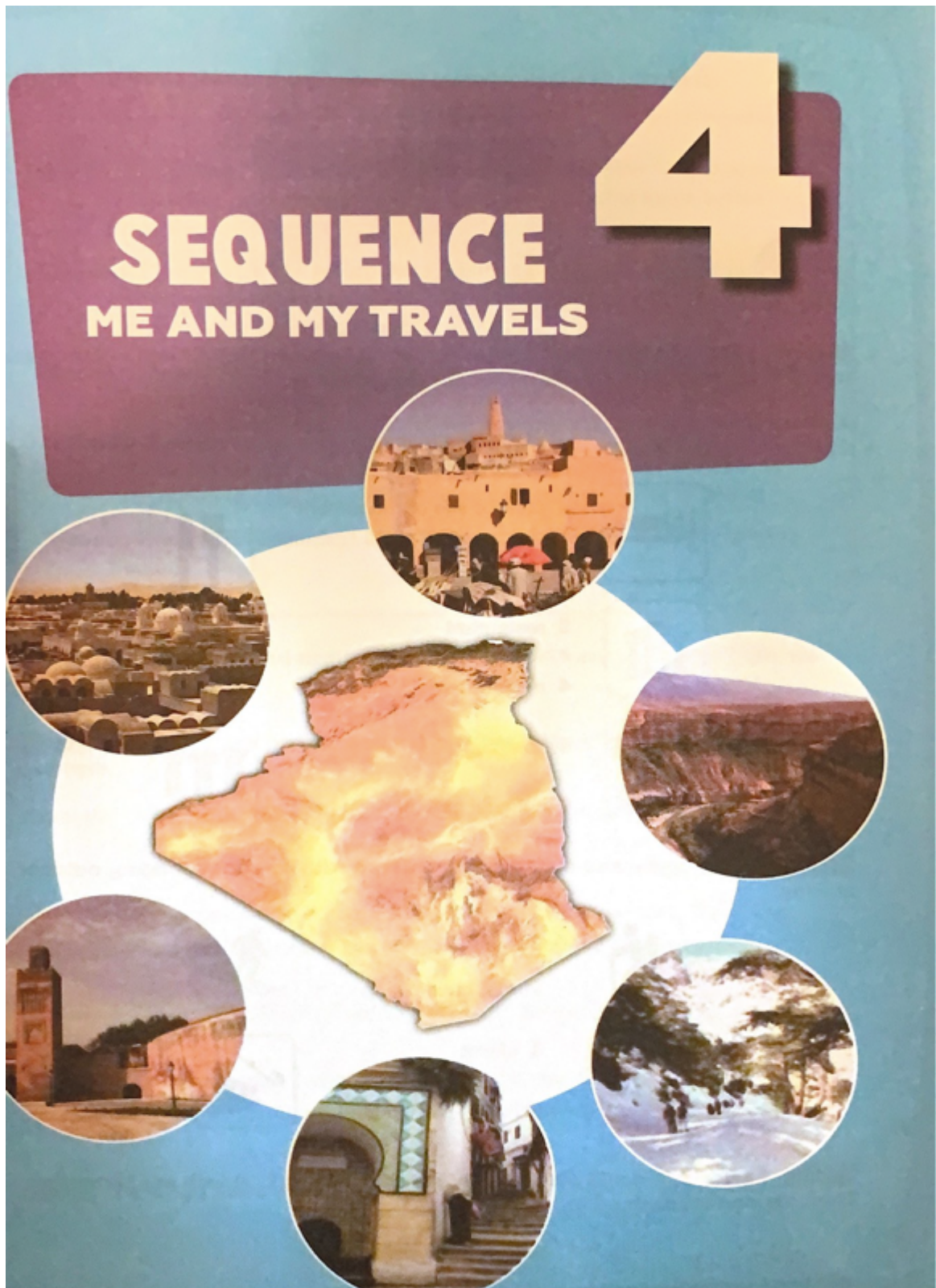
4



5



6



MS2: Me and my travels



I read and do.

Pride

Discover my wonders

Hello!

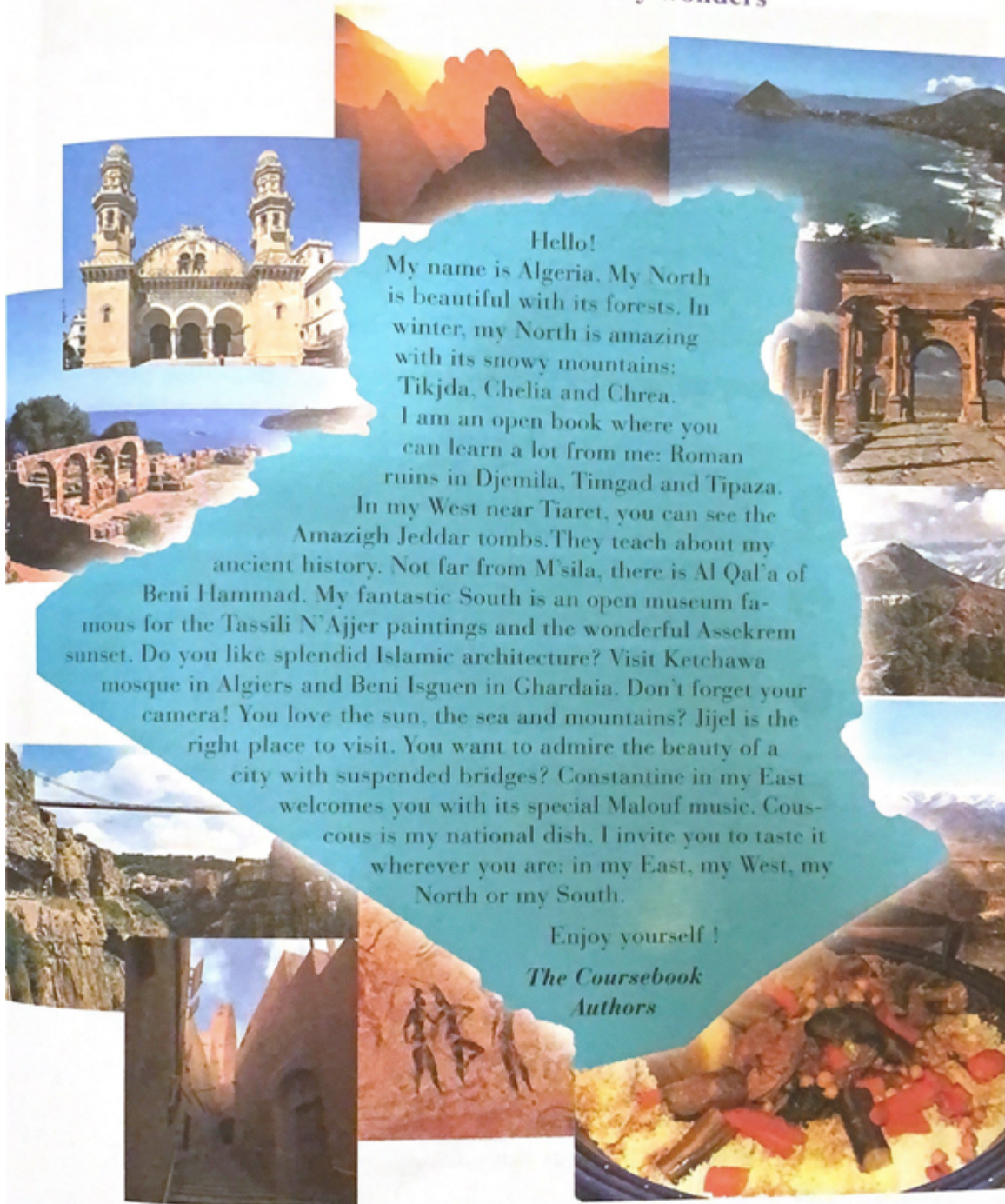
My name is Algeria. My North is beautiful with its forests. In winter, my North is amazing with its snowy mountains: Tikjda, Chelia and Chrea.

I am an open book where you can learn a lot from me: Roman ruins in Djemila, Tingad and Tipaza.

In my West near Tiaret, you can see the Amazigh Jeddar tombs. They teach about my ancient history. Not far from M'sila, there is Al Qal'a of Beni Hammad. My fantastic South is an open museum famous for the Tassili N'Ajjer paintings and the wonderful Assekrem sunset. Do you like splendid Islamic architecture? Visit Ketchawa mosque in Algiers and Beni Isguen in Chardaia. Don't forget your camera! You love the sun, the sea and mountains? Jijel is the right place to visit. You want to admire the beauty of a city with suspended bridges? Constantine in my East welcomes you with its special Malouf music. Cous-cous is my national dish. I invite you to taste it wherever you are: in my East, my West, my North or my South.

Enjoy yourself !

*The Coursebook
Authors*



MS1: Me, my country and the world

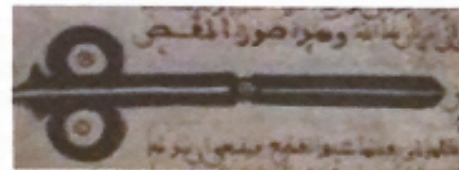
Task 8. A scientist is a good “observer” of the world around him/her. I find in text (1) the scientist's “observation” which the following picture illustrates.



Task 9. I write the name of each surgical instrument using the information given in text (2).



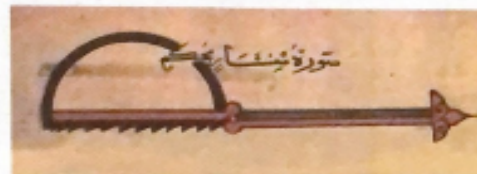
1:



2:



3:



4:

Task 10. I work with my partner. We discuss our answers in tasks (8 and 9) and correct each other.

Appendix 8: Interviews Conducted

Pseudo	Participants' profession	Interview form	Interview date
Au1	Curriculum and textbooks' author Inspector of English	Face to face	April 2017
Au2	Curriculum and textbooks' author Inspector of English	Online	April 2017
Au3	Textbook author, Lecturer English	Face to face	November 2017

Interviews conducted with Authors

Pseudo	Participants' profession	Interview form	Interview date
A, Ins	Inspector	Face to face	April 2017
A, T1	Teacher trainer, Teacher	Face to face	April 2017
A, T2	Teacher	Face to face	April 2017
A, T3	Teacher	Face to face, online	April 2018 December 2018
A, T4	Teacher	Online	December 2018

Interviews conducted with participants from city A

Pseudo	Participants' profession	Interview form	Interview date
B, Ins	Inspector	Face to face	September 2018
B, T1	Teacher, Teacher trainer	Online	November 2018
B, T2	Teacher, Teacher trainer	Online	November 2018
B, T3	Teacher	Face to face	February 2019
B, T4	Teacher	Face to face	February 2019

Interviews conducted with participants from city B

Pseudo	Participants' profession	Interview form	Interview date
C, Ins	Inspector	Online	April 2018
C, T1	Teacher	Face to face	April 2017
C, T2	Teacher	Online	October 2017

Interviews conducted with participants from city C

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