Introduction

The culture in which each of us lives affects and shapes our feelings, attitudes, behaviours, as well as the thoughts which make the furniture of our minds. It is largely through our culture that we see and interpret the world and evaluate acts and behaviours as good or bad, right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate. Socio-cultural dos and don'ts regulate people's behaviour in all life facets: child rearing, schooling, professional training, working, marrying, communicating ….

This chapter looks at what 'culture' means, examining anthropological and literary approaches to culture, and pointing to the various shifts in significance that this concept witnessed over the course of time: cultural products as literary works or works of art, background information about the history and geography of the country where a target languages TL is spoken and the social knowledge that people use to interpret experience. For some scholars, culture is invisible and lies in the mind of its bearers. Many metaphors have been associated with culture: now it is a 'map' to know one's way around in the life of a society, now it is a 'school of navigation' to cope with different terrains and seas; sometimes, it is even thought of as a filter through which reality is perceived. The chapter points also to cultural diversity and to the interaction of cultures.

1. Approaches to Culture

There are numerous misconceptions about the nature of culture, for it is a broad and complex phenomenon. One way of understanding what culture relates to is knowing what it is not, what it is and its different characteristics.

1.1. What Culture Is Not

Brooks (1968) delineates the framework of culture by differentiating it from other close subjects: geography, history, folklore, sociology, literature and civilization.

Culture is not 'geography', for the latter is the 'setting' of the former: ''Geography is the stage upon which the drama of human culture is played. But the play's the thing, not the scenery. Geography can at best be no more than the material surroundings in which culture takes root, flourishes, and comes to fruition'' (Brooks,ibid:19).

Culture is not the same as 'history' which heavily relies on written records :'' of course everything has a history –even history– and human culture is no exception. […] In general, it is fair to say that history goes back no further than the invention of writing. […] Though much younger than geography, human culture is vastly older than history, for culture appears at present to go back in time the greater part of two million years'' (Brooks,op.cit:19).

Culture is not 'folklore', i.e., not ''the systematically studied customs, legends, and superstitions that are transmitted in an informal way from one generation to another by means of oral communication […] folklore can provide only a limited and partial view of what we mean by culture'' (Brooks,op.cit:20).

Culture is different from 'sociology' : '' Sociology informs us with precision that in a given community there are three and a half children per family, but culture still waits for an interview with one of those half children '' (Brooks,op.cit:20). Damen (1987:82) believes that a society has a culture and a social organization. Therefore, she maintains society and culture are not the same : '' In general, social refers to the interactions of groups of people, with the group serving as a major focus of analysis, while culture refers to a set of behavioural, cognitive and emotional patterns''. However, what is social and what is cultural may coincide and be identical. Both the social and the cultural perspectives are important and are complementary and hence the term 'sociocultural'.

Culture is not to be confined within literature : '' literature can supply us with but a part – though clearly a most valuable part – of what needs to be taught under the heading of culture.'' (Brooks, op.cit: 21).

Culture is also not to be confused with civilization. Brooks (op.cit:21) puts it clearly that ''Civilization deals with an advanced state of human society, in which a high level of culture, science, industry, and government has been attained. It deals mainly with cultural refinements and technological inventions that have come about as the result of living in cities and thickly populated areas.''. In other words, civilization is a more inclusive concept.

Brooks(op.cit:21-22). argues that culture is above all (and most of all) about human beings, the point which distinguishes it form the disciplines mentioned above:

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The most important single criterion in distinguishing culture from geography, history, folklore, sociology, literature, and civilization is the fact that in culture we never lose sight of the individual. The geography for example, of mountains, rivers, lakes, natural resources, rainfall, and temperature is quite impersonal and would be what it is whether people were present or not. It is only when we see human beings in this geographical picture and observe the relationship between their individual lives and these facts and circumstances of the earth' s surface that our perspective becomes what we may call cultural.

1.2. What Culture Is – a Historical Account

Culture is not an easy concept to define, for it reflects what one thinks of oneself and how one is seen by others. Actually, the definition of this concept has developed in time. To begin with, the term ' culture' has historically been used in various discourses, in O' Sullivan et al.'s words (1994:68), it is a 'multi-discursive' term . Hence, no definition can fit all relevant contexts (anthropology, literary criticism, cultural studies, agriculture, Marxism, microbiology, nationalism, intercultural communication,...): "the term culture may be regarded by an anthropologist as a major unifying force, by a communication professional as a major variable, or by a psychologist as an individual mental set.'' (Damen, op.cit: 20).The concept of culture originates in agriculture where it denotes the tillage or the cultivation of the soil and plants. By extension, it refers, in biology, to the growing of bacteria. O'Sullivan et al. (ibid: 69) make it clear that "cultivation such as this implies not just growth but also deliberate tending of 'natural' stock to transform it into a desired 'cultivar' – a strain with selected, refined or improved characteristics". Accordingly, a 'cultured' or 'cultivated' person has a good educated and refined mind; the ''cultivation of minds'' is ''the deliberate husbandry of 'natural' capacities to produce perfect rulers'' (O'Sullivan et al., op.cit: 69).

Along these lines, culture in the nineteenth century meant Western civilization– a subjective,authoritative , taken for granted definition: ''it was popularly believed that all peoples pass through developmental stages, beginning with "savagery", progressing to "barbarism" and culminating in western "civilization". It's easy to see that such a definition assumes that western cultures were considered superior.'' (Jandt ,1998:6). In the mid-nineteenth century, culture was bound to (great) literature and fine arts. It was then defined as "the pursuit not of material but of spiritual perfection via the knowledge and practice of 'great' literature, ' fine' art and

'serious' music.'' (O'Sullivan et al. op.cit: 70). Hence, it was exclusively restricted to an elite class, leaving the majority of people 'uncultured'. This has later formed one of the basic orientations in the definition of culture, namely the literary, aesthetic, artistic approach or big 'C' culture, known also as 'formal' or 'high' culture. The second orientation is that of the social science anthropological approach which views culture as what shapes everyday life, namely patterned ways of behaviour, including the thought processes of a given people, in other words, small 'c' or 'deep' culture. (Brooks 1968, Seelye 1993).

Anthropologists were the first to try to define culture given that this concept is the core of their discipline. However, going through one of the many anthologies or collections of readings on this subject makes one become 'bewildered' given the various definitions conferred on such key concepts as 'culture' , 'intercultural' or 'acculturation'. Three hundred definitions were analysed by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1954; cited in Seelye, ibid.), on the basis of which culture was regarded in a very broad perspective being linked to all aspects of human life. These many (sometimes conflicting) definitions attest to the complexity of culture as a human phenomenon. Anthropologists seem to agree, however, on three main principles regarding the nature of culture: first, it should be dealt with as a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts (Seelye, ibid: 81) ; second, there exist many cultural means to serve the same human needs, and hence the importance of the principle of 'selectivity'; and third, culture is considered as an ever-changing phenomenon.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, anthropologists in both Europe and the United States of America (USA) approached culture as human (universal) patterned ways of living. Research then aimed at finding out general laws of human behaviours. The notion of cultural relativism did not emerge until later in history. Definitions illustrating this early approach to culture are quoted in Damen (op.cit:82-83):

-''Culture … is coterminous with man himself…''(Sapir 1964:79)
-''God gave to every people a cup, a cup of clay, and from this cup they drank their life….They all dipped in the water but their cups were different." (Benedict,1934:27-22)
-''Culture is a way of thinking, feeling, believing. It is the group's knowledge stored up (in memories of men; in books and objects) for future use …. A culture constitutes a storehouse of the pooled learning of the group." (Kluckhohn,1944:24-25)

By the twentieth century, American anthropologists under the leadership of Boas, (in Damen,op.cit) shifted the attention from searching general laws applicable to all cultures to investigating the particularities of individual cultures.They focused on field work,extensive data collection and induction –aspects that were to provide the foundations of ethnography. They believed that culture was

> a uniquely human mode of adaptation, at work in every facet of human life. Its functions were to hold human groups together and to provide ways of behaving, believing and evaluating for its human bearers. It was seen as learned and transmitted; it included knowledge, accepted manners of behaving, and was reflected in the artifacts and institutions of its given groups. (Damen, op.cit: 83)

This means that culture was viewed as what people share in the same social environment, and what sets them apart from people from another social environment. It is worth mentioning that cultural anthropologists during that time gradually moved from a description of culture as a more or less random collection of traits, to its definition as a system of patterned behaviours. Indeed, Kluckhohn and Kelly conceived culture as ''all those historically created *designs* (our emphasis) for living explicit and implicit, rational , irrational, and non-rational , which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behaviour of men.'' (in Hoijer, 1953; in Lado, 1957:111) . Furthermore, some anthropologists were concerned with the relationship that binds culture and language . This is clear, for instance, in Kluckhohn's (1944; in Damen, op.cit: 84) statement "Human culture without human language is unthinkable''. Other definitions related culture to its ecological environment : ''Culture is all those means whose forms are not under direct genetic control ... which serve to adjust individuals and groups , within their ecological communities.'' (Binford, 1968; in Damen, op.cit: 85) . In short, the anthropologists of the time emphasized the diversity of human cultural patterns , but restricted culture to what is observable and shared. This is known as the behaviourist approach to culture .Culture is most commonly defined in behaviouristic terms . Behaviourists viewed culture as a set of shared observable behaviours or patterns of behaviour, having to do with habits, events, customs. They were, however, interested in the mere description of behaviours without interpreting them, i.e., without attempting to understand their underlying rules and the circumstances of their occurence.

Subsequent definitions of culture were functional . Culture is also commonly defined in a functionalist perspective . Unlike the behaviourists , the functionalists were interested in understanding the underlying reasons and rules which explain and govern observed behaviours and events. People belonging to the same culture are believed to share common rules of behaving. Knowing these rules would lead to develop an ability to predict others' actions resulting in a better understanding of and a successful participation in the culture in question. Although the functionalist approch was a step further compared to the behaviourist, in that it attempted to uncover why people behave the way they do, it had shortcomings that were equally those of the behaviourist . Both assumed that identifying cultural behaviours and their functions could objectively and accurately be done , though , practically speaking , this proved not to be the case. Robinson (1985) explains that whether the observer is a native or a non-native of the culture , designating cultural behaviours is not an easy task , let alone their interpretration. For instance, a cultural anthropologist may observe a smile and infer the reason for smiling is happiness . Another may infer that the interpretion of the smile, in the same context , is embarrassment. A third might not perceive the smile but another act . Besides, the behaviourists and functionalists restricted culture to what is observable in behaviours and to what may be deduced on this basis.These approaches, thus , disregarded the unobserved cultural features shared by the members of the same culture , namely culture as " a way of perceiving, interpreting and creating meaning." (Robinson, ibid: 10) , what has precisely been taken into account by the more recent cognitive approach .

The cognitive approach to culture (known also as the ideational approach) views it as a system of ideas and mental constructs rather than material observable things in Goodenough's words (1964; in Damen, op.cit:85):

> 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 ... By this definition ... culture is not a material phenomenon ; it does not consist of things , people , behavior , or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them.

For Robinson (op.cit:10), "culture is like a computer program. The program differs from culture to culture. The program refers to cognitive maps". Similarly, Hofstede

(1991; in De Jong, 1996: 26) refers to culture as the "software of the mind ", and De Jong as "the set of mental rules that govern our everyday behaviour". To put it otherwise, cognitivists view culture not as behaviour but as knowledge, or as an internal system for thinking, interpreting and behaving. Along these lines, the European sociologist and anthropologist, Lévi-Strauss conceives of culture as 'creations' of the human mind. Obviously, this dealing with culture is not based on fieldwork, but is more abstract and aims at throwing light on universal properties of the human mind. Its limitation lies in the fact that it fails to consider the other modes of acquiring a culture such as the emotional and the kinesthetic modes. It explores the inside of people only on the basis of knowledge conveyed through the analytic cognitive mode.

Other abstract definitions of culture consider, in addition to the universal mental aspect , the process of sharing these mental processes , in Damen's words (op.cit:87): "The locus of inquiry then moved from within the human mind to the relationships in which the mental representations were joined .The study of cultures meant the study of shared codes of symbolic meaning". An example of such definitions is Geertz' (1973; in Lantolf, 1999: 30) which views culture as a "historically transmitted semiotic network constructed by humans and which allows them to develop, communicate and perpetuate their knowledge, beliefs and attitudes about the world". Another instance is Thompson's (1990; in Kachru, 1999: 77) , according to which culture denotes "the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances and meaningful objects of various kinds , by virtue of which individuals communicate with one another and share their experiences , conceptions and beliefs". Culture is, thus, approached as symbols and meanings. In other words, while cognitive anthropologists point out culture as a 'process' , a cognitive mapping , symbolic anthropologists consider it as a ' product' of this process , a set of meanings .These meanings are historically intertwined in the sense that one's past experiences influence present and future ones in a dynamic process .

One further approach to culture worth mentioning in this account is the socio-cognitive approach (Atkinson, 1999). It is a 'middle-ground' approach which advocates a theory of culture that balances what is considered as the traditional theory of culture and its alternative, critical, postmodernist theory. The traditional view of culture (in Atkinson's words the 'received' view) considers it as a homogeneous, static, monolithic, all-encompassing entity; a set of values, norms, meanings

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collectively shared by a community. The alternative critical approach reveals the inequalities, disagreements and differences that exist within the same one culture, and throws light as well on cross-cultural interactions and cultural change. Attention shifts from ''culture'' considered as a 'general' and 'misleading' concept to ''identity'', ''subjectivity'', ''resistance'' viewed as 'more useful' categories. These concepts highlight the importance of individuals and their positions vis-à-vis the prevailing way of life. Moreover, in the framework of the alternative critical approach, cultures are viewed as unbounded, that is there are no strong boundaries isolating cultural groups. Rather, cultures interact and share borderlands. They are permeable and permeating. Hence, they are unstable, ever-changing and developing. What is more, viewed from ''the inside'', cultures are not homogeneous. Indeed, the same culture bearers display individual differences and personal idiosyncracies. Some may act in ways that resist or ignore or alter cultural norms. The process of acquiring cultural symbols and meanings is very significantly influenced by individuals' personal knowledge and experience. Thus, culture is viewed as an ideology constructed by people in position of power (notwithstanding 'outside' influence and 'inside' individual difference), to justify particular socio-political interests. The socio-cognitive approach, as mentioned above, is a middle ground approach in that it views culture as neither exclusively homogeneous and monolithic, nor heterogeneous and fragmented. This goes in harmony with 'the Structuration theory' (Giddens, 1979; in Atkinson, op.cit) according to which abstract social systems (i.e., shared culture) and individual actions (i.e., individual fragmented culture) are significant only in relation to each other: ''In this view humans are agentive in creating their environments , but not in a wholly unconstrained way . Cultural models and schemes provide basic guidelines for behavior, but these guidelines are constantly being reworked and remade in the messy crucible of everyday human behavior'' (Atkinson, op.cit: 637). This view has been further reinforced by work in cognitive anthropology and related disciplines, which demonstrates that society and culture are neither ''homogeneous, monolithic edifies [n]or fragments drifting chaotically in space.'' (Atkinson, op.cit: 637).A culture exists as a result of the interaction of 'culture in the head' and 'culture in the world', in other words, the interaction of socially (more or less) shared 'schemas' and networks, i.e., cognition, and actual socialized practices and actions.

We do believe that culture has both a collective and an individualistic dimension: it is a whole shared by the members of a social group, but at the same

time, each member adds something of his / her own to this whole. To put it otherwise, culture has something that unites people, but every individual makes his / her contribution to it, as so aptly put by Keesing (1974; in Damen, op.cit: 87):

> Culture, conceived as a system of competence shared in its broad design and deeper principles, and varying between individuals in its specificities, is then not all of what an individual knows and thinks and feels about his world. It is his **theory of what his fellows know, believe, and mean**, his theory of the code being followed, the game being played, in the society into which he was born.

Culture is now regarded as a broad concept that embraces all aspects of human life. Jandt (op.cit: 8) thinks of culture as a life experience in which people share problems , pleasures , tastes , eating habits , values , challenges , … :

> To begin to understand a culture, you need to understand all the experiences that guide its individual members through life , such things as language and gestures; personal appearance and social relationships ; religion , philosophy , and values ; courtship , marriage ,and family customs ; food and recreation ; work and government ; education and communication systems ; health , transportation , and government systems ; and economic systems .Think of culture as everything you would need to know and do so as not to stand out as a " stranger " in a foreign land.

In the concise words of Seelye (op.cit: 22) culture "is everything humans have learned." For Damen (op.cit: 23), it is "learned and shared human patterns and models for living." What is more, culture is now viewed as both cognitive and material: "Culture is a set –perhaps a system– of principles of interpretation, together with the products of that system." (Moerman, 1988:4; in Cortazzi and Jin, 1999: 197); it refers to the "totality of a people's socially transmitted products of work and thought. Thus Irish culture refers to everything commonly thought of as Irish." (Jandt op.cit: 9). This approach to culture as an inclusive all-embracing concept takes us back to the classical nineteenth century anthropological definitions such as Tylor's (1871; in Damen, op.cit:73): "Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".

The best definition of culture is, according to us, the one that embodies all relevant factors and finds a middle-ground between the behavioural, the functional, the cognitive, the symbolic, the social and other perspectives. Kramsch's (1998) is perhaps such a definition and is worth ending this historical account with. According to Kramsch, culture affects its bearers in two contradictory ways: it frees them from the generality and anonymity of nature by conferring on them a special 'hue', but at the same time, it restricts and restrains them to this particular hue, and imposes on them conformity to it. These effects of culture are, according to Kramsch, felt at three layers: the social, the historical and the metaphorical layers. Socially speaking, culture manifests itself in the ways members of the same social group think , behave, and value things in the world .This is reflected , for instance , in their use of language. They choose what to say or not to say, when, and how to say it, according to their shared socio-cultural norms. The latter are reinforced by social institutions such as the family and the school. Culture has also a historical dimension in the sense that what is cultural is reinforced through time and handed down from one generation to another , so that it becomes 'natural' and unquestionable . Kramsch (op.cit: 7) states: ''The culture of everyday practices draws on the culture of shared history and tradition.'' The historical view of culture entails the reference to its material productions namely scientific inventions, monuments, literary works and artifacts of all kinds. Preserving them means preserving one's cultural patrimony. In this regard, language plays a significant role to safeguard the cultural heritage of a nation and to perpetuate its thoughts and views .The third layer of culture is imaginative , in Kramsch's opinion , '' Discourse communities are characterized not only by facts and artifacts , but by common dreams , fulfilled and unfulfilled imaginings'' (p 8). These imaginings are part of a nation's culture. Again, language serves as a means to externalize and express people's imaginative reflections and metaphorical thinking.

1.3. Characteristics of Culture

Cushner and Brislin (1996) outline several characteristics for culture. These characteristics touch on both concrete and abstract facets. As such, they enable a better understanding of the true nature of culture.

First, they believe it to be human, i. e., it is all that is related to humans and made by them; it is not merely something that exists in nature. As already mentioned, this point was particularly stressed by Brooks (op .cit).

Second, culture has subjective and objective facets. Subjective culture has to do with the beliefs, values, norms and assumptions about life that underlie people's behaviours and attitudes, in other words, "the invisible, less tangible aspects of a group of people" (Cushner and Brislin, op.cit: 6). Objective culture means material visible culture, i.e., "things as the artifacts people make, the food they eat, the clothing they wear, and even the names they give to things." (Cushner and Brislin, op.cit: 6). Some of the less tangible cultural aspects remain implicit and not discussed. These aspects mostly underlie intercultural miscommunication and misunderstanding, when people from different cultures behave on the basis of different perspectives and find themselves consequently frustrated. It is actually perplexing for them to speak about or figure out what is going on when it is the subjective elements of their culture that are in conflict with those of others. Hinkel (1999: 5) explains: "One of the prominent qualities of cultural values, assumptions, and norms acquired in the socialization process is that they are presupposed and not readily available for intellectual scrutiny." Many scholars have pointed out the unconscious aspect of cultural phenomena. Keesing (op.cit; in Damen, op.cit: 88) writes "…the actor's "theory" of his culture, like his theory of his language, may be in large measure unconscious. Actors follow rules of which they are not consciously aware, and assume a world to be "out there" that they have in fact created with culturally shaped and shaded patterns of mind". Weaver (1993; in Thanasoulas, 2001) believes that the most important part of culture is that which is internal and hidden, i.e., what lies in the deep sub-conscious of its bearers. Reference is made here to the values, thought patterns and assumptions which underlie people's behaviours and ways of life. Weaver states that they are what lies below the water level of an iceberg, the water level of conscious awareness, and hence their significance.

Third, culture is socially and collectively constructed and transmitted. It follows that it is not innate but learned. Jandt (op.cit: 8) puts it clearly that "Culture is not a genetic trait. All these cultural elements are learned through interaction with others in the culture." Besides, cultural values, beliefs and worldviews are learned right from childhood. In this regard, Hilgard et al. (1958; in De Jong, op.cit: 27) state: "The process of growing up includes learning to behave in ways expected by our society. We usually accept group values without much reflection and without awareness that peoples of other cultures may not share these values. If our culture values

cleanliness, promptness, and hard work, we try to be clean, prompt, and industrious." Because culture is learned and is learnable, it can thus be taught.

Fourth, according to Cushner and Brislin, a culture enables its bearers to readily communicate much information via few words or gestures. This is known as the 'cooperative' principle. In other words, people belonging to the same culture are able to 'Fill in the blanks' and to deduce what is not explicitly stated, on the basis of their shared cultural knowledge.

Fifth, people are likely to react with emotion when their cultural norms and values are violated in cross-cultural encounters[1] .

Sixth, the values and norms of culture are unquestionable. It happens that individuals or groups rebel against some of them; for example, adolescents may challenge authority or conventional social order, but this is generally temporary and they end up joining the main stream culture. Besides, a cultural value remains a 'value' though it may be compromised in real-life situations. It is worth mentioning, however, that cultural beliefs, attitudes and worldviews may change. For instance, the western civilization was, among other things, built upon the belief that nature is to be 'conquered'. Now, the relationship man / environment has changed. Indeed, efforts are being made to protect the environment and clean it up. Another example of cultural change is the status of women in most world cultures. After world war two, women began to work outside the home and started to share what was exclusive to men. Accordingly, family roles shifted in that men had to assume, to some extent, more responsibility as far as housework and children care are concerned. It should be remembered, nevertheless, that for a long established cultural belief to change, there need be much time and will.

Seventh, cultures may be described on the basis of contrastive criteria like the use of time, orientation in space, respect of age. For example, some cultures are past-oriented, others are present- and future- oriented. (This characteristic will be further discussed in subsection 2.2.2).

Damen (op.cit) points out other features of culture. To begin with, she argues that it is an ever-changing code .Culture is, indeed, subject to constant change, and absorbs inside and outside influences .Cultural patterns change in harmony with people's needs and values. It is this dynamic aspect which, in our opinion, keeps it

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[1] See chapter two, section 2.1 for further information.

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alive. Damen highlights on this basis the need to learn how to learn a culture, that is how to recognize, analyze and assess its aspects, and adapt to its changes and variables rather than learn particular temporary facts. For her, culture is a whole life aspect, in that no society or social group can be conceived of without implying the existence of a culture. This is due to the fact that culture has to do with human needs and ways of living; it structures one's life on the basis of selected principles and values: "Cultures provide sets of unique and interrelated selected blueprints." (Damen, op.cit: 88-89). In addition, according to her, culture is a filter through which people perceive reality, a selective but limiting filter. It is also a system that is mainly expressed and transmitted through language.

Scollon (1999: 185) characterizes culture as 'regular', 'patterned', 'distinctive' and 'out-of-awareness'. By regularity, he does not mean "rigidity of practice" but "stability of expectation". By pattern, he refers to the fact that cultural codes "are not specific to the single situation depicted"; the distinctiveness feature denotes that one's cultural codes "differ from the codes used by members of other cultures"; and the out-of-awareness characteristic implies that cultural codes "are not highlighted in any way except when violated."

Another characteristic of culture worth mentioning in this account is its heterogeneity. Every culture is heterogeneous for it is made up of a variety of sub-cultures (age, social class, sex, ethnic origin)[1] , and the same one situation may elicit varied reactions. Therefore, one cannot expect exact similarity in behaviour among the members of the same culture. Each individual has distinctive features setting him / her apart from the others .Hilgard et al. (op.cit; in De Jong, op.cit:29) explains:

> Even though cultural pressures impose some personality similarities , individual personality is not completely predictable from a knowledge of the culture in which a person is raised for three reasons : (1) the cultural impacts upon the person are not actually uniform , because they come to him by way of particular people-parents and others – who are not all alike in their values and practices ; (2) the individual has some kinds of experiences that are distinctively his own ; and (3) the individual because of the kind of person he is , redefines the roles he is required to fit into.

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[1] See section 3.1 for further details in this regard.

2. The Structure of Cultures

A culture, as explained in the previous section, is what a group of people share as a common background. This is reflected in major components as cultural beliefs, values, assumptions and behaviours. Rituals, superstitions, symbols, myths, taboos, stereotypes, and prejudices are also subsumed under the cultural umbrella.

To understand the deep structure of cultures, scholars have developed conceptual frames that relate for example to time, space, power and uncertainty. On the basis of these dimensions, cultural profiles can be drawn and variation analysed.

2.1. Cultural Elements

2.1.1. Beliefs

A belief is a conviction in the truth of something that one learned by living in a culture. It is the basis of one's actions and values. Samovar, Porter and Jain (1981; in Damen, op.cit) identify three types of beliefs: experiential, informational and inferential. The experiential type is based upon a person's experiences, the informational type has to do with information acquired interpersonally and the inferential one transcends direct observation and information. Inferential beliefs are based on logic and thinking. It goes without saying that patterns of thinking are culture–specific.

In close connection with the beliefs, we have the knowledge, i.e., the facts, the skills and the understanding that people of a culture have gained through experience and learning. One's views are what one has learned from one's culture about how to regard and think about issues and ideas. Regarding nature, for instance, Germans and Americans do not have the same view – the German's being more 'polished' or 'civilized': (Hahn, 1997: 506)

> The German concept of nature is not the rugged western style and
> setting familiar to Americans. Rather it was found to include (in
> addition to such physical features as lakes, forests, and mountains)
> a refined lifestyle, in which one sits down to a glass of wine or a cup
> of strong "sun-grown" coffee at a nicely set table with flowers, and
> may smoke a mild cigarette or enjoy the delicious candy-brought by
> a guest the previous evening.

2.1.2. Values

Values are a set of beliefs made up of rules for making choices. They tell one what is right and wrong, good and bad; they tell one how to live one's life. Cushner

and Brislin (op.cit: 318-319) believe that values significantly shape and pervade one's life: "People make judgments and draw conclusions about what is and what is not of value. These judgments give rise to certain presuppositions from which people act with little or no conscious awareness. These presuppositions learned during childhood, play a pervasive role in all areas of people's adult experiences." For Damen (op.cit:191-192) "Values bring affective force to beliefs.[...] Values are related to what is seen to be good, proper, and positive, or the opposite. [...] They are also often the hidden force that sparks reactions and fuels denials". These reactions and denials are especially cross-cultural given the fact that cultures are built upon different values: "The often unexamined practice of making casual attributions about the behaviour of people from other cultures from our own perspective is part of a much larger picture, in which social interactions in one culture are distorted through the prism of values in another" (Ellis, 1996: 216). What is more, values change through time and may only be embraced by some and not others in the same culture; certain aspects, however, remain valid for a very long time. Individual courage and initiative, team spirit (or support from all the members of the team) are examples of American cultural values (Kramsch: 1993). In the Chinese culture, the major value is to uphold the needs of the group over those of the individual, together with a reluctance to draw attention to oneself.

'Value dimensions' are a set of interrelated values that exist along a continuum of relative importance. These dimensions describe the values that influence cultural behaviours in all cultures, for example, individualism versus collectivism and high–power versus low–power distance dimensions. These dimensions are viewed in subsection 2.2.2.

2.1.3. Assumptions

A culture is underlain by a set of assumptions about life and the world. An assumption is a belief that is not proved. Assumptions are indispensable to everyday living. Without them, people would constantly need to ask about the meaning of things.

Differences in assumptions can go unrecognized or dismissed. For example, a teacher may assume that if learners do not ask questions, they understand the material. Learners may assume that if they ask questions, the teacher will think they

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are not intelligent. Different cultures have different assumptions which may reflect different world views:

> To members of a particular culture, these assumptions appear self–evident and axiomatic. They are not, however, necessarily shared by members of other cultures whose values are also based on unquestioned and unquestionable fundamental notions and constructs. In this sense, conceptualizations of reality and social frameworks in different cultural communities may occasionally be at odds to varying degrees. (Hinkel, op .cit:5)

People holding very different assumptions about what is right or wrong will have difficulties to communicate, unless one or both parties make an effort to understand what the other assumes to be true. Acknowledging and understanding one's own assumptions and those of one's interlocutor is required if effective cross-cultural communication is to occur.

People all over the world may hold some common assumptions and beliefs, which may at times be wrong. Thousand years ago, it was believed that the Earth was flat and was the centre of the universe, staying fixed while the Sun, Moon and Stars moved. When virtually all people believe in the same thing, there is little chance that they will ever consider believing in something else. As a result, a view that is not valid may be propagated from generation to generation. We may assume that our cultural traditions must be good or else they would not have survived. It is particularly tempting for Americans to assume their traditions are perfect, as the USA has become a superpower in recent history.

If we are unwilling to question our own long–held assumptions, we may negatively perceive another group of people. Their behaviour or way of living may be queer or wrong by our standards. The outcome would be negative stereotyping of other cultures. If we care about truth, we will not believe things just because those around us do or say so. We need to question one's own perceptions and assumptions. If beliefs are not shared by other cultures, we may question them to find the reason why others think differently, and compare the evidence for each view. It is difficult to reconsider a cultural assumption if we are not conscious of it. We should, nonetheless, try to analyze a question for ourselves, and come to the most unbiased possible conclusion.

2.1.4. Behaviours

Behaviours are the way people act, based on their learned beliefs and values. Behaviours that one group of people consider improper may be practised on a routine basis by those in another group. The set of behaviours one is expected to engage in as a consequence of one's social position (mother, father, teacher, president...) is known as one's 'role' in the society. An individual may assume a number of different roles in his/her daily interactions with other individuals: "Productive, efficient, and healthy persons are able to shift roles as needed (e.g., from participant to leader, from employee to spouse) and understand the appropriate behaviors in each context." (Cushner and Brislin, op.cit: 297). For these persons, it is not difficult to realize that other people who have different cultural frameworks have themselves different roles and expectations in different contexts.

It is relevant, in this regard, to refer to cultural patterns. "The cultural behaviours of people from the same country can be referred to collectively as cultural patterns, which are clusters of interrelated cultural orientations." (Matikainen and Duffy, 2000:41). A dominant pattern is the one that represents the majority or the largest number of people in a culture. According to Lado (op.cit), the 'pattern of behaviour' is the functioning unit of a culture. He describes it as "The mold or design into which certain acts must fall to be considered [as belonging to the same pattern of behaviours]" (p111). Each pattern is made up of several elements such as the performer, the act, the objects, the setting, the time, the manner and the purpose. There are 'static units' such as people , animals , things , places ; 'processes', i.e., actions such as to eat , to wash , to think ; and 'qualities' that is adjectives and adverbs such as quick , slow , beautiful , happily.

Each pattern has form, meaning and distribution that are culturally determined. Lado (op.cit:113) argues that it is very difficult to define accurately the form of the patterns of a culture : "Even such a clear unit of behaviors as eating breakfast , immediately identified by the performer if we ask him what he is doing , may be described by him as the morning meal when you eat cereal, bacon, eggs, and coffee [in the American culture], yet a man who works during the night might be eating breakfast in the evening , and a meal of cereal, bacon, eggs, and coffee might be lunch or even supper.". Lado implies that even the members of the culture in question may not be able to define a cultural pattern of behaviour of theirs, though perfectly able to identify it. This inability to describe one's cultural ways may be due

to the fact that one has been doing things without being conscious of doing them. Therefore, to describe the form of any cultural pattern, researchers should observe a number of occurrences of this pattern and contrast them with occurrences which resemble them but are identified as other patterns of behaviour. The natives can help identify the cultural pattern, but the accurate description of its form requires systematic observation and careful analysis. What is more, any patterned form of behaviour has a complexity of meanings that are significant within the framework of a given culture. Many factors are at work in this regard. Considering the act of eating breakfast or any other meal, to paraphrase Lado again, the 'primary' meaning has to do with nutrition; the secondary meanings may have religious, health, economic, social class, political connotations. A cultural pattern has form, meaning, but also distribution in time, space and position in relation to other patterns. All these factors are culture–bound and may not be transferable form one culture to another. Lado (op.cit:114) puts it clearly that:

> The patterning that make it possible for unique occurrences to operate as sames among the members of a culture did not develop for operation across cultures .When they do occur in contact across cultures , many instances of predictable misinterpretation take place . We can assume that when the individual of culture A trying to learn culture B observes a form in culture B in a particular distribution spot, he grasps the same complex of meaning as in his own culture. And when he in turn engages actively in a unit of behaviour in culture B he chooses the form which he would choose in his own culture to achieve that complex of meaning.

Regarding the pattern behaviour of sleeping, for example, it may be culturally significant in the sense that it varies from one culture to another. Time of sleep is particularly significant in most cultures. On this basis, some members of a culture might be judged as lazy, or sick, or reckless with one's health. It is useful to note Lodo's classification of the cultural patterns of behaviour according to the type of needs they meet : needs of one's body (to sleep, to eat, to clean ...) ; needs of one's personality (to study, to engage in social and artistic activities…); needs of one's soul (religious activities); tool activities (to communicate, to work, to govern, to organize ...) .

A culture provides a set of rules and norms of behaviour that its members should respect and conform to. According to Jandt (op.cit:18), rules and norms represent distinct paradigms: "Rules may refer to socially agreed–on behavior or to individual guidelines for behavior. Norms specify appropriate and inappropriate behaviors." Knowing cultural rules means, for instance, knowing when to call a friend on the phone, or the appropriate time for an informal visit, or what to expect when considering someone a friend... . Hand salute and walking on the left of a senior are illustrations of norms in the military sub–culture (Jandt, op.cit). Cultural rules and codes of behaviour are not immutable, but it may take some time before changes become obvious and generally accepted. It is useful to note that cultural rules and norms are explicitly stated by people to justify their attitudes and behaviours, while cultural values and assumptions lie at a more sub-conscious level and are unquestioned.

2.1.5. Rituals and Superstitions

For De Jong (op.cit: 29), "Rituals are to do with areas of behaviour like ways of greeting and saying farewell, and showing respect towards others, i.e. 'customary' cultural behaviour , both at the level of the individual and at the social level". Customs are habitual ways of going about daily activities, i.e., settled practices that cannot be easily given up. Cushner and Brislin (op. cit: 307-308) define a ritual as:

> Some standardized behaviour in which the relationship between the means and the end is not intrinsic. Rituals are therefore not based on facts but rather on symbolic concepts. [...] Rituals are often performed as part of relationships –there are rituals of kinship, of ties to others, of participation in and connection with the organic, psychological, and metaphorical realities of the society. They are related to key areas of human life –[...] and are concerned with binding people's feelings and behaviour into the social fabric.

The way knives and forks are handled during a meal, the way people get dressed in ceremonies or formal occasions , the way formal meetings are opened and closed , the way one greets friends upon meeting in public or private (kissing , handshaking , verbal greetings...) , handing out a sport winner medals are all examples of rituals . Circumcision of little boys is a ritual that symbolizes 'growing up' or 'manhood', and implies as well belonging to Muslim or Jewish communities. In any culture, there is a

language to celebrate rituals. It is generally characterized by a more careful articulation, a special prosody and an exceptional use of vocabulary and structures compared to everyday language use.

Rituals vary from one culture to another. With respect to the ritual of kissing, cultural differences have been observed in that in some countries like France and the Netherlands, meeting a friend requires an exchange of three kisses, whereas in other countries such as Britain and Germany, at most two kisses (De Jong, op. cit). In the Arab world, the number of kisses may exceed four. Besides, in Western Europe, this ritual is restricted to women or men towards women, but in Eastern Europe or in the Arab world, it is quite normal for men to exchange kisses in ritual occasions, especially in feasts and after daily praying for Muslims. Shaking hands is another culture–specific ritual. French people, for instance, shake hands on many occasions – when introducing themselves, when meeting again, and when leaving. This custom has spread widely, in that for most people on the European continent, shaking hands is an everyday occurrence, though, perhaps, not as frequently as in France. English people on the whole restrict 'shaking hands' to the occasion of meeting someone for the first time, hence their difficulty to adapt to others in this regard (De Jong, op.cit). In Asian and African cultures, people do not use the left hand in personal contact given that it is used to wash unclean parts of the body; the right hand is to be used for eating and personal contact (Cushner and Brislin, op. cit). Other forms of greeting that are culture–bound are verbal forms. 'How are you ?', for instance , is a greeting formula that is used by English-speaking cultures not to elicit full details of one's interlocutor's health, but to be answered with a similar short utterance : ''How are you? is a signal that allows Australians [for example] to acknowledge each other.''(Sakamoto and Naotsuka, 1982: 2). In a like manner, Japanese greet each other with the question 'Where are you going?' that is not meant as a request for information (Sakamoto and Naotsuka, ibid.). Moreover, Chinese speakers do not use greeting formulas on the phone; for the French, this is considered impolite, particularly in formal situations (Zhihong, 2001). According to Crystal (1997: 49), a phone call to a private residence in France normally follows the sequence:

- Telephone rings
- Answerer : allo
- Caller verifies number [C'est bien le…]
- Answerer : oui

- Caller identifies self, apologizes and asks for intended addressee [Je suis …;je m'excuse, est-ce que je pourrais parler à…].

In Britain, there are only three stages:
- Telephone rings
- Answerer gives number [This is …]
- Caller asks for intended addressee [Could I speak to…].

On this basis, an English caller may seem bold to a French answerer, for not observing step five of the normal French telephone conversation pattern. This is one of the ways stereotypes are formed about foreigners.

Compliments are also handled differently cross-culturally. For instance, Americans take them for 'gifts' and acknowledge them with thanks and big smiles. The French are rather embarrassed when complimented, that is why they usually say something to minimize the value of the compliment (Kramsch, 1998). In the Chinese culture, acknowledging compliments is not humble, and may be considered as bad manners – a hostess would, for example, respond to "that was a wonderful meal" with "No, I'm sorry the food is not delicious." For modesty reasons, we may find similar reactions in the Arab world.

Modes of address are also socio-culturally bound. When people meet, the way they address each other depends on the culture they belong to, as well as on the factors of the speech situation in which they take part. The choice of first names and nicknames in direct address usually signals intimacy between the speakers, while last names and titles indicate social distance and a more formal level of relation. Nevertheless, the basis of selecting one form or another is not always that straightforward and complex factors are at work in this regard. In addition to cultural differences operating at the level of languages and dialects, there are idiosyncratic preferences (some people may agree to 'dispense' with titles). Contextual factors or factors of the speech situation determine as well one's choice of the actual appropriate form. What is normally inappropriate is to mix both title and first name such as "Mister Jack". Many foreigners to a particular culture find it difficult to use names properly, and often put themselves in embarrassing situations. The same applies to the use of 'polite' and 'familiar' pronouns of address. Reference is made to the 'T' form versus the 'V ' form that is , for example , tu versus vous in French , tu versus vos in Latin, ti versus chwi in Welsh and du versus sie in German. The rules

governing the use of these pronouns are complex. At the outset, T form was used in Latin when referring to one person and V form to more than one. Then, the latter began to be used when addressing a very important person, or a person of power, as a mark of respect. Later, it signalled social distance as opposed to T form which acquired the meanings of solidarity, social closeness and intimacy. Therefore, the implications of V and T forms may be different form one culture to another, and perhaps even from one individual to another, and these implications may change in time. As a result, misunderstandings and confusing situations often occur. Other cultures do not have the T and V pronouns, but manifest this distinction via other means, verbal and non-verbal, such as intonation, careful pronunciation, and body posture.

Other rituals performed daily are calls. When entering a room or an office, a Korean would clear his / her throat, or shuffle his / her feet as a call, i.e., as a means to call attention to him / her, and this would open up or signal the beginning of the interaction. It has to be noted that Koreans do not knock on doors, while Chinese knock with the back of their hands or knuckles, even if they have been seen coming and asked to come in before they perform this ritual (Scollon, op. cit).

It is very important to mention that rituals have been trivialized in modern secular societies, as aptly put by Cushner and Brislin (op.cit: 65):

> Modern secular societies have stripped their cultures of many of the rituals that were significant or have trivialized them to such a degree that they have largely lost their meaning. Sojourners from such societies are apt to view rituals of other cultures as quaint, amusing superstitions or mere spectacle or sport. Failure to take them seriously can easily cause offense, so sojourners should be sensitive to their hosts' regard for such events.

People in a culture may, in fact, cherish superstitious acts and beliefs. A superstitious behaviour is ''a learned habit repeated periodically, often a behavior coincidentally reinforced in association with other rewarded action (e.g., a person always bets on gray horses because he once won a large sum of money on one)'' (Cushner and Brislin, op.cit: 308-309). Anthropologists believe that a superstition has more pejorative meanings than a ritual in that the former is viewed as ''degraded or degenerate ritual, the context of certain ritualistic practices being lost with cultural

changes and only the habitual action or vague fears persisting as superstitions." (Cushner and Brislin, op. cit: 309).

2.1.6. Symbols and Myths

Hofstede (1991; in De Jong, op.cit:29) defines symbols as "words, gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning which is only recognized by those who share the culture." Symbols are particularly noticeable in religious ceremonies, weddings, funerals, sessions of law courts. The national flag , for instance, symbolizes a country's unity ; the head scarf for women is a token of a religious belonging (according to Islam , women must be completely covered except for face and hands ; their 'abaya' and veil represent honour , dignity ,chastity and purity); white colour suits signify death and funerals in Japan . Other symbols have to do with hair style, preferred beverages, choice of words... and characterize especially youth sub–cultures .Further , there are symbols associated with holidays (for example foods) , good and bad luck (such as animals) and are different from one culture to another . Under the cultural category of symbols may be included as well literary , artistic or architectural ' products' of all kinds : important characters , events and themes from folk literature , stories , legends ; visual arts (and artists) ; musical arts (and composers) ; traditional songs , rhymes and games; and significant national or geographic monuments . Currency coins, stamps and other realia have also symbolic cultural meanings.

To understand a culture, one needs also to understand its myths. Jandt (op.cit:8) associates a culture's myths to its symbols, values, and rituals; for him, "Myths provide the cultural image of perfection and provide a guide for living (...). [They] are expressed in the dominant symbols and rituals of a culture in story form". Myths are sometimes used to influence people's beliefs and behaviours .For example, the myth of the American Cowboy is exploited in cigarettes advertisements. Under the cultural category of myths may be included the category of heroes, that is, in De Jong's words (op.cit: 29), " the persons, dead or alive, real or imaginary, who serve as models for behaviour." Heroes may be political, sport, art,…figures and may be common to many cultures.

2.1.7. Taboos

Members of a culture are psychologically and physically shaped to observe taboo–related rules. The word 'taboo' is borrowed from Tongan, a Polynesian language (Chu, 2000). It refers to 'forbidden', 'unmentionable' and 'to be avoided' behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal. In other words, a taboo is an act or a word which religion or custom considers as forbidden. Once taboos are formed in a society, references to them become taboos as well. Some cultures may consider certain topics taboo; hence, these are not raised in public, and may only be discussed among people who may know each other very well. Examples would be discussing one's income in Britain (as opposed to USA) or discussing one's religious conviction in the Netherlands (as opposed to Britain) (De Jong, op. cit). To display affection in public, to cross one's legs with the sole of one's shoes facing another person, to whistle, and to walk in front of someone praying are taboo behaviours in the Arab world. A taboo question that seems to be common to many cultures is asking a woman about "her age".

In every language, there seem to be some words of such strong affective connotation that they cannot be used in polite discourse. Some of such words are probably universal, for example, those that relate to excretion and sex. Further, in both Eastern and Western cultures, fear of death engenders fear of words that relate to it. Therefore, expressions as 'pass away' and 'depart' are usually used as substitutes for 'die'. Many cultures in south Africa, the Americas, China, England, and Turkey (Crystal, op.cit) witness 'linguistic duels', whether intentionally organized with a public attendance, or happening occasionally in many social settings, where participants quarrel to have the last word .These linguistic attacks may be implicit using subtle forms of irony and alluding jokes, as they may be explicitly rude, indecent and obscene. The exchanges of insults are delivered with great speed, following consistent phonological patterns. The language of cursing has two main varieties: formal expressions used in formal contexts like law and taboo forms expressing different intensity levels of emotion used in other contexts (Crystal, op. cit). Among these taboo forms are 'the four- letter words' in English. They may be common to the members of a social group, and can be considered as a marker of group identity. Polynesians and Japanese are said to use very little language of this sort.

Knowledge of the non-verbal and verbal taboos of a culture is essential to successful communicative interactions, and should thus be discussed in language classrooms and textbooks, as part of cultural instruction. In many cases, foreign people realize the existence of the rules associated with taboos only after they have violated them. People who do not respect these rules may face total embarrassment, or other more serious outcomes, for a taboo is by definition (culturally) insulting.

2.1.8. Stereotypes and Prejudices

A stereotype is a belief or an opinion held by one group that the majority of a different group can be classified by the actions, appearance or attitudes of a few members of that group. In other words, it is an unanalysed attribution of some characteristics to all members of a cultural group. An expression such as ''that's typical of those people...'' (Koyama, 1992: 6) is 'typically' stereotypical. A stereotype is hence a form of prejudice that is due to a rough overgeneralization, a judgement made on the basis of little or no evidence.

According to Lado (op.cit), the phenomenon of stereotyping is due to preconceived ideas about the others and their culture , ideas which result from the assumption that one's view of the world is the best and the most correct one, compared to the others' ; hence , any difference is not taken as such and is even not tolerated . In addition, preconceived ideas about a culture may be due to the fact that people usually 'rush' to false generalisations, applying to the whole society or culture what holds true only for one individual or one group: (Lado, op. cit : 120)

> Another type of problem related to distribution differences or rather to assumed distribution differences , occurs when member of one culture , who normally recognize many subgroups in the population of their own culture , assume that another culture with which they come in contact is uniform . Hence, observations made about one individual of that other culture tend to be generalized to the entire population.

He further illustrates the point stating: "What a religious person does on Sunday is not [or should not be] generalized to all religious groups and much less to the non religious members of the culture." (p121)

Stereotypes are handed down from one generation to another as fixed truths about 'otherness'. They are, hence, more likely to be reinforced than questioned or modified. Along these lines, Kramsch (1998:131) defines stereotypes as

"conventionalized ways of talking and thinking about other people and culture." She believes that stereotyping is , anthropologically speaking, a 'diffusing', 'focusing' process, that is stereotypes are formed by "extending the characteristics of one person or group of persons to all" (p127), and by "focusing on certain classificatory concepts prevalent within a certain discourse community " (p128).

For Clarke and Clarke (1990: 34), stereotyping is underlain by the 'stigmatisation' of others or of those who are 'unlike us', to be able to feel ourselves more fully human. "The dollar grasping American", "the indolent Latin American" are instances of stereotypes. The Americans in general are usually stereotyped as gregarious, the Germans as very disciplined, and the French as individualists (Kramsch, 1993). Other people may cherish other stereotypical viewpoints about these cultural groups; for example, for De Jong (op. cit: 16)

> The Dutch look upon the English as typically trustworthy, friendly, approachable people, they are almost like the Dutch themselves in many respects. The reputation of the Germans on the other hand is terrible: they are harsh, overbearing loudmouths who insist upon occupying their particular spot on the beach and everything that goes with it. The French are too far away to have much of a reputation ,apart form the Latin-lover type of fame, but if they do have one , it is one of arrogance [...] French cuisine and French wine enjoy a high reputation in the Netherlands even among those who have never even seen a four –star restaurant from the outside . French is still the language of upper – class culture in many respects.

Similar stereotypes exist in Algeria about its neighbouring countries. For instance, Tunisians are viewed as 'polite' but 'secular' and 'greedy'.

Clarke and Clarke (op. cit) identified three major types of stereotyping: racial (racist) stereotyping, which negatively represents black people as trouble makers and violent individuals; sexual (sexist) or gender stereotyping, depicting women as less rational and less capable than men, and restricts their role to housework and childcare, in short, viewing feminity as the absence of masculinity; and class (classist) and regional stereotyping which regards groups or classes as homogenous, resulting in such oversimplified generalizations as 'Northerners are less friendly than Southerners'. Obviously, these stereotypes do not represent the complex socio-cultural reality. Blair (1989: 48) advocates 'refining' the stereotypes that surround cultural differences, "a process sometimes known as education."

As mentioned above, a stereotype is but one form of prejudice. Prejudice towards a culture is essentially caused by ignorance of or preconceived ideas about this culture. It was defined by Clarke and Clarke (op.cit: 31) as: "aversion fuelled by ignorance, and although this is not the terminology used by Krashen (1982), it is clearly cognate with those negative feelings on the part of a learner towards a target language / culture which trigger, in Krashen's model of second language performance, the raising of the affective filter and the consequent hindering of language learning / acquisition."

2.2. Cultural Dimensions

2.2.1. Cultural Differences and Similarities

2.2.1.1. Cultural Differences

Cultures of the world are different in many respects. Cushner and Brislin (op.cit) outline differences in work, decision making, time, space, displays of affection, silence, intensity of verbal exchanges, family relations and roles, male/female relations, sex roles, social relations and engagements, and hierarchies.

With respect to work, some cultures such as Latin-American and Asian ones, unlike others, mix work and relationships. Another instance of difference is that in USA, as reported by Kramsch (1993:214), jobs are advertised in a special section of newspapers or through signs in shop windows bearing the words: 'help wanted'. For the Russians, this phrase is too impersonal and cold, because they are used to phrases as 'you are invited to work here' instead; for the Americans, the former phrase has the connotations of efficiency (i.e., what is important is the job) and need (i.e., to work means to help).

Decision making is culture-bound in that is may be a 'democratic' 'participative' process in some cultural systems such as that of European Americans, or an individual matter in high-power-distance countries, that is countries whose social structure is shaped on the basis of authority and power.[1]

Time is a crucial cultural aspect. Its conception and use may vary considerably cross-culturally: (Cushner and Brislin, op.cit: 285)

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The working unit of time for European Americans is the 5 minute block; any amount of time smaller than that is not considered very important. Thus an individual can typically be 2 or 3 minutes late for a meeting without apologizing. After 5 minutes, he or she is expected to offer a brief apology. If the individual is 15 minutes late _a block of time representing three significant units_ he or she is expected to make a lengthy sincere apology, and perhaps may even be expected to make a phone call to the waiting party to explain the delay. Other cultures, however, do not place the same emphasis on time and punctuality as do most Europeans and Europeans Americans.

For the Hopi Indians, time is not fixed or measured, but dealt with in relation to changes in the environment, such as the maturation of corn.

Space is also managed differently in different cultures. For instance, some people like Latin Americans observe a close distance between themselves during casual conversations, the fact which may be highly disagreeable for others, namely, European Americans or northern Europeans. Misinterpretations of such culturally influenced differences are common. Arabs, for instance, are often claimed to 'violate' what European Americans consider as their 'personal' space in public places. Actually, 'personal' space and 'public space' are thought of differently in these cultures[2]. Time and space are two momentous conceptual frames to understand the underlying structure of cultures[3].

Public displays of affection also obey cultural rules: in some countries they are routine matters, but not in others; some cultures do not tolerate displays of affection between persons of the some sex, and the opposite happens in other cultures.

Silence is another cultural phenomenon. It may communicate different meanings in different contexts and in different cultures. It may be 'threatening', 'thoughtful', or may elicit speech on the other part. In the same one situation, silence may be or not desirable, depending on the socio-cultural environment in which communication takes place. In the Apache culture, silence is the appropriate form of greeting, while in the Japanese it is the 'best language' to express innermost feelings and emotions (Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit: 231). In Asia, listeners are said to remain silent longer than their American counterparts, waiting for others to finish speaking, before they would intervene. Crystal (op. cit: 174) reports an interesting example in this regard: "in response to the question 'Will you marry me?' silence in

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[2] See subsection 2.4. 2 in chapter two for further details in this regard
[3] This point is tackled on pp 44-46.

English would be interpreted as uncertainty; in Japanese it would be acceptance. In Igbo, it would be considered a denial if the woman were to continue to stand there, and an acceptance if she ran away." In the Arabic culture, silence in this context is desirable and denotes acceptance. Moreover, in conversations, some cultures allow for intense verbal exchanges and disagreements, which are interpreted as anger or hostility in other cultures. People's ways of speaking are in fact governed by their culture as clearly delineated in the following quotation: (Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit: 231)

> In different societies people not only speak different languages and dialects, they use them in radically different ways. In some societies, normal conversations bristle with disagreement, voices are raised, emotions are conspicuously vented. In others, people studiously avoid contention, speaking in mild and even tones, and guard against any exposure of their inner selves. In some parts of the world, it is considered very bad to speak when another person is talking, while in others, this is an expected part of a conversationalist's work. In some cultures, it is de rigueur to joke and banter obscenely with some people but to go through life not saying a word to others.

The Arabs, as noted by a Westerner (Jandt, op. cit: 134-135), usually use high pitch and emotional intonation, that is, they talk with much noise and emotion in daily life interactions: "What may appear to be a heated argument may just be two friends having a chat."

Family relations and roles also have cultural hues. Cushner and Brislin (op. cit: 297) illustrate the point referring to marriage rituals: "In many societies, for instance, a public announcement of engagement cannot be made until the intended spouse has been approved by the extended family into which he or she intends to marry. In some cases, it may even be the Fiancé's extended family itself that must be approved". In the West, marriage does not entail all these constraints; "In Western countries, marriage as an institution has waned. More than a quarter of all children born in the United States, a third of those in France, and half of those in Sweden and Denmark are born outside marriage" (Jandt, op.cit: 210). Moreover, different cultures define the concept of 'family' differently: it includes more people in southern Europe than in its north. The Dutch have the word '*gezin*' to mean the father, mother and children and '*familie*' to refer to other relatives such as cousins, uncles…, i.e., those who share the same ancestors. The English word 'family' denotes both '*gezin*' and '*familie*'. (De Jong, op.cit). Age is another factor assigned different roles in different

cultures. In some cultures, it is a virtue, in others it is a curse. Accordingly, different expectations are associated with respect to age values, needs, abilities, rights and duties in different cultural frameworks. In Latin American and Arab cultures, elders are respected and consulted, but they are marginalized in other cultures like in the European American culture.

Male / female relations constitute a particularly sensitive issue that often engenders misinterpretations and stereotypes and so are male and female roles in the society. To conceive of women in positions of authority is still only possible in few cultures. The status of women is one of the most controversial and delicate issues, nowadays, particularly in the Arab world. Attitudes, role expectations and values associated with the position of women vary considerably across cultures. In some Arab countries, a husband's consent is necessary for a wife to obtain a passport. Women cannot leave the country without the husband's permission in Iran and in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, in the latter, no woman, including foreigners, may drive cars or ride bicycles. The Nordic countries namely Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland are said to have the greatest gender equity. We believe that such questions cannot be overlooked in modern language and culture textbooks, for even if they are, they are often hinted at or raised in discussions by the learners themselves.

There are also cultural differences regarding social relations and engagements. The American culture, for instance, is a self-oriented society in which all social engagements are scheduled, unlike Asian cultures whose social activities are characterized by more spontaneity and are group-oriented. Accordingly, Americans do not pay casual visits to each other; even time with friends is often carefully scheduled (Cushner and Brislin, op.cit.). Further, to behave politely does not have the same significance across cultures. For Japanese, for instance, it is polite to say uncomplimentary things about oneself, one's family, one's things … which is far from being to case of Americans. Jones (1995:1), who is American, relates his shock when his Japanese friend invited him to dinner stating, "I just got married, and my wife and I would like you to come to our house for dinner next Saturday […]. She's not beautiful, and she can't cook very well. But I hope you'll come". He later realised that to emphasize one's inferiority is polite in the Japanese culture, while obviously not so in the American culture. Jones (op.cit:3-5) elucidates this discrepancy on the basis of the fact that the cultural rules for politeness, or what he refers to as the 'polite fictions' underlying behaviours in the two cultures are different:

> Every culture has its own polite fictions. Whenever we want to be polite, we must act out certain fictions, regardless of the facts […]. These fundamental polite fictions, which are closely interrelated, make up a logically consistent psychological world which unconsciously shapes and influences everything we feel, think or do […]. One of the most fundamental of the American polite fictions is that "You and I are equals". The corresponding Japanese polite fiction, however, is that "You are my superior".

As an outcome, people from different cultures may misinterpret and misjudge the others' ways of being polite. It is only through the recognition of one's own polite fictions that one can come to understand the others and the reasons why they behave the way they do. Furthermore, being too polite may generate misunderstandings. In fact, appropriate language use does not entail one to be too polite in all situations. Consider, for example, the situation depicted by De Jong (op. cit: 102): "How would you feel, if you were just expected to sell entrance tickets, and someone addressed you with: 'Excuse me for interrupting your work, but could you possibly find a moment to sell me two adults and three children's admission tickets to the fair?' ". Obviously, these polite forms are not expected in such context and might cause misinterpretations.

Cultures display discrepancies in hierarchies as well. The criteria for placement in a hierarchy may depend on "age, birth right, election by peer, expertise in a topic area, family name, formal education, sex and even physical attractiveness." (Cushner and Brislin, op.cit: 312). To be placed at the top of a hierarchy in a culture implies acquiring certain privileges such as expecting respect from others, expecting that one's opinion will affect decisions, the right to speak first in a meeting, to give orders… . These privileges are also culture-bound. Moreover, what is considered as high status in a culture may not be so in another, like the occupation of teaching, which is respected in Japan, but not in USA: (Cushner and Brislin, op. cit: 313)

> In Japan, teaching is a respected occupation, and an honorable term, *sensei*, is used for members of that occupation. In the United States, on the other hand, teaching is not an especially respected profession. Many American teachers tell stories about being introduced to people at parties who, when they find out they are teachers, move on to initiate conversations with others who might be of higher status. An American teacher on a sojourn in Japan, then, would experience an increase in status. A Japanese teacher visiting the United States would experience a decrease in status.

Japan is considered as a typically hierarchical society, and the Japanese publicly acknowledge this hierarchy, verbally and non verbally, that is through the use of language, bowing to one another, seating arrangements…. High-ranked people are older people (over young ones); males (over females); teacher (over learners); sellers (over buyers); superiors (over subordinates). The Wolof of west Africa also have a complex system of social raking reflected, for example, in the Wolof proverb, ''when two persons greet each other, one has shame, the other has glory.'' (Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit: 233), though this might not be noticed by cultural outsiders.

Another interesting cultural topic is humour. Cartoons may convey many cultural overtones. What is funny (or not) as apposed to what is witty varies across cultures. It would be interesting to know about these cultural variations. There are cultural dissimilarities too in celebrations and festivals and their rituals. For example, 'Easter' is observed in a like manner in France and USA, but not 'Christmas', and the American 'thanksgiving' has no counterpart in the French calendar (Ladu, 1974). In Arab cultures, there are other holidays that are completely different in concept and observance from those just mentioned. Cultures differ also with respect to religious fundamentals, views of God, relationship of man to land, property, view of profit, growth, and performance….

Kramsch (1998) draws attention to another aspect of discrepancy between cultures: the latter are said to be more or less 'literate' or more or less 'orate' than others, depending or the uses their members make of the written language or the spoken one in different contexts. In Eastern European countries an 'oral agreement' is not as valuable (in the sense of binding) as a written one (De Jong, op.cit). However, in Muslim and Arab countries, important contracts are initially based on 'men's' words.

The Senegalese philosopher and statesman Senghor (in Von Barloewen, 2000: 47) thinks that ''African culture's real capability lies more in emotional sensitivity than it does in intellectual observation''. Put otherwise, he believes that African cultures are more based on an intuitive way of thinking, unlike western cultures which are underlain by an analytical way of thinking (Aristotelian and Cartesian rationality). For instance, in Brazil, Afro-Brazilian cultures such as Macumba and Condomble are characterized by a way of thinking and a logic of action that are wholly unlike the empirical and pragmatic culture of Calvinistic north

America, which is built upon the principal of individual property rights , as initiated by Locke.

The renowned Islamic thinker Imara (2003) depicts the Islamic culture as being based on moderation in all its facets, that is it amalgamates what is mental, rational (the mind) with what is emotional, passionate (the heart). On the other hand, the Western culture, according to him, is underlined by contrasts: the individual versus the group; religion versus science; religion versus state. Contrasts are fused in the moderate Islamic culture.

2.2.1.2. Cultural Similarities

All the cultural differences outlined above do not negate the fact that cultures do share similarities. For example, the Chinese and the Arabs have approximately the same concept of familism, in that, in these cultures, the family comes before the individual, males are valued more than females, and elders are venerated. Sons are the pride of the family; daughters are to serve fathers in their youth, husbands in marriage and children in old age: "In Arabian cultures, a man is considered a descendant only of his father and his paternal grand father. A man's honor resides in the number of the sons he sires. A man belongs to his father's family. A divorced woman may keep her children until they are 7 years old, but then they go to the father's family. Decisions are made by the family patriarch-not the individual." (Jandt, op. cit: 205). The situation is worse in the Korean culture where a "wife who does not produce a healthy son under Korean custom could be driven from the home and deprived of her status as a wife" (Jandt, op.cit: 204). According to the Islamic culture, women are equal to men. The rights and duties of women are equal to, but different in nature from, those of men. The woman who was in the past denied the right to live, and was buried alive, being considered a shame to the family, is viewed by Islam as the wife and the mother who should be entirely catered for by her husband, to quote Jandt (op.cit:205) again: "The prophet Mohammed revolutionized life for women in the seventh century by granting women access to the mosque, full participation in public affairs, and the right to inherit property.".

Generally, values and human rights are the same in all cultures:" I don't know of any culture that considers murder legitimate. I know of no culture in which rape, torture or genocide is held justifiable. These fundamental values are more or less the same in all cultures around the world" (Gunter, 2000:51).

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In many cultures, similarities have been observed in people's communicative behaviours, according to their gender: "more women make suggestions, whereas more men give orders; more women use and accept touching more than most men do, and more women use conversation to create a feeling of connection whereas most men give information" (Jandt, op.cit: 212). In some cultures, there are important linguistic differences between men and women in that they use different words to refer to the same thing, for example: the translation of 'it's beautiful' to the Japanese language varies according to gender, "Kirei dawa" for a woman and "Kirei dana" for a man. (Jandt, op.cit: 208). Generally speaking, male language is said to be stronger, less refined and more direct than the female one.

An amusing instance of cultural similarity is reported by (Valdes, 1990: 24). We, as Arabs, may be surprised to hear that dipping exists in the American culture: "They [Moroccans] expected us [Americans] to be horrified that we were to dip Moroccan 'bread' into a communal bowel, and were pleased to learn about party dips so popular in America". Moreover, some British eating habits such as taking one's meals on small tables or even on the carpet, home-made cakes and bread curiously remind one of those in the Arab culture, particularly in the country side.

Differences between cultures point out the individuality and the uniqueness of each culture, similarities enable people to go beyond their own culture and learn about others, as noted by Damen (op. cit: 94): "It was what we share that makes it possible for us to learn another culture". It should be noted that cultural differences may occasionally give rise to negative feelings and attitudes, namely "intense dislike of culturally different others (leading to prejudice) negative labels (stereotypes) and refusal to interact with others (discrimination)" (Cushner and Brislin, op. cit: 12). The difficulty inherent in people to perceive cultural differences, their fear of 'the other', their prejudices, their ethnocentrism and selective perception, and their devaluating and discriminating attitudes are all barriers to intercultural understanding and tolerance.

2.2.2. Cultural Conceptual Frames
2.2.2.1. Hofstede's Dimensions

Hofstede (1991; in De Jong op. cit) puts forward a set of dimensions according to which cultures can be analysed, described and compared, namely:

- 'Power distance';
- 'Individualism' / 'Collectivism';
- 'Assertiveness' / 'Modesty';
- 'Avoidance of uncertainty';

and - 'Short term' / 'Long term' focus.

The 'power distance' dimension is related to how a culture views influence; it has to do with the internal relationships within a community: "Power distance is a measure of built-in inequality. The effects of power distance show themselves in the way people in influential positions are treated by their environment." (De Jong, op.cit: 35). In some cultures, groups of people holding certain positions in the society (for example political functions) enjoy exclusive privileges and rights. These 'high-power-distance' cultures "believe that authority is essential in social structure, and strict social classes and hierarchy exist in these countries" (Matikainen and Duffy, op.cit: 41). On the other hand, 'low-power-distance' cultures "believe in equality and the people with power may interact with the people without power on equal level." (Matikainen and Duffy, op.cit: 41), i.e., people are less impressed by positions of power, and lead a more democratic life. De Jong (op.cit: 35) refers in this respect to the Scandinavian countries:

> In the Scandinavian countries democracy has worked for many years. The inhabitants tend to be less impressed by the function of the prime minister than by his/her personality. They are / must be on the whole easily approachable people who do not give the impression that the country would go to the dogs without them; an impression one often takes away from Prime minister's behaviour in, particularly, southern and eastern European, and many other countries.

Another socio-cultural behaviour reflecting low-power-distance is that of teachers who socialize with their students outside of the classroom, and of students calling them by their name. Cultures with a high score on the dimension of power distance are generally characterized by such phenomena as manipulation and corruption. Negotiation and compromises are the alternative in countries where power distance is small. Additionally, the power structure of a country determines to a great extent what is or what should be considered as its underlying cultural values: "The influence of a country's power structure shapes to a very large extent our system of values, basically through insisting on the use of certain rituals, and quite often deciding for us

who are our heroes, and what symbols we must use in what circumstances." (De Jong, op. cit: 42).

With respect to the 'individualism' / 'collectivism' dimension, a culture is assessed as loosely structured or highly integrated. The importance of the group and that of the individual are differently considered in different cultures. A culture based on individualism focuses on the individual, his/her beliefs, needs, viewpoints, interests and aspirations: "each individual is the most important part of the social structure, and each individual is valued for his / her unique persona. People are concerned with their own personal goals and may not possess great loyalty to groups." (Matikainen and Duffy, op.cit: 41). In a collectivist culture, on the other hand, the individual and his / her factors dissolve within the group and the group's factors, that is individuals are led and not leaders: "individuals are very loyal to all the groups they are part of, including the work place, the family and the community. Within collectivism, people are concerned with the group's ideas and goals, and act in ways that fulfil the group's purposes rather than the individual's." (Matikainen and Duffy, op. cit: 41). In a collectivist culture people stay at the same job all their lives; when people make choices about marriage, education, and the work, they always make their decisions together with their families. However, in individualistic cultures, if people are unhappy at their jobs, they are encouraged to look for jobs that are likely to make them happier; besides decisions and choices are those of the individual and not of the group.

USA is probably the best example of an individualistic society. Other nations that rank high on this dimension are Australia, Canada, Great Britain, the Netherlands and New Zealand (Cushner and Brislin, op. cit). Western cultures, on the whole, give great importance to the dignity of the individual and self-work, as well as to individual achievement and individual privilege. This fact is relatively new in human experience and may be considered as an outcome of science and the Industrial Revolution. Increasing mobility, urbanization and access to education are among other factors that reinforced individualism in the societies mentioned above. On the other hand, nations that score high on collectivism are primarily those in Asia and South America. Collectivism in Japan, for instance, has its roots in the agricultural needs of the people in the far past. Irrigation for rice farming needed coordination and cooperation among the inhabitants of the same village, to be able to harvest a good crop. Then, the welfare of the group meant the welfare of the individual. On this

basis, the Japanese developed habit of doing things together. Collective cultures are underlain by higher degrees of conformity, cooperation and reciprocity than individualistic ones. In this regard, Robinson (1976:86) notes: "every American wants to be different. To tell an American "you're really different, you're really an individual" is a compliment. To a Japanese, the same words may be interpreted as an insult meaning the individual is not fitting in and, hence, breaking the social code, resulting in loss of face."

It is worth noting that all people and cultures have both individual and collective patterns, and the ideal is to keep them balanced. De Jong (op. cit: 36) explains:

> The amount of individual freedom and the space where individuals follow the directives of others can and will be manipulated, depending on circumstances and individuals. In every community a balance has to be found between the needs of each individual and the needs of the collective, the community as a whole. Some cultures emphasize individuality more, while others favour the collective.

On the basis of the 'assertiveness' versus 'modesty' dimension, a culture is said to be governed either by masculine assertive values or feminine nurturing and modest ones. In many societies, the roles of men and women are changing: men are taking up cooking, cleaning and looking after children and women are pursuing their 'outside of home' careers.

The 'uncertainty avoidance' dimension describes the extent to which a culture may accept ambiguity and risk. De Jong (op. cit: 38) elucidates this point stating:

> Some people become very anxious when confronted with a problem they can't decide on the basis of existing rules, while others are completely happy to use their own initiative in order to solve the same problem. Some communities accept that one can't foresee every eventuality and prefer to provide broad guidelines, while other communities are the exact opposite. They will supply detailed prescriptions for every eventuality; sometimes with the result that there are so many rules that nobody bothers to follow them anyway.

With respect to the fifth dimension, a culture is evaluated as being short- or long-term focused, depending on whether it values 'now' or 'then': "Europeans are typically focused on the short term: 'life is short, we'll have to get the most out of it

while we can'. Asians generally take the long- term view: 'after this life there is more to come'." (De Jong, op. cit: 34).

Differences between cultures can be 'measured' on the basis of these dimensions. They are interrelated in that, for example, a high score on the dimension of power distance correlates with a high score on the dimension of uncertainty avoidance and collectivism, and vice versa. Southern European countries represent cultures with a high score on these dimensions – they are high power distance; they do not tolerate uncertainty; and they advocate collectivism and assertiveness particularly among the masculine population. On the other hand, northern European cultures display opposite features in that they have low scores on the dimensions of uncertainty avoidance and power distance, treat men and women on equal footing and encourage individual initiative (De Jong, op. cit). In other words, behaviours such as making decisions, changing jobs, interacting with people, socializing with superiors are largely influenced by the dominant cultural patterns reflecting the value of the culture in question.

2.2.2.2. Hall and Hall's Dimensions

Hall and Hall (1990) suggest other conceptual frames to understand the deep structure of cultures. They refer to time, space, context, information flow and interfacing.

Time (referred to above as the fifth dimension) is an important cultural system. It is viewed and used differently across cultures. Among other things, when entering a new culture, one needs to know whether people adhere to schedules or not, whether the culture in question is past-, present- or future- oriented cultures, i.e., whether it values the past, the present, or the future. People in future- oriented cultures believe their future to be better and more prosperous than their past. Hence, they are more willing than others to undertake new projects, investments and to take risks, in general. People in past- oriented cultures do not readily make and accept change, given that they prefer to hold on to their past. Past- oriented cultures are characterized by collectivism and high- power distance, while future-oriented cultures are low-power distance and individualistic cultures (Matikainen and Duffy, op.cit). Cultures whose primary focus is on the 'here' and 'now' are present-oriented cultures. Moreover, cultures may be classified as 'monochronic' if they emphasize schedulings and appointments, and concentrate on one thing at a time, 'polychronic' if based on

arbitrary schedules and on the involvement of many people and many things at a time. There are as well cultural differences in the amount of time spent on work versus time spent socializing.

Like time, space or spatial organization can be significantly different from one culture to another. Hall and Hall (op. cit: 180) illustrate the point contrasting the French and the Germans: "People like the Germans are highly territorial, they barricade themselves behind heavy doors and sound proof walls to try to seal themselves off from others in order to concentrate on their work. The French have a close personal distance and are not as territorial. They are tied to people and thrive on constant interaction and high-information flow, to provide them the context they need". In other words, for the Germans [as well as the British and the Chinese; see Scollon, op. cit], closing doors implies the values of order and respect. For the French [and even the Americans; see Kramsch, 1993], leaving doors open suggests friendliness and sociability. In addition, different cultures regard the proper space to be respected in interpersonal interactions in different ways (as pointed out on p28)[1].

With respect to context, people and cultures may be high- or low-context. High- context people (unlike low- context ones) are well informed even outside their spatial area of expertise, and do not need to be given background information when interacting with others. Put in other words, in a high context culture communication is mainly based on information embedded in the surrounding physical environment or in the communicator's brain, while in a low-context culture, much of the information is explicitly expressed, in Hall's (1977; in Damen, op. cit: 78) words '' A high context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code". Interaction between high- and low-context cultures may engender misunderstandings and friction, as explained by Seelye (1993: 9):

> Sojourners who are socialized in high-context cultures (e.g., Hispanic, Arabic, Japanese) and then travel to a low-context one (the United States or Germany) often erroneously perceive slights and insults where none were intended. Conversely, the low-context person often misses the barbs in interactions in a high-context culture. It's like someone from a non tonal language such as English trying to hear the difference between two utterances that appear identical save a tonal difference.

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[1] See chapter two, section 2.4 for further elucidation of this point

Damen (op.cit: 79) adds that "High context groups were characterized as generally more traditional, slow to change, and highly stable; while low context groups were associated with technological, fast-paced, and less stable groups."

How information is dealt with in culture is one of its crucial aspects. The information flow may be free and rapid; this is the case in the French culture, for instance. In the German culture, in contrast, information flows relatively slowly.

The greater the difference in such things as time, context, and space between two cultures the more difficult the interface will be between them. The term 'interfacing' derives from the technical terminology of computers and is used by Hall and Hall (op. cit: 184) to mean "the key to combining and using different systems".

2.2.2.3. Other Sets of Dimensions

The 'value orientations' approach as elaborated by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961; in Damen op. cit.) analyses cultures and cross –cultural variations on the basis of other dimensions. This approach has as its cornerstone the assumption that values in all cultures revolve around five universal human problems, having to do with man's relationship to the environment, human nature, time, activity, and human interaction. In relation to each aspect, cultures may be classified along a continuum of variations having three focal points: an intermediate and two extreme points. For instance, concerning the relationship man / environment, the three focal points are: human mastery over nature, harmony with nature, and subjugation to nature. For the human nature orientation, variations range from good to evil with a mixture of both in the middle. The dimension of time, as dealt with in the previously mentioned approach, has three focal points: past, present and future and a culture may be oriented accordingly. With respect to the activity dimension, cultures may be action–oriented, or being–oriented, or somehow both in an intermediate point. Past–oriented cultures are said to be reflective, being–oriented cultures, whereas future–oriented ones are geared to action. On this basis, one can decide people's "inventive drive, entrepreneurial dynamics, abilities with technology, and investment behavior" in a particular culture (Von Barloewen, op.cit: 47). As to the human interaction dimension, variations range from individual-, to group-oriented, with a concern with both in a middle point. Along these lines, cultures' profiles could be drawn and

orientations determined. The 'value orientations' approach aimed thus at constructing cultures' profiles, and explaining why people in a particular culture act the way they do. Furthermore, contrasting such cultures' profiles in relation to these dimensions is insightful in that it enables a better understanding of these cultures, including one's own, and alerts one to the need to examine things from different perspectives.

Other scholars developed other sets of dimensions to draw cultural profiles. Hall's (1959) list (in Brooks, op. cit.) includes:

1. Interaction (to interact with others)
2. Association (to associate with others)
3. Subsistence (to gain the requirements of living)
4. Bi-sexuality (men and women and the ways they relate to each other)
5. Temporality (time and its effect)
6. Territoriality (space and one's relation to it)
7. Learning (formal and informal learning)
8. Play (games, sports...)
9. Defense (to defend what one values)
10. Exploitation (to control things)

Brook's list (1968) had also ten but different focal points:

1. Symbolism (language, literature, art, politics, religion)
2. Value (personal preference and rejection, conscience, morality)
3. Authority (whose word is respected?)
4. Order (arrangement of thoughts and things)
5. Ceremony (dress, rituals, gay and solemn occasions)
6. Love (of different types)
7. Honor (high standards of personal conduct)
8. Humor (what is witty and comic)
9. Beauty (what is aesthetic, innovative, perfect)
10. Spirit (man's awareness of himself)

All these approaches are insightful in that they enable an understanding of the true and deep nature of cultures and their categorization. They also help to throw light on the boundaries of variability within which human cultures manifest themselves, as well as on features common to all cultures.

3. Interaction of Cultures

The cultures of the world do not exist in isolation; they are rather in constant interaction. This interaction brings about enrichment and expansion, but also antagonism and dissension.

3.1. Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous Cultures

Diversity denotes the state of being different or of unlikeness. In the context of society, diversity means differences in various factors that interact to define the society of a particular culture. For example, religion, art, food, educational level, and economic wealth may be similar for the majority of the people in a 'homogeneous' culture. In a 'heterogeneous' culture which includes many ethnic groups, there is diversity of cultural features. Put otherwise, a 'homogeneous' culture is one in which the majority of the members share the same beliefs, attitudes and values and have little difference in economic wealth and social level. A heterogeneous' culture, in contrast, is one in which members of the society come from diverse cultural groups. Besides, there are differences of economic, educational, and social levels among the groups who live in the same society.

For Kramsch (1998: 50), every culture is heterogeneous in that "it is composed of a variety of subcultures, and every situation elicits a variety of responses, even within the same national culture". Hence, talking about the Western or the Arabic culture assumes that they are homogeneous entities, which is not true. Every culture is a continuum of patterns of behaviours, values, beliefs. Hippler (2002:10-11) states that the "West"

> encompasses religion and atheism, secularism and determinationalism, the philosophers of the Enlightenment, the inquisition, human rights, fascism and democracy. It also includes rural communities with close family ties and low mobility as well as highly adaptable experts in information technology and telecommunications. There are significant regional and national differences, different languages and dialects, patriarchal mentalities alongside feminism, progressives alongside reactionaries, bigotry alongside tolerance. The West is full of differences and contradictions.

This diversity is also sensed in the East and the Arab world. There are, thus, cultures or subcultures within cultures. According to Jandt (op.cit:11), "A subculture resembles a culture in that it usually encompasses a relatively large number of

people and represents the accumulation of generations of human striving. However, subcultures have some important differences: they exist within dominant cultures and are often based on economic or social class, ethnicity, race, or geographic region". A social class, for instance, is a subculture since, among other things, members belonging to different social classes advocate different values. An ethnic group is another subculture given its very definition: it may be regarded as "a group of people of the same descent and heritage who serve a common and distinctive culture passed on through generations […]. Ethnic groups can exhibit such distinguishing features as language or accent, physical features, family names, customs and religion." (Jandt, op.cit: 13). Subcultures based on ethnicity may be living within the same one dominant culture. USA offers a perfect example in this regard. Subcultures can as well be based on race. A race is a group of people descended from the same ancestors. Nevertheless, people may belong to the same race but to different cultures – USA, for instance, is said to be a culture of all races.

Some scholars prefer to use the term 'co-culture' instead of 'sub-culture', believing that the former implies mutuality, whereas the latter carries meanings of inferiority and subordination. Actually, there is a dominant powerful culture and a less powerful subculture, especially when it comes to the legal system of a nation. The best example may the case of the subculture of Native Americans in USA.

At this stage, it is relevant to refer to 'sub-group' or 'membership group'. It gathers people who have common interests and characteristics on the basis of such factors as occupation, age, and religious affiliation. When people belong to the same profession, for instance, they usually dress alike, and share a common code of language and behaviour. In other words, sub-group members share words and ideas, norms and values. Students, for example, form a sub-group having its own values and patterns of behaviour; the military, teachers, doctors; police officers are other examples of sub-groups. It should be noted that communication problems may occur between sub-groups just like they do between global cultures or sub-cultures. Many conflicts between parents and children originate from incompatibilities between the system of norms and values that operate at home (with one's parents) and the one that is valid outside of it (with one's friends). All of us are and have been members of a variety of sub-groups. Our culture, sub-culture (race; ethnicity; economic or social class; geographical region) and sub-group (sex; age; occupation; hobbies…) help define who we are.

3.2. Dominant vs. Minority Cultures

The diversity of cultures and sub-cultures as mentioned above is a fact. It does not only signify difference but also variety. Standards and norms are established according to the beliefs and norms of the majority group or culture; national identities develop on the basis of sameness of ethnic origin, language, religion and culture, hence the existence of 'dominant' and 'minority' cultures: "the common cultural patterns that apply to the entire country represent the dominant culture in a heterogeneous society." (Matikainen and Duffy, op.cit: 41). In other words, a dominant culture or dominant cultural patterns are those that represent the majority or the largest number of people. In a community, there is usually a dominant culture (and language) and minority subcultures (and languages). People belonging to the latter generally find themselves victims of prejudice when it comes to jobs, education, housing and so on.

Kramsch (1998: 9) believes that the culture of a group is that of the powerful: "only the powerful decide whose values and beliefs will be deemed worth adopting by the group, which historical events are worth commemorating, which future is worth imagining. Cultures and especially national cultures resonate with the voices of the powerful, and are filled with the silences of the powerless". What is more, a powerful culture may consider and put it forward as an absolute truth that other cultures are inferior, and only its beliefs and values are fitting. Thus, one needs to reflect upon (not to say question) 'universal truths', for knowledge is usually coloured by the socio-cultural context in which it is learned.

Theoretically, speaking, races, languages and cultures are considered as equal. A language is considered a 'good' language, as long as it satisfies the needs of its users, and so is a culture. Field work by Boas and other leaders in American anthropology did not confirm the previously held belief that American Indians' cultures and languages were 'primitive' and 'ill-formed'. On the contrary, it uncovered the fact that they were complex and required the direct observation of details to be described, rather than relying merely on general laws of behaviour. Among other things, a difference was pointed out between the behaviours and skills that are valued as intelligent in the Native American Indian culture and that of "the white man" in USA (Christison, 1998). Boas (1940; in Baugh, 1988: 64) puts it clearly that "the present state of our knowledge justifies us in saying that, while individuals differ, biological differences between races are small. There is no reason to believe that

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one race is by nature much more intelligent, endowed with great will power, or emotionally more stable than another that the difference would materially influence its culture". Furthermore, the claim that oral cultures (i.e., those which make little or no use of written language) are said to be 'primitive' while literate cultures (i.e., those which make extensive use of writing and printing) are considered as 'civilized' is now widely rejected (Great Divide; in Kramsch, 1998).In fact, literacy should not be restricted to the written medium. According to Kramsch, there should be a recognizance of multiple literacies that are socially constructed and that are linked to various genres (literature, press, science…).

The equality of cultures is not, however, reflected in reality. Indeed, the world witnesses the existence of 'dominant', 'superior' languages, cultures and races, as well as 'subordinate', 'inferior' ones ; in Baugh's opinion (op. cit:65):

> Domination of some groups over others has been the rule rather than the exception throughout history […] racists believe that their language (and most other aspects of their culture) is superior to those of the 'inferior' races. Such an attitude, if supported by political domination, whether overt or covert, is used to justify attempts to impose various doctrines on racially subordinate groups. Ironically, these policies are usually offered in the name of 'improving' the plight of less fortunate people.

Barrow, (1990:8-9) is among those who believe that some cultures are more valuable than others: "Some cultures are superior to others, at least in certain specific respects". By these respects, he means "their literature, their morality, their industrial capacity, their agricultural efficiency, their scientific understanding and so forth". In relation to these 'civilizational' spheres including Big 'C' cultural and artistic aspects, cultures may indeed, show discrepancy. Nevertheless, when it comes to small 'c' deep culture, that is thought and behaviour patterns, world perceptions and assumptions, norms and values, to talk about superiority or inferiority of cultures is, in our view, an ethnocentric, subjective and even imperialistic attitude.

Being of a different culture does not mean being 'superior', 'inferior', or 'suspect'. Rather, cultural differences should be respected and tolerated; they bring richness and quality to the human cultural heritage. Today's generations are building common threads around which differences can exist in harmony and values can be shared. Nevertheless, this change in worldview is not readily accepted and adopted. Many long-standing prejudices and practices against the other culture(s) still exist in

all societies. Education and teaching, particularly foreign language (FL) teaching is one of the ways to overcome these prejudices. In culture teaching, it is important not to idealise or undervalue other cultures. A realistic attitude helps the learners to make comparisons, to be able to recognize the typical features of another culture, and understand more their own. An intercultural society is a society which recognizes the importance of common norms and languages but also recognizes the specificities of minorities, and in which diversity is perceived as a mutual source of enrichment. In other words, an intercultural society is the one that is founded on the recognition of and openness to cultural differences, as well as flexibility and acceptance of change.

3.3. Culture Shock

Culture shock is a reaction of astonishment, frustration and rejection or even revolt, an emotional and intellectual experience relevant to those who find themselves for one reason or another outside their native culture (NC). It is an important element in intercultural interactions. When interacting within a foreign culture (FC), one may witness what shocks one as vulgar, obscene, and barbaric. Culture shock in Koyama's words (op. cit: 6) is the ''bewilderment in a new environment''. According to him, at first, there is the 'euphoric' stage during which new comers into a culture see positively everything novel: ''New comers generously evaluate every aspect of the new culture _ very often to the extent that they regard it as being better than their own'' (p 6). This is the positive side of culture shock, according to Jordan (1997: 104), that is, the ''excitement caused by the prospect of something new and interesting''. Then, new comers to a culture go through a period of 'grievance' and 'bitterness', when they feel irritated and vulnerable and often seek refuge in people of the same cultural background. This stage is followed by a stage of 'acceptance' and 'recovery' in which they eventually learn to adapt themselves to the new environment and /or culture. Damen (op. cit: 261) summarizes these stages in the following words: ''sinking from a high point of enthusiasm at the beginning of the episode to a stage of despondency as culture shock is experienced, and then rising to higher levels of adjustment both in the host culture and in the home culture''. These stages, in her opinion, illustrate Gullahorn's (1963) view, that the adjustment process of sojourners in a FC is based on a W curve.

According to Cushner and Brislin (op.cit), individuals experience culture shock when they feel that there is a pressing demand on them to make many adjustments

at a time in their new environment: work and eating habits, interpersonal relations patterns, communication patterns, dressing ways… . This engenders "the problems of fatigue, sleeplessness, anxiety, depressions, anger and malaise" (Damen, op.cit: 261), in addition to a feeling of 'not belonging' and a sense of loss of what is familiar. It should be noted that culture shock may occur in a FL class, and is not necessarily connected to a sojourn or settling in the FC in question: "the effects of culture shock may even be manifested in the foreign language classroom where the distance between native and acquired cultures is great. The classroom use of second language features should be considered for their role in addressing, or conversely, exacerbating this problem." (Potter, 1995: 77).

Emerique (1985) lists five major areas where culture shock is likely to occur: first, shocks related to the differential perception of space and time ; second, shocks due to differences in the structure of the family: family type, parental system, socialization of children, gender roles, modalities of communication and modes of social control; third, shocks having to do with sociability: hospitality, gifts, exchanges, codes of well being..; fourth, shocks related to help request; and fifth, shocks pertaining to religious rites and beliefs which accompany the most important moments of an individual's life from birth to death. A situation of culture shock related by a French educator and reported by Emerique (op.cit: 285) reflects feelings of uneasiness and consternation facing a mourning family:

> Il s'agit d'un assassinat d'un jeune fils de Harki, 25 ans environ, assassiné à la sortie d'une boite de nuit. Moi j'interviens dans la famille depuis pas mal de temps. […]Le jour de cet événement toute la famille a été prévenue dans toute la France et la mère qui d'habitude était très passive et ne bougeait pas, ce jour là elle était très dispersée, elle courait dans tout le camp pour chercher de l' eau avec des sceaux. Cela m'a paru «dingue» cette démarche ; la chambre du garçon a été lavée et on a profité pour laver toute la maison. Mai, je me trouvais là par hasard et je ne jouais pas au curieux. J'ai eu l'impression qu'il y avait la fête à la maison et cela m'a profondément choqué.

To cope with culture shock, one is recommended to attempt to see things from the others' perspective, as so aptly put by an orientation seminar coordinator: "Don't look at things through your own sunglasses. When you feel lost or angry in the new society you are about to join, take off your sunglasses and look around" (Koyama, op. cit: 7). Besides, culture shock, if properly analysed, plays an important role in

revealing aspects of one's own culture and social identity. One knows oneself through knowledge of 'the other'. Usually people do not consciously think or meditate upon their culture. Many of them take it for granted. The issue of culture is raised only in some situations, namely when travelling abroad, when facing instances of a culture that are so different from one's own (culture shock), and in specific religious or social rituals. FL learners have a further opportunity to reflect upon their NC in the framework of their studies, that is, in relation to the TL culture.

3.4. Cultural Globalization or Cultural Imperialism?

> Thursday morning in Berlin. During a breakfast consisting of Darjeeling tea from India and bio-dynamic musli from Uc kermark we can scan the newspaper: Korean yodeller Kim Chul Hong has won first prize at the Swiss Music Festival being held in the Japanese town of Norikura ; a German and a Japanese company have made their joint venture plans known . Later , the BBC world Service broadcasts a report about a new initiative from Bangladesh bank … (Breidenbach and Zukrigl, 2000 : 40)

The quotation above is but one instance depicting the world as a small village in a global era. Nowadays, the world is witnessing unceasing people's movements, namely movements of businessmen, sportsmen, refugees, immigrants, students, diplomats, members of international organizations, tourists and others. In addition, the world is getting more and more unified thanks to the tremendous development achieved in the field of communication. Modern means of communication have facilitated the interaction of people, and hence of languages and cultures. What was before isolated and relatively unknown has become now part of the world system. As a result, schools are adjusting programmes, and working forces are integrating many nationalities and races. Cushner and Brislin (op.cit:1) state: "It has become clear to many people that, like it or not and ready or not, the conditions of the world are such that we are all increasingly coming into contact with those who are different from ourselves".

Because cultures are in constant interaction, they overlap and borrow from each other. People do not remain within the frontiers of their NC; they venture beyond. This may be reflected in the clothes they wear, the food they eat, the music they listen to, and sometimes even in their ways of thinking and behaving. Mee Cheah (1996: 193) writes about new 'border lands': "Cultural border crossings do not

necessarily mean stepping into a different culture but new cultural border lands can be formed where shared beliefs and values are developed''. Some observers speak of 'cultural mix' and of a 'blurred line' between what is local and native and what is distant and foreign. Instances of 'racial mix' are, to mention but two, the case of Tiger Woods , the international gulf star who calls himself "Cablinasian" (i.e., Caucasian + black + Indian + Asian) , and the case of Noah Becker, the son of tennis player Boris and his black wife.

As defined by Tomlinson (1997: 170 -171), globalization (usually written with z) refers to

> the rapidly developing process of complex interconnections between societies, cultures, in situations and individuals world wide. It is a process which involves a compression of time and space(Harvey,1989), shrinking distances through a dramatic reduction in the time taken – either physically or representationally – to cross them, so making the world seem smaller and in a certain sense bringing human beings 'closer' to one another.

Anyone interested in debates about globalization finds, no doubt, a wide range of positions on several issues, and this is unsurprising given the complexity of this phenomenon. Some believe that the globalization process goes back to the 15th century, when Europeans began to colonize the world; others think it to belong to the second part of the twentieth century. Some view it as a 'done deal', whereas for others it is a 'work in progress' (Block, 2004:75).

The interaction of cultures may thus be viewed as a positive process, in that it brings about variety which in turn leads to enrichment and expansion: "Cultures enrich one another – this keeps them alive and protects them from museum – like paralysis." (Naumann, 2000:3). Along these lines, some scholars visualize culture in broad terms: they view it as general rather than specific, flexible rather than rigid, and unifying rather than separating or distinguishing; they conceive it as a world phenomenon rather than a group or an individual feature. Put otherwise, culture is not "a clearly defined, relatively static unit" but "a moving river of various meanings which continually dissolves old relationships and makes new connections and associations" (Breidenbach and Zukrigl, op.cit: 42). It is no longer associated with a community of people living in the same geographical area and sharing a common historical origin: "Today's culture is not the culture associated with a place, it is the culture of a time" (Von Barlowen, op.cit: 46). Focus is now on a common culture that

goes beyond geographical borders and that connects people on social, professional, artistic, economic, technological bases. Nowadays, we talk about youth culture, internet users' culture, artists' culture …, each of which may be seen as a 'global' culture. In this framework, "an increasing number of people relate to a growing number of universal categories, ideas, standards, and have access to the same goods and stories" (Breidenbach and Zukrigl, op.cit: 42).

We believe that a culture denotes an identity, a way life, a conception and an interpretation of the world, a personality, a belief, a value that are, doubtless, not shared by all humans. But this fact does not exclude interchange, sharing and caring. Besides, the interaction of cultures carries an inherent risk of intercultural and ethnic conflict. Different cultures particularly those belonging to the Arab and European worlds have had tense relationships marked by prejudice and fear. In cases of confrontation and clash, people identify strongly with their NC which confers on them their identity: they are nobody, unless they belong to a culture. Acceptance of other cultures is a difficult and gradual process. Crucial issues such as cultural identity and nationalism are brought to the fore in a period of rapid social change. In an attempt to preserve one's culture, one's language, one's religion, one's history, one's ethnic belongingness, people get involved in conflicts. The image conveyed by the media worsened the situation: (Rotter, 2000: 52)

> These days newspapers and magazines, radio and television, and increasingly the internet –in short, the media–are the transmitters of information per se. Yet, stereotypes , prejudices , deliberate misinterpretations and exaggerations that – consciously or unconsciously – exercise a decisive influence on the opinions held by media consumers everywhere are also transmitted via these channels.

Accordingly, one may view the other's culture as strange, alien, or even hostile and threatening. One's negative stereotypes may eventually lead to "a battle of cultures", a battle in which languages and religions are used as arms. What is more , the intensive interaction of world cultures may lead them to melt in the same mould imposed by one culture – what Breidenbach and Zukrigl (op.cit) call the 'Homogenization scenario' , that is one or more culture(s) may attempt to dominate the other cultures . Instances of wearing 'Jeans' and eating 'Big Macs' almost all

over the world lead us to say that this major culture is likely to be the Western American culture.

Cultural imperialism as defined by O'Sullivan et al. (op .cit: 73) is

> both an integral part and product of a more general process of imperialism , whereby certain economically dominant nations systematically develop and extend their economic , political and cultural control over other countries […] The local cultures of developing nations become dominated and in varying degrees invaded, displaced and challenged by foreign, often western, cultures.

In other words, cultural imperialism occurs when the NC and its language are presented and deemed as 'backward' and 'incapable of modernity'. Kramsch (1998: 129) refers to 'linguistic imperialism' or ''worldwide expansion of one language at the expense of others''. Instances of cultural imperialism abound in one's everyday life: (Tomlinson, op .cit: 176 – 177)

> The distantiated influences which order our everyday lives can easily appear as those of the culturally dominated other: from the McDonald's restaurant, that replaces the local café to the multiplex cinema 'vertically integrated into the Hollywood distribution system and thus showing almost exclusively American films. If you happen to live in the third world, the sense of distanciated influences must seem almost total: from the western brand marks which carry the most social cachet, to the transnational that owns the plant where you work, to the world bank that provides the development bans but also dictates the pattern of that development and, in extremis to the foreign –aid workers who try to keep you alive at feeding centres and in refugee camps.

FL teaching can as well be a powerful way to promote imperialistic forces, in that it may be a vehicle for the introduction of alien and harmful ideas. Educators who are against the integration of the FC in the FL curriculum argue that such integration would foster cultural imperialism, threatening one's national cultural identity .They believe that 'cultural globalization' is but an extension or a deepening of the cultural imperialism of the West , an 'Americanization' or a 'Westernization' : (Tomlinson, op.cit: 174):

Globalization is either just the latest term for, or the latest stage in, a process with a long history, a history more or less co-extensive with the history of Western imperialism. It is simply the global working through a process of domination in which the West (or American, or transnational capitalism) draws all its cultures into its ambit.

On this basis , if the dominant others (meaning north American , western European , possibly Australian cultures) are being ' imposed ' locally in terms of clothes , food , music , television programmes , architecture , … , why reinforcing them further through FL teaching ?

On the other hand, it is argued that there is no such 'Americanization' or cultural imperialism, if people look beyond what seems evident. In relation to USA television exports, it is proved that, though they are dominant especially in third world countries, there is actually high competition in this domain on the part of other international and national companies. There is, thus, a 'pluralization' in the cultural production, and not one–culture dominance. The cultural imperialism perspective referred to before is due to the long history of western colonialism and imperialism in the third world. Besides, this perspective overlooks the fact that in the process of the interaction of cultures, there is mutual influence and not "a unidirectional flow of power" (Tomlinson, op.cit:181) on the part of a 'strong' culture over a 'weaker' one. Although cultures may lose some of their particularities in the globalization process, it should not be forgotten that the diversity emanating from world cultures leads to the enrichment of the human cultural heritage. One only needs to do away with value judgments, and to pick up what is in conformity with one's religion and morality.

There are, thus, two opposing views when considering the interaction of cultures: some professionals speak of "a clash of civilizations", others of "a dialogue of cultures". In other words, some consider that "cultures are divided by fundamental differences", and others believe that cultures are "united by the opportunity and need for dialogue" (Hippler, op.cit:10), a dialogue which assumes the equality of its parties and the focus on their similarities rather than differences. We believe that dialogue is always needed to promote attitudes of tolerance, acceptance and respect, and to ease tensions and hostilities. In this regard, the United Nations Educational Scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO) has proclaimed 2001 the year of dialogue between cultures, a dialogue to be promoted through international seminars, conferences, scholarships and exchange programmes. A global culture is indeed, likely to be shaped in western terms. This does not mean that they are

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unchallengeable. The role of the other parties particularly people in oriental cultures is to critically analyse concepts and behaviours, to adapt and not adopt them, but above all, to defend their own position. Along these lines, a global culture will be a ''structure of common differences'' (Wilk ; in Breidenbach and Zukrigl, op.cit: 42), i.e., a common framework to manifest differences , aiming at a better understanding and recognition of 'others' and a better communication with them. Feminism, for example, is a global culture within which women's rights are viewed in different perspectives: western feminists, for instance, have as ideals individual self-determination and equality in the work place; women in southern countries are chiefly concerned with economic and legal equality. The global feminism culture provides a frame to reconcile to some extent differences, and to find grounds of common interest to promote women welfare all over the world; why not a global feminine culture inspired from Islam?

Conclusion

The concept of culture, its elements, dimensions and variation are the concern of many scholars of the past and of today. They assign culture an 'umbrella' definition, in the sense that they link it to all aspects pervading human life: dressing, eating, marrying, worshipping, educating, working, thinking, speaking, …. Perhaps the most concise definition of culture is Lado's (op.cit), depicting it as the ''ways of a people''.

The human civilization is wealthy in the matter of cultures. This wealth and diversity of cultures may however be a source of trouble and conflict when it comes to questions of values, identity, religion, and nationalism.Intercultural dialogue is an important means to overcome cultural crises. This remains one of the crucial challenges facing the twenty first century generations.

CHAPTER TWO

CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

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Introduction

In chapter one we saw that culture embraces everything that makes a group of people unique. In chapter two, spotlight is on the relationship culture, language and communication.

A language is an aspect of a culture and a culture is an aspect of a language; both are so intimately interwoven that they cannot be separated without losing their essence and significance. The Sapir/Whorf hypothesis in its strong version assumes a causal relationship between language and culture, with language having a dominant controlling force over people's minds, behaviours and world-views.

Language and culture are interwoven in patterns of communication. Without language, communication would be very restricted; without culture, there would be no communication at all.

1. A Socio-Cultural View of Language

The view of language as a system of structures has long since been transcended. The birth of sociolinguistics in the early seventies, and later of disciplines which derive from it, such as the ethnography of communication, has led to an increasing focus on language as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The fact that language and culture mutually act upon and depend on each other is more and more recognized and supported by research evidence.

1.1. Language and Context
1.1.1. Disciplines that Study Language in Context

"There is neither a society without a language nor a language without a society which uses it" (Baylon and Fabre, 1975; our translation)[1]. On the basis of this double implication was born the discipline of sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics views language as a socio-cultural phenomenon: "language, of course, is more than a mental phenomenon. Indeed, many would say that such a function is secondary to its role in social interaction, i.e., to its function in communication and as the principal agent for the transmission of cultural and social values" (Newmeyer, 1988: vii). For Trudgill (1992: 43), language is "not only a linguistic but also a political, cultural, social and historical term".

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[1] -" Il n'ya pas de société sans langue ni de langue sans société qui parle".

Historically speaking, sociolinguistics developed as a fully-fledged discipline in the sixties and seventies. Its origin goes back to American social anthropologists' works in the twenties and thirties, on the connection between cultural meanings and language. Sapir's (1920; in Hinkel, op.cit) theory about language as a social phenomenon was leading as regards relating language to its socio-cultural context. It inspired such prominent works as the one of Hymes and Gumperz (in Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit), mainly in the seventies, which made explicit the connection between language and culture. Hymes' theory of communicative competence includes the speaker's ability to use language appropriately in socio-cultural contexts. He emphasizes the need to consider the socio-cultural factors at work in any communicative interaction, i.e., the participants and their social status, setting, purposes of the interaction, social and cultural norms of appropriateness... .[1] Searle's and Austin's (in Corder, 1973) theory on speech acts, in the fifties and sixties, was also influential in that it provided the cornerstone to studies of language in use such as pragmatics. The latter analyses such parameters of speech acts as the speaker's meaning, goal and intention, presuppositions, assumptions, and shared knowledge, which are culturally defined. According to the speech act theory, language is regularly used by members of a social and cultural group, who are expected to behave according to the social context and to defined cultural norms, with which non-native speakers may not be familiar. In Britain, it is in the theoretical models elaborated, beginning from the thirties, by Malinowski, Firth and later by Halliday (cited in Dubin and Olshtain, 1986) that the relationship between language, society and culture was highlighted, by drawing attention, for the first time, to the importance of the context of situation for the production and interpretation of language. The socio-cultural background of written discourse was one of the objects of study of the Prague school of linguistics, in the thirties. According to Lavandera (1988), Chomsky is indirectly held responsible of the growing interest in the study of language in its socio-cultural context, what his paradigm paradoxically does de-emphasize and even exclude.

There is considerable overlap between sociolinguistics and ethnolinguistics given that these disciplines are both assigned broad definitions: sociolinguistics is usually defined as the study of language in relation to society, and ethnolinguistics is

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[1] See section 2.3 for more about 'communicative competence'

known as the study of language in relation to culture, taking culture in its anthropological sense. As culture and society interpenetrate and depend on each other, so do their respective disciplines. According to Baylon and Fabre (op.cit), sociolinguistics is a vast domain which encompasses ethnolinguistics, sociology of language, geographical linguistics or dialectology, and other disciplines concerned with the systematic study of language use in social life. Each discipline, however, has its focus and methodology. Sociology of language is the study of language facts as indicators of social cleavage, with a special focus on non-linguistic factors. Dialectology or linguistic geography is a comparative study of the local varieties of a language. Ethnolinguistics, as mentioned above, studies a language as the expression of a culture and in relation to a situation of communication.

The relationship between language and culture has been the object of ethnolinguists' investigations, in the eighties and the nineties. Research findings in this regard demonstrate that the language acquisition process, for instance, does not progress in the same universal way. Rather, it follows a sequence that is determined by the cultural context in which it takes place. In fact, the way children interact and use language in the society is culturally-determined. Therefore, the form and content of their utterances will develop on this basis. It was shown as well that the input they are exposed to is more socio-cultural than purely linguistic or grammatical in nature. It is also rich in terms of paralinguistic patterns of communication, which are, similarly, culture-bound[1].

The ethnography of speaking is another subfield of sociolinguistics which studies the norms for using language in social situations in different cultures; in Duranti's (1988:210) words, it "studies language use as displayed in the daily life of particular speech communities". The ethnography of communication is similar to the ethnography of speaking, but it is more inclusive in that it embraces as well non-verbal communication[2].

Discourse and conversation analysis are other studies interested in investigating language use in context. Their object of analysis is the utterance at the interpersonal level, namely, at the level of the interacting persons and their psychological aspects, rather than the social context of interaction. Their methodology is analogous to the one followed in Chomskyan linguistics. Intercultural

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[1] Paralinguistic communication will be discussed in section 2.4
[2] See section 2.2 for more details about the ethnography of speaking (or of communication)

communicative interactions may breakdown, because the participants operate with different rules and expectations. Discourse and conversation analysts attempt to investigate this question at length.

Many other relevant research approaches fall under the heading of contrastive pragmatics. One of them was inspired by Grice's (1975) 'maxims of conversation' (e.g. 'be brief', 'be informative', 'be relevant', 'be clear') (in Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit). Another research work oriented towards universality is Brown and Levinson's strategies of politeness (1978; in Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit), supposed to underlie communicative interactions across cultures. Another trend analyses the way speech acts are realized in different cultures by both native and non-native speakers, what is known as interlanguage pragmatics. Data collection techniques used in contrastive pragmatics like questionnaires, surveys, role plays and discourse completion tasks enable the statistical interpretation of data, but they are based on a restricted amount of spontaneous speech. What distinguishes ethnographic approaches from pragmatic analyses is that the former are more concerned with the socio-cultural context of language use (Duranti, op.cit).

The quantitative paradigm is another approach to language study mainly advocated by Labov and his collaborators. Its data are not based on the utterance, but on "the 'aggregate statistical data' that result from quantifying linguistic variables and correlating them with external variables in all the utterances of the corpus, which itself is obtained from a socio-economically representative sample of speakers." (Labov, 1972 a; in Newmeyer, op.cit: 2-3). Linguistic anthropology is a branch of anthropology that is equally interested in studying language and culture, or the cultural aspects of discourse. In this perspective, language use in considered as an integral part of the whole constituted by culture.

1.1.2. Types of Context

In the framework of all these disciplines, increasing attention is given to the socio-cultural context of language use: "sociolinguistics views any language as inseparable from its sociocultural context" (Dubin and olshtain, op.cit: 69). Kramsch (1993: 35) points to the importance of such context stating: "Constructing a speech event means not only having a choice of grammatical and lexical features, but deciding which to choose from, depending on one's assessment of the whole situation of communication, and on the expectations raised in the speaker and the

listener by that situation''. There are many contextual factors that are relevant to the production and the interpretation of speech. The immediate situation within which the speech act is performed is to be taken into account. Labov refers particularly to the features of the participants in a communicative situation such as sex, age, race and socioeconomic status. The larger situation in which the communicative event takes place is equally important. Researchers focus on specific speech community divisions such as groups, classes and influential cultural patterns. Other contextual factors have to do with the community's shared knowledge, assumptions, beliefs, values, patterns of verbal and non-verbal behaviour and attitudes. Lavendra (op.cit) distinguishes the 'social context' from the 'interpersonal context'. The former focuses on the natural influence of linguistic and social factors. This issue is mainly considered in the ethnography of speaking and in other branches of sociolinguistics. The 'interpersonal context' lays stress on the interacting psychologies of individuals (beliefs, intentions, presuppositions). It is the foundation of pragmatics, discourse analysis and conversation analysis. Studies done on politeness strategies are relevant in this context; they exclusively point to the relationships between speaker and hearer, disregarding significant social factors such as the distribution of power (Lavandera, op.cit). Doubtless, an exhaustive study of language in use must consider both social and interpersonal contexts.

According to Kramsch (1993:42), four major contexts are to take account of: 'the linguistic context', 'the situational context', 'the interactional context' and 'the cultural context'. The linguistic context is shaped by ''the intratextual linguistic demands of cohesion and coherence''. Put otherwise, one's choice of language forms and meanings depends on what preceded and what is to follow to achieve cohesive and coherent discourse. The situational context refers mainly to ''the physical setting and the participants'', i.e., the external context of communication. The interactional context has to do with ''the interactional demands of exchanging utterances both for display and for communication''. In other words, language is used according to the interactional needs and patterns imposed by the context of situation. The cultural context or the context of culture is considered as a larger kind of context. Malinowski (in Kramsch, ibid: 42) was the first to use the term 'context of culture' to mean ''the institutional and ideological background knowledge shared by participants in speech events''. Fowler (1986) calls it 'the community's store of established knowledge', whereas Tannen (1979) refers to 'prior experience' and 'expectations about the

world', and Lakoff and Johnson (1980) talk about a set of metaphors a society lives by (in Kramsch, ibid). It is the context of culture which makes the difference between native and non-native speakers' ways of using language, hence its relevance to FL teaching: (Saville-Troike, 1992; Becker 1992; cited in Kramsch, 1993:43)

> This makes native speakers' ways of speaking predictable enough to be understood by other speakers, but it is also what makes it so difficult for non-native speakers to communicate with native speakers, because they do not share the native-speaking community's memory and knowledge. And all the more so if they are fully socialized adults who carry with them twenty or thirty years of their own speech community's ways of talking. Even if they have mastered the forms of the new language, they might still have difficulty in meeting the social expectations of speakers from the new speech community.

1.2. Language and Culture

1.2.1. Original Interest in the Relationship Language / Culture

Interest and inquiry on the question of language and culture originate in the field of anthropology, as early as the end of the nineteenth century. The then researchers who investigated the structure of Amerindian languages (Boas, Sapir; in Hinkel, op. cit.) were the first to throw light on the crucial relationship of language and culture: language expresses the thoughts, beliefs and assumptions of a community, hence, language reflects ways of looking at the world and understanding reality. This thought was the core of what came to be known as the Sapir / Whorf hypothesis[1]. The intimate interweaving of language and culture was pointed out in instances, as "human culture without language is unthinkable." (Kluckhohn, 1944: 26; in Damen, op.cit: 84). The study of culture has developed under the heading of anthropology. Scholars as Geertz (1973) and Shweder (1984) (in Hinkel, op.cit.) did research works aimed at understanding cultures on the basis of the analysis of language in use. Language was already recognized as a valuable tool for the scientific study of culture. As early as 1949, Sapir wrote: "It is an illusion to think that we can understand the significant outlines of a culture through sheer observation and without the guide of the linguistic symbolism which makes these outlines significant and intelligible to society" (Sapir, 1949; in Lado, op.cit: 116).

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[1] This hypothesis is dealt with in section 1.3

In a like manner, sociologists have recognized the interdependence of language and culture, in the early 1900s. Durkheim (1912; in Thanasoulas, op.cit.), for example, observes that a child acquires his /her mother tongue within its culture - specific framework. Put otherwise, as part of language acquisition, a child internalizes associations that are built on the basis of the cultural environment within which s/he is being socialised. Doubtless, these associations will vary from one culture to another, and hence the rationale of the "linguistic relativity" hypothesis. The issue of language and culture is also of major importance in sociolinguistics and ethnolinguistics (as demonstrated in the previous section).

1.2.2. Nature of the Relationship

Language and culture cannot be separated given the very definition of language. It is widely agreed that language is a social institution that operates within a socio-cultural group or in 'cultural niches' (Eleanor Armour-Thomas & Sharon- Ann Gopaul-McNicol, 1998; in Thanasoulas, op.cit.). We cannot conceive of a language in a vacuum. Any language has a setting, and its setting is a society, a culture, hence, language and culture interpenetrate. Thanasoulas elucidates this complex relationship, stating that language serves as a complex system to classify experience, an important window on the universe of thought, a link between thought and behaviour, and a prototypical tool for interacting with the world. In one word, to speak a language means to enter a culture; it is through language that one is considered as a member of a community, of a culture.

For Kramsch (1998:3), language relates to culture in three main complex ways. First, ''language expresses cultural reality'', for it enables its speakers to express ideas, facts, attitudes and beliefs that can only be understood when shared within a specific cultural setting. Second, ''language embodies cultural reality'', since it is a system that is inherently creative, in the sense that it enables people to use it in various ways, for example, face to face interaction, reading / writing messages, speakers on the telephone. Moreover, using language through one medium or another gives way to a variety of possible meanings, depending on the tone of the speaker's voice, accent, adopted style..., which are significant to the members of the same culture. Third, ''language symbolizes cultural reality'', because it symbolizes one's identity, in Sapir's words (1964; in Damen, op.cit: 84), language may be thought of as the ***"symbolic guide to culture"***.

Among the characteristics of human communication, or language, Hockett (1960; in Damen, op.cit) cites traditional or cultural transmission, a feature that closely links language to culture. Hickerson (1980; in Damen, op.cit:119) states:

> Although the potential for using language ... is biologically transmitted, specific languages are taught and learned. They are passed on traditionally, generation after generation, from older speakers (who already know the language) to younger ones (who acquire it). In turn, language enables humans to learn other things through tradition rather than by direct experience.

In other words, language is culturally transmitted in the sense that one learns the language of the culture in which s/he is being raised, regardless of the language of one's biological parents. On the other hand, language reflects culture and enables its speakers to recognize and learn aspects of the culture they bear, as concisely put by Jin and Cortazzi (1998:100) "language reflects culture. However, language is part of culture and it also **constitutes** culture". Limbach (2002:25) puts it clearly that " if I would like to generate enthusiasm for the culture of my country, then I must encourage people in other countries to speak my language. The language is always the first tool, as it were, when introducing others to specific cultural achievements".

For Corder (op.cit:69)," there is a necessary connection between a community possessing a distinctive culture on the one hand and the nature of its language, that is, its dialect, on the other". He believes the concept of language, unlike that of dialect, to be 'too vague' and not 'functionally useful'. As to the nature of this connection, he explains that "language mediates between the individual and the culture" (p70). He argues that the process of socialisation that a child goes through takes place within a defined linguistic framework. To achieve this mediation, a language should have codifiability, i.e., " an economical and easily learned way of referring to objects and events which that culture classifies together, or regards as useful or important" (Corder,op.cit:70). Put in other words, language should serve the cultural needs of the community in that linguistic entities should reflect what is culturally significant, what is culturally structured and highlighted, in a way that is economic and a form that is easily memorized.

Metaphors portraying the relationship between language and culture are common. For instance, a language is frequently depicted as the 'mirror' which reflects culture. Another instance is that which conceives of language and culture as forming

an iceberg: what is visible is the part of culture represented by language; what is invisible is the culture part that is not reflected in language or that goes beyond it. For Jiang (2000), language and culture combine to form a living organism where language is flesh and culture is blood; thus, without culture, language would be dead and without language culture would be shapeless.

1.2.3. Illustrations

Instances showing that language is deeply rooted in culture abound. To begin with, in vocabulary, there are always nuances of difference between synonyms or similar words in different languages. Thus, there is no perfect similarity or synonymy across languages. Indeed, members from different cultures associate seemingly the same word with different culturally pre-determined objects, feelings or beliefs (as will be illustrated in subsection 1.3.2)

In grammar, the use of conjunctions, for example, may be culturally significant. The choice of a particular conjunction rather than another can reflect particular values, beliefs, assumptions or stereotypes: (Sercu, 1998: 267)

> One can link 'he's from Madrid' and 'he's very nice' in a number of different ways. One could say: '***Although*** he's from Madrid, he's very nice'. The speaker is then clearly negatively prejudiced against people living in Madrid. One could also say: 'he's from Madrid ***and*** he's very nice', which is a neutral description of that person. A third possibility would be: '***Because*** he's from Madrid, he's very nice', the speaker here being positively biased.

Another example may be the sentences 'she is not married', 'she would like a baby'. Using ***'and'*** as a conjunction is possible from the Western cultural point of you, whereas from the Eastern one '***though'*** is more appropriate as a conjunction in this context. Moreover, pronouns in Spanish are culture-loaded. In other words, their daily use is related to one's feelings. Many factors are at work in this regard: politeness, groupness, the ego (Morain, 1970; in Kitao, 1991). In English, plural and singular forms are not merely based on the factor of number. Rather, their use depends on the way English-speaking people view things in the world ('countable' versus 'uncountable' words, e.g. 'a cup of tea' versus 'tea'). Besides, a language can reflect the cultural dimension of power distance in its pronouns, for example, the availability of two forms for the second person pronoun in French (one indicates familiarity and

close social relationship, and the second mirrors social distance and is used with people in position of power – ' tu' and 'vous', respectively). Many scholars have pointed to the cultural aspect inherent in language patterns and structures. Hill (1988:22) refers to what he calls the 'unsaid' cultural meaning:

> The realm of the 'unsaid', a vast and unspoken source of human cultural meaning derivable primarily only by inference, lies not only in the conditions of pragmatic interaction, but in the patterning of grammar itself. Linguists of every theoretical persuasion have pointed out that the surface representation of any sentence inevitably leaves out a great deal of semantic detail… [for example] in the sentence she heard the piano there is likely to be a piano player who is not mentioned.

These grammatical images and others[1] are likely to be different from one language to another, and from one culture to another.

Another aspect attesting to the close relationship of language and culture is language discourse patterns. For instance, the Arabic language, unlike English, mirrors a culture that is basically religious. References to 'God' and religion in general are very common in everyday situations: for example, no future event is usually mentioned without adding ' God Willing' (Insha Allah) as a reminder of the conviction that only the 'Almighty God' holds the secrets of the future. In English, the term ' god ' is only used in oaths (blasphemous or solemn) or in very formal situations (Harrell et al., 1965; in Hyde, 1994). Thus, language discourse patterns reflect, and are based on, the values and beliefs of the society. Accordingly, learning new languages does not mean merely learning new linguistic codes; it signifies as well acquiring new beliefs, attitudes, values, worldviews – new cultures.

Poetry and idiomaticity are other instances in which language and culture merge. One cannot usually grasp the figurative meanings of a poem or an idiom without having an appropriate cultural background, and so is the case of proverbs, similes, metaphors and sometimes even newspapers' headlines. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980; in Lantolf, op.cit), language use is underlain by 'metaphors' that are culture-bound. For example, utterances like "thanks for your time" or "you're wasting my time" are based on the metaphorical concept that "time is money ". Lakoff and Johnson refer to the 'cognitive metaphor' "Good is UP and bad in DOWN" in terms of which positive and negative aspects of life are expressed,

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[1] Other examples will be mentioned in the subsection 1.3.2.

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hence the expressions ''to be in top shape'' and ''to fall ill'', for example. All languages have metaphors, which may be different across cultures: ''Since metaphoricity is deeply rooted in the culture of a people, it is representative of how a given community cognizes reality, how a way of thinking evolved into specific traditions and social practices.'' (Ponterotto, 1994: 5). Masako (1991; in Ponterotto , ibid: 5-6)   illustrates differences between the Japanese and American cultures within the framework of the cognitive metaphor theory : for the Americans , for example , "sweet is good and sour is bad" , whereas for the Japanese a sweet person denotes a pushover or an immature , spoiled person; besides , in English , ideas are "in the mind" , in Japanese they are "in the belly" , hence the expressions 'he couldn't make up his mind' , in English, corresponding to 'he could not close his belly', in Japanese. Speakers are believed to be unconscious of these metaphors. Some of the latter are said to be universal, since they are said to exist in many languages, and may reflect some universal innate human culture.

Moreover, the characteristics of a language may be as well those of its corresponding culture. A sexist language, for instance, reflects a sexist culture; it expresses the stereotypes, attitudes, expectations and prejudices of a cultural group. Leard (1998: 38) believes that one way to overcome the bias and stereotyped beliefs of a culture is by reconsidering aspects of its linguistic system: ''For those who believe that language and culture are interrelated, that language embodies and disseminates cultural assumptions and relations of power, the first step forward transforming a biased society may be to transform the language itself''. What is more, a language changes and evolves along with the culture it reflects. One reason why artificial languages such as universal languages (e.g., Esperanto) do not survive is the fact that they remain static, as they have no relationship to a culture.

1.2.4. The English Language and Culture

With respect to the English language, some professionals refer to what they call 'Neutral' English (Hill, 1967), 'Nuclear' English (Quirk, 1981), i.e., 'a culturally unmarked' version of English "which would serve as a universal medium of communication" (Saleemi, 1985: 16). Along these lines, Chew (1991) argues for an IAL, namely, an international auxiliary language. She believes that "We need a worldview of English, which recognizes that it no longer belongs exclusively to its native speakers. We must realise that when any language becomes international in

character, it cannot be bound to any culture. It cannot be owned by its native speakers'' (p 43). She states further that ''the English language has to be denationalized ''(p 44). For Hasman (2000: 4), ''English is divesting itself of its political and cultural connotations as more people realized that English is not the property of only a few countries. Instead, it is a vehicle that is used globally and will lead to more opportunities. It belongs to whoever uses it for whatever purpose or need''. In other words, since English has long since been recognized as an international language, a language of wide communication, a language which enjoys an official status in many countries, it has become, at the same time, a language that belongs to no particular culture, that is, it has been emptied of its cultural connotations and specificities.

English, as many other languages, changes constantly, reflecting patterns of interaction with other languages, and the developing communication needs of people. Nevertheless, can a language ever become a culturally neutral medium of communication? It is highly recognized that language is governed by numerous extra-linguistic factors (social, cultural, political, educational) interacting in a complex fashion. Thus, to attempt to 'simplify', 'generalize', or   'standardize' it is, according to us, a theoretical enterprise, and yields an artificial product . Widdowson (1982; in Saleemi, op.cit: 17) puts it so aptly that '' a language stripped down to its bare essentials as a resource for impersonal reference is deprived at the same time of its potential for creativity and change, and the humanity of its users is diminished accordingly ... [Such a language] ceases to function as a natural language''. The cultural norms and conventions of a society are so deeply 'ingrained' in its language that one can hardly see how they could be 'extracted' or 'uprooted' from it .

1.3. The Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis

1.3.1. Definition

Through language, humans make of their world a meaningful one. In other words, things in the world make sense to humans mainly through a mediator, language. The notion of "linguistic relativity" may be traced back to the writings of German scholars [Johann Herder (1744 -1803) and Wihem Von Humboladt (1762 - 1835); in Kramsch, 1998], at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, who, in a framework of 'nationalism', advanced that different people speak different languages because they think differently. This

difference in thought patterns is reflected in language forms or structures which are said to affect the way people think and view the world around them – the very conception of the "linguistic relativity" principle.

In USA , it became the focus of attention of Boas (1858 -1942) and then of Sapir (1884 -1939) and his pupil Whorf (1897 -1941) (in Kramsch , 1998) , hence the appellation Sapir / Whorf hypothesis. Boas observed that common phenomena elicited in different cultures and languages more or less distinctive reactions and attitudes. He pointed out the role of language in the unconscious shaping and explaining of the concepts of culture and thought , though he did not suggest a direct causal relationship . However, his student, Sapir (1929; in Damen, op.cit: 127) did suggest that: "We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation". In a like manner, Whorf, Sapir's student, believed that speakers of different languages viewed the world differently. He based his hypothesis on data from the Hopi language, an Indian language spoken in the north American south west. He demonstrated that this language has some grammatical categories that do not correspond to the 'Standard Average European' grammatical system, and that delineate different thought patterns. It was noted for example, that the Hopi language speakers conceive of time in a completely discrepant way from the English. This discrepancy is, according to the hypothesis, due to a difference in the structures of the Hopi and English languages. In other words , it was hypothesized that the structure of a language determines the thought patterns of its speakers, that the world as one knows it is largely predetermined by the language of one's culture : (Whorf , 1956; in Corder, op.cit : 75)

> We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face ; on the contrary , the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds - and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds ... We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity , which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe , unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar or can in some way be calibrated.

For Damen (op.cit:119), "human language may be viewed as a system, as a vehicle for cultural transmission, as a formulaic force whose structures place their stamp upon the minds and actions of its speakers". She elucidates the hypothesis stating : "the Whorfian hypothesis, for it was more Whorf's than Sapir's, states that a causal arrow can be drawn from language categories and forms to cultural items and meanings , which in turn add up to a unique world view or system of cultural meanings , postulates , and theories . This is the strong version" (p125). It is known as 'linguistic determinism'. Mackey (1965 : 14) holds a similar view: " the content of language , far from being shaped by thought , is itself the shaper of our mental categories . It is the language content that shapes the mental content". An example is in order: the linguistic form "I see what you mean" is based on the metaphor ''understanding is seeing". This metaphor provides a conceptual framework through which English speakers view the world. This view is not necessarily shared by other languages and cultures; different languages imply different world views. If we concede that language governs thought, it follows that a language structure is likely to hinder its speakers' grasping of particular thought patterns, as developed by the speakers of a different language: (Barrow , op.cit: 4)

> Particular communities may vary what they think worth reasoning about and, as a consequence, fail to develop a language for reasoning about certain things. This, in turn, will inhibit and restrict the chances of developed or refined thought about those things. For example , classical Greek indicates a concern with , and allows for sophisticated reasoning about , individual freedom ,which the contemporaneous language of the Persians does not.

The Sapir / Whorf hypothesis in its weak version, that is, what is known as 'linguists relativity', suggests that a language influences (rather than determines) the way one thinks and perceives the world, in the sense that its semantic encoding of experience highlights some aspects and not others. This varies across languages and cultures. Thus, what seems to be the same concept in different languages is not actually so, but there are underlying cultural nuances. Kramsch (1998: 14) states succinctly : "The theory of linguistic relativity does not claim that linguistic structure constrains what people *can* think or perceive, only that it tends to influence what they routinely do think ''. Put otherwise, this version of the hypothesis simply states

that there is a relationship between language forms and cultural thought patterns, that language has an impact on mental activities in that it "provides the conceptual categories that influence how its speakers' perceptions are encoded and stored." (Jandt, op.cit:130). Hill (op. cit:15) distinguishes 'linguistic determinism' from 'linguistic relativity', stating that the latter, unlike the former, suggests that "there are no a priori constraints on the meanings which a human language might encode, and these encodings will shape unreflective understanding by speakers of a language".

1.3.2. Illustrations

Kramsch (1998: 13 -14) reports the results of an experiment to illustrate the hypothesis:

> Navajo children speak a language that encodes differently through different verbs the action of ' picking up a round object' like a ball and ' picking up a long, thin, flexible object', like a rope. When presented with a blue rope, a yellow rope , and a blue stick , and asked to choose which object goes best with the blue rope , most monolingual Navajo children chose the yellow rope , thus associating the objects on the basis of their physical form, whereas monolingual English– speaking children almost always chose the blue stick, associating the objects on the basis of their color, although , of course both groups of children are perfectly able to distinguish both colors and shapes .

Speakers of different languages may therefore have rather different worldviews, depending on how different the languages are from one another, semantically and grammatically.

The language and culture connection is especially manifested in the systems of categorization of natural and cultural objects and relationships. Patterns of kinship, colour coding, organizing time and space may be viewed as universal classifications. However, upon closer analysis, variations due to cultural differences will emerge. People in different cultures categorize things differently, i.e., they place the same element in different categories. Consequently, what may be differentiated in a culture may not necessarily be in another. Sometimes, people who do not differentiate information in the same manner as others may be viewed as ignorant or naive. In the Ayamara language of the Altiplano of Bolivia and Peru, for instance, time divisions are quite different from those in other languages: (Miracle, Jr., and Yapita, 1981; in Damen, op.cit : 121-122)

> In Ayamara, time is divided into the future and other time. Such divisions are reflected in the very inflections of the language. There is no obligatory division between present and past. One Ayamara speaker explained: the future in Ayamara is what has not been seen. We cannot see the future… . In Ayamara the future is **behind** you – you cannot see it. In English, the future is **ahead** of you; you can look into it.

Furthermore, no distinction is made in Hopi between spilling as an accidental act, and pouring as an intentional act, (Lantolf, op.cit). Another instance has to do with kinship terminology, that is, terms used to label family relationships. The latter, contracted through birth and marriage, are the same in all societies, but different cultures classify and name them differently. Indo-European kinship systems make use of only a few items that are subject-centred, and are more and more vague and rare when referring to far kins. Terms such as 'father', 'mother', 'son', 'daughter', 'brother', and 'sister' are relatively precise, but those of 'uncle', and 'aunt' are very flexible. Beyond this stage, no other terms are available. English-speaking people do not distinguish linguistically between uncle, 'father's brother', 'mother's brother', 'father's sister's husband', and 'mother's sister's husband'. Other languages do not distinguish between all or some of these relationships. The linguistic system in Arab cultures, for example, makes available separate terms for father's brother and mother's brother ('âam' and 'khal', respectively). This differential labelling posits a difference in the structures of societies and in the roles, behaviours and attitudes expected of individuals on the basis of these relationships (one's father's brother, for example, is usually treated with deference and one's mother's brother with familiarity in the Arab culture). Subtle cultural features of this kind are not catered for in all languages. In the Chinese system, hundreds of terms are counted and new ones can even be created by combining elementary terms. Thus, no kinship degree whether close or far can be expressed with less precision. The colour system is also relevant to this discussion. In Jaqara, an Aymaran language in Chile, there are four terms to refer to four kinds of red: shocking pink, burgundy, reddish brown, and wine red; and in Tarahumara, no distinction is made between green and blue (Hill, op.cit). So, languages have as many words as required in their respective cultures to satisfy the needs of speakers.

Considering cultural emphases or foci, and the way they are reflected in corresponding languages is also relevant to this discussion. The importance of some cultural elements is highlighted in language through the availability or even the proliferation of lexical items to express them, or to enable fine distinctions in relation to them. The Barai of Papua in New Guinea, for example, have thirty different words for yam, the fact which shows the importance of yam in this culture. 'Surprisingly', only one word is available in their language to refer to beds, chairs, tables, benches, desks, counters and cupboards (Damen, op.cit). In a like manner, the point demonstrates that these people do not give much importance to furniture, given the fact that they spend much of their time outdoors. Compared to other languages, Japanese has many items to refer to the seasons of the year. The four seasons are divided into twenty-four subseasons, and each subseason into the beginning, middle and end: "It is said that when a Japanese writes a letter, it always begins with a remark on the weather and the season. It will say things like "it is already mid-May, and the young foliage is fresh and green…" (Jandt, op.cit:132). The Yanomamo language of southern Venezuela has only three numbers that correspond to "one", "two" and "more than two" in English. Another striking example is that of the Arabic language: it has three thousand words for "camel", eight hundred for "sword", five hundred for "lion" and two hundred for "snake". This fact denotes that animals (living in the wilderness) and swords (traditional war arms or tools) are (or were) significant in the Arabian culture. Moreover, the Eskimo language is proved to have four hundred words for "snow", given its vital importance in the Eskimos' life and environment. In a like manner, there are multiple words for automobiles in contemporary USA culture. Hickerson (op. cit; in Damen, op.cit: 122-123) puts it clearly that:

> points of cultural emphasis are usually directly reflected in language through the size, specialization, and differentiation of vocabulary. That is, there are more separate terms, synonyms, and more fine distinctions made in reference to features of environment or culture with which the speakers are the most concerned. There are fewer terms and they tend to be more generalized when they refer to features which are given less cultural emphasis. "Cultural emphasis" may indicate environmental or economic factors which are critical to subsistence; it can also comprehend aesthetic, religious, or other kinds of values.

As previously mentioned, the same one item may also evoke different meanings, feelings, reactions in different cultures: (Sercu, op. cit: 268)

> When considering the abstract concept 'bird', Americans may prototypically think of a sparrow whereas members from some Asian culture may think of another concretisation of that same abstract category. The concretisation then becomes the point of reference of the members of that culture. Americans will for example regard a duck as less bird like than a sparrow.

In her survey of word association technique, Jiang (op.cit) demonstrates that people associate words to images, events, entities, characteristics, relations that are relevant to their NC. For instance, she notes that while native speakers of Chinese link the word 'food' mainly to items such as 'steamed bread' and 'rice', English native speakers refer to 'hamburger' and 'Pizza'. Moreover, it appears that the difference between breakfast, lunch and supper is much more important for the latter, and that in the Chinese culture similar food is served in the three occasions. What is also significant is that English native speakers are found, as well, to care more than the Chinese about the quality of food and nutrition, since they use more adjectives to describe their food and feelings about it. These cultural instances are reflected in words. Words, as pointed out before, convey cultural meanings. Besides, the words of a particular language and their equivalents in other languages are generally not true or perfect equivalents since they have different associations and images, as illustrated by Kramsch (1993:2): ''a rose, may be, is a rose, but it is not ***une rose***, is not ***eine Rose***, but multiple ways of viewing and talking about roses''. Holly (1990: 14-15) offers another instance: ''When I use 'fenêtre' in translation, I cannot, in this sense, use it as an exact equivalent of 'window'. Though for many purposes such translation may be perfectly adequate, nevertheless 'fenêtre' has a cultural history which gives it an emotive force quite distinct from 'window' or 'fenster' or 'okno' – to choose only European examples''. This is to say that words are to be viewed as cultural referents, i.e., they have a cultural potential: ''And this is not a matter of academic etymology: a word is related to its object –referent via a thought process, a complex of recognition and emotive response which is, outside poetic utterance, usually dormant but which, nevertheless colours our thinking however faintly '' (Holly, ibid: 15).

Differences in syntax and grammar in general may be indicators of differences in cultures and worldviews. For instance, change in world order across languages is significant in that it reflects specific focal points. In an SVO (subject verb object) language like English, emphasis is on the subject, the doer of the action: "Only about a third of English sentences lack a subject" (Jandt, op.cit:133). This is not the case of Japanese. Though the typical word order in this language is basically SOV (subject object verb), the subject is not emphasized: "75% of Japanese sentences lack a subject […] [The latter] is known by context" (p133). On the basis of the Sapir / Whorf hypothesis, it can be implied that English is an individualistic culture, whereas Japanese is a group-oriented one. A VSO (verb subject object) language like Arabic shifts the focus into the verb. This may suggest that Arabic-speaking people value action itself whoever its doer. In addition, grammatical categories such as case, gender, aspect, and tense exist in a language because they represent corresponding aspects in the external world. Different languages have different grammatical systems. The Burmese language has nominal classifying particles to distinguish a long object or an object as a weapon (Corder, op.cit). Navaho language has a grammatical feature that modifies the stem of verbs of handling according to the shape of what is handled (Carroll and Casagrande, 1958; in Corder, op.cit). The Hopi language has a grammatical attribute to indicate whether a statement is based on observation, memory, expectation or generalization. Furthermore, what is for Hopi people a question of modality is for English people a question of time (in Corder, op.cit). Whorf (in Hill, op.cit:17) notes that "the Hopi view was embodied in such habitual linguistic patterns as the absence of spatiotemporal metaphors, the impossibility of counting units of time, and the absence of tenses in the verbs". Sapir reports the case of "a number of indigenous languages of the Pacific Northwest [which] lacked a distinction between nouns and verbs" (Hill, op.cit:18). The Wintu people of northern California do not demarcate self from other; while English, like other European languages, distinguishes "I go" from "we go", Wintu does not allow for such a distinction, since it only provides for one word "harada" to mean both (Kearney, 1984; in Lantolf, op.cit). Another example relevant to the English language has to do with the fact that there is no question that elicits an ordinal number as an answer (i.e., 1st or 2nd, …). The question what is (was) the rank of…? is not acceptable as idiomatic to the native speakers of English. One possible interpretation is that the latter did not need or were not interested, in their culture, to ask such a

question. In other cultures, however, an appropriate question word for this purpose may be available ('ethramate' in the Indian Malayalam language and 'hoeveelste' in Dutch) (Abooty, 1997). Again, this offers further evidence that people within a culture view the world differently from others, and the linguistic means they have serve their particular view and their own needs.

A language, thus, helps form its users' worldview, and enables them to describe and deal with their reality. A worldview is associated with the values and beliefs of a cultural group. In Damen's (op.cit:124) viewpoint, 'worldview' is ''a cover term that refers to the particular sets of realities associated with a given cultural group. It includes attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions about the environment, human relations, social organization, and all that constitutes human life''; all these aspects are essentially reflected and expressed in the language of the cultural group in question.

1.3.3. Criticism

The Sapir / Whorf hypothesis was widely criticized by linguists and anthropologists, especially in its strong 'deterministic' form. Scholars could not admit that human thoughts were prisoners of the structure of languages. It was unreasonable to believe that speakers of a language (like the Hopi) would not understand thought of another language users (like modern scientific English thought), because of the structure of their language, and that to achieve this purpose they have to learn first the language in which this thought was originally expressed. Besides, the belief upon which the hypothesis is based was not revealed by data, but was merely supported by them. Whorf and Sapir themselves are reported to have at times contradictory statements: sometimes, they advocated the strong position of linguistic determinism, and at other times, they adopted the weak version of linguistic relativity or even a universalistic position (Damen, op.cit.). Carroll (1973; in Damen, op. cit) contested this hypothesis arguing that all worldviews can be expressed in any language. Corder (op. cit) does not think one's language restricts one's conceptual capacities and worldviews as do Whorf and Sapir. He believes their position to be 'radical' and of 'a very powerful claim'. According to him, ''The differences between cultures are ones of degree not of kind. The members of different cultures live in 'the same world' but they categorize it differently'' (p74). Still, however, the fact of having many worldviews and basically the same one for people who share the same

language indicates that the Whorfian hypothesis is not to be dismissed for good. Its weak version is generally acknowledged nowadays (Kramsch, 1998), but it needs further research and analysis. In this respect, Carroll (op.cit) and Singer (1982; in Damen, op.cit) have suggested modified forms of the original strong version of the hypothesis. They stress the connection between language, culture and thought, but disregard the deterministic factor of language.

While the linguistic determinism / relativity hypothesis advances that one's language shapes / affects the way one thinks and views the world, culture is argued to have its own 'grammar' or rules imposed on that of language (Howell & Vetter, 1976; in Thanasoulas, op.cit). That is why, for instance, an American seeing a bus coming would say "the bus is coming", but a Japanese would rather say "the bus has come" (Thanasoulas, op.cit: 9). In our viewpoint, whether it is language which governs thought and hence shapes culture (for what is culture if not what people think and do), or it is culture which acts upon language and conditions language use, this cannot deny the fact that they are significantly connected, and should be dealt with as such. We believe the relationship between language and culture should not be restricted to ˋwhichˊ determines ˋwhichˊ. It is not a relation of cause and effect, but a relation of alliance and correspondence. The Sapir / Whorf hypothesis serves, thus, to highlight the interconnectedness of language and culture: language reflects cultural meanings, choices, preferences…, and at the same time, it can only be fully understood in the light of its cultural context. Language and culture are two parallel modalities of a more fundamental activity: the human spirit.

As to the implication of the Sapir / Whorf hypothesis in the field of language teaching, Mackey (op.cit:15) states that "language-teaching methods based on such theories tend to regard language instruction as the teaching of a new mode of thought". In a like manner, Barrow (op.cit:5) views teaching a second language as teaching about a new way of life and thinking: "I concede that in teaching English to those for whom it is a second language we may be promoting different ways of thinking and different values from those with which they are familiar".[1]

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[1] The question of including culture in language teaching will be dealt with in some detail in chapters three and four.

1.4. Language, Culture and Identity
1.4.1. Nature of the Relationship Language, Culture and Identity

For many people, language, culture and identity are intimately associated. One's culture is everything that makes one unique. It is viewed as the expression of one's 'collective' identity, in Von Barloewen's words (op. cit: 46), ''Culture's most important task is to act as a foundation for people's identity''. A participant in a culture experiences it as something deeply internalized, an integral part of one's nature, oneself: (Hinkel, op. cit: 1)

> The term culture has diverse and disparate definitions that deal with forms of speech acts, rhetorical structure of text, social organizations, and knowledge constructs. Culture is sometimes identified with notions of personal space, appropriate gestures, time and so forth. Although these concepts are certainly manifestations of cultural norms, the impact of culture [...] is both broader and deeper, defining the way a person sees his or her place in a society.

Language may be considered as the foremost culture and identity mark of a society, in addition to being a pragmatic system of communication. This is manifested in the importance conferred on one's mother tongue or native language (NL), and in the conflicts accompanying the process of choosing a national language or learning a foreign one. In addition, language carries and expresses shared cultural and identity symbols, namely, what pertains to one's roots and cultural heritage, and all the distinctive features and symbolic elements which confer on a group its identity. This is especially manifested in poetic language use (proverbs, songs, metaphors). Spradley (1979; in Damen, op. cit: 120) sees that language is "The primary symbol system that encodes cultural meaning in every society". For Strevens (1987: 56), ''one's language is a central element in one's personal, national, and ethnic identity''. For Crystal (op.cit: 34), it is "the primary outward sign of a group's identity". This close connection between language and identity is due to many reasons: language is a 'taken for granted' aspect of community life, "it is such a widespread and evident feature of community life " (p 34); in addition, language relates one to one's past ancestors and origin, "for example, many present–day Italians-Americans and Australians know very little Italian, but they still see Italian as a symbol of their ethnic identity'' (p 34). What is more, language can be a 'natural barrier' between people when it is not shared. Kramsch (1998: 65) believes that

There is a natural connection between the language spoken by members of a social group and that group's identity. By their accent, their vocabulary, their discourse patterns, speakers identify themselves and are identified as members of this or that speech community. From this membership, they draw personal strength and pride , as well as a sense of social importance and historical unity from using the same language as the group they belong to.

Varieties of language as well symbolize a social group identity. Black English Vernacular, for example, refers to ''the non-standard English spoken by lower- class African Americans in urban communities'' (Crystal, op.cit: 37). Slang also reflects the common social and linguistic identity of its users, hence the slang of outlaw gangs , the slang of gays , the slang of pop singers, the slang of students , the slang of medical staff ... .

The switch from one language or variety to another is culturally significant, in that it signals the speaker's solidarity or distance vis-à-vis the interlocutor. In Paraguay, for example, there are two main languages, 'Guarani' and Spanish. To use one or the other depends on geographical as well as social factors. It has been observed that bilingual speakers form Itapuami and Luque would use Guarani to show solidarity vis-à-vis the addressees that they consider socially close to them, while they use Spanish in formal situations and with strangers. On this basis, ''jokes would tend to be in Guarani. Courtship often began in Spanish, and ended in Guarani'' (Crystal: 42). Another example worth mentioning is the Vaupés Indians of Columbia. These Indians belong to twenty tribes, having each an independent language. Though they have a common lingua franca called Tukano, each tribe remains faithful to its own language which symbolizes the social identity of the same group of 'brothers'. The latter could only have marriage partners from other tribes (Crystal, op.cit). In 'monolingual' societies , speakers use different language varieties depending on the kind of social relationships they have with the hearers , and more generally, on the speech situation or event they take part in . A Berlin official, for instance, uses standard German at work, and a local dialect at home. A particularly interesting case to mention in relation to this topic is that of the Australian Aborigines who witnessed the development of special languages referred to as 'avoidance' languages, called sometimes 'mother in law' languages, to be used when communicating with ' taboo' relatives, mainly the wife's family. These

languages are characterized by a limited vocabulary and a specific prosody and style marking social distance.

Crystal (op.cit: 51) points to the process of 'linguistic accommodation' or 'convergence' which normally occurs in any communicative interaction: "When two people with different social backgrounds meet, there is a tendency for their speech to alter, so that they become more alike ''. This change in speech implies a change in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speech rate, and pauses. It is mainly aimed at facilitating communication. However, this convergence may have negative consequences in that it can engender the loss of one's social identity, or it may elicit a negative attitude on the part of the listener, as a reaction to the style adopted by the speaker. On the other hand, speech divergence occurs in circumstances that entail the speaker to defend or simply to display one's social, national or religious identity. This often happens when one feels offended or threatened, or when one dislikes the other's behaviours and attitudes.

In intercultural communicative interactions, code switching can mirror the speaker's position vis-à-vis one's own and the interlocutor's cultures. In other words, by adopting words, sentences, prosodic features from one's own language, the speaker is at the same time manifesting one's cultural pertaining and identity. This is referred to by Kramsch (1998: 70) as ''language crossing as an act of identity''. Therefore, one's language is part of one's culture, and both denote one's identity.

1.4.2. Identity-Related Issues

Identifying accurately people's linguistic and cultural identities is not an easy task in the complex and open societies of today. Indeed, in the same one country, people may identify themselves with different ethnic (cultural) groups. In addition, one's cultural identity cannot always be defined on the basis of race, for genetic differences may be detected within the same racial group. Language in particular cannot always be used as a criterion of group identity. Kramsch (ibid: 68-69) outlines many examples in this regard:

> Alsatians who speak German, French and Germanic Platt may alternatively consider themselves primarily Alsatians, or French, or German, depending on how they position themselves vis-à-vis the history of their region and their family biography. A youngster born and raised in France of Algerian parents, may even though he speaks only French , call himself Algerian in France , but when abroad he might prefer to be seen as French , depending on which group he wishes to be identified with at the times ... .

Kramsch refers even to cases where the cultural identity of a group survives notwithstanding the disappearance of its language (Hebrew of the Jewish culture [1], the Gullah of the American Black culture, the Indian languages of the east Indian culture in the Caribbean). Hence, the relation language – cultural identity is not always straightforward. For Kramsch, an individual has several identities that change in time and space. She believes as well that a group identity is not a natural fact but the outcome of others' perception conditioned by their cultural worldviews and stereotypes.

Along these lines, Kramsch points out the relevance of politics: "linguistic wars are always also political and cultural wars". In fact, for particular political motives, one language variety is chosen to be the 'national' 'standard' language of the country, and to represent its 'national' culture and 'national' identity, a choice that is not agreed upon by everybody. According to Byram (1992) many European countries hold 'a monolingual ideology' in that national identity implies for them one national common language. He believes multilingualism to be more realistic a phenomenon in today's European countries: English and Welsh in Britain, to mention but one language ; French and Flemish in Belgium; Spanish and Basque in Spain. In other words, more than one national language is actually recognized in these countries. Most world nations are, nowadays, too mixed to readily talk of a 'national' language and a 'national' culture, let alone a 'national' identity. Nevertheless, a 'national' language is strongly fought for everywhere, and is in many cases imposed as a mark of cultural identity, as a 'cultural totem', in Kramsch's words. On the other hand, there are minority groups whose languages are more or less acknowledged within the country in which they live. Linguistic conflicts often occur as an attempt on the part of ethnic minorities to preserve their linguistic and cultural identity. The minority language is for its people a token of identity, whereas the 'national'

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[1] Paradoxically, Yiddish, the modern form of Hebrew that was revived by the Jews, in the nineteenth century, played a central role in building the state of Israel.

language is viewed as a means of communication: "The more recognition afforded, and the larger the minority group, the less insistence on using only the language of the group and the more it is seen as a symbol of identity rather than, as well as, a tool for communication" (Byram, op.cit: 168). The children acquire both languages and cultures becoming eventually bilingual and bicultural, that is, they learn the language and the way of thinking and acting of the minority, as well as of the majority. Learning the latter does not mean letting down the former. Indeed, when pointing to the distinction between the symbolic nature and the communication nature of language, Byram aims at showing that the link binding one's language to one's identity does not hinder one from learning another language to facilitate communication with other countries and other social groups. [1]

Although there is not always a one-to-one relationship between one's language and one's cultural identity, language is perhaps the most significant key to identity. Besides, identity, in our viewpoint, is not that intricate to define, for it is an inside-felt sense. There are many factors at work to determine one's sense of self: language, culture, religion, race, country, nationality, hometown, and social class; they are not incompatible except in some cases, as shown above. We want , in this regard, to refer to the Muslim concept of 'El Ouma', where all people have the same identity, that of being 'Muslim', whatever their origin, colour, sex, mother tongue or other, and where all differences merge in the framework of a common faith. This identity is not the same as the so called 'intercultural identity', which frees its holder from the "restraints" of his / her original culture. It is claimed that to have such an 'intercultural identity' means, among other things, not to feel strange when entering new cultural spaces and when interacting with foreigners: "This intercultural identity is flexible and fluid because it is no longer based solely on belonging to the original or the new culture in which a person finds himself" (Von Barloewen, op. cit: 48). It is also claimed that the intercultural identity will solve the religious, ethnic and cultural conflicts of the world: "what was originally 'foreign' is transformed into a constantly expanding interculturalism" (Von Barloewen, op.cit: 48). We think that to have an 'intercultural identity' or an identity "in between" means to have no identity at all. How can we be at the same time Arabs and Jews, Muslims and Christians...? An identity serves essentially to distinguish an individual or a group of individuals from

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[1] See chapter three, section 1, for further elucidation of this issue.

others or other groups, on some particular bases .What would then be the value of this entity if all people of the world had the same identity in the so-called globalization era? How could cultural differences in this perspective, "be kept in mind and honored" (Von Barloewen, op.cit: 48)? Nowadays, one has sometimes to "struggle" to keep one's culture alive, and to stick to one's identity and religion; what would be the plight of the world if everybody let down willingly the cornerstones of one's identity, that is, one's language, culture , religion and ethnicity, and adopted a fictitious 'intercultural identity'? Doubtless, it would not be, according to us, an ideal world. It would not be unification or globalization; it would not be integration or acculturation; it would rather be the Westernization or Americanization of the world. This is not to say that one should not learn FLs and cultures, lest one loses one's native cultural identity.

Modern sociopsychologists interested in intercultural communication regard identity not as a stable single entity, but as a varied dynamic one: (Collier and Thomas 1988; in Jin and Cortazzi, op.cit: 117-118)

> Identity is seen in a 'mosaic sense' in which people identify themselves not only in relatively stable terms (on such dimensions as nationality , mother tongue , ethnic group, age , gender) but also in dynamic terms. In the latter, *major* [our emphasis] aspects of identity are 'framed, negotiated, modified, confirmed and challenged through communication and contact with others.

We think that one's sense of identity is at first dynamic in that it develops along with other processes, in the course of one's socialization with others. Then, it becomes more and more stable, at least in what concerns the basic foundations of one's identity, namely, language, culture, religion and ethnicity. When interacting with others, especially interculturally, *some* (and not *major*), aspects of one's identity may change and evolve. These aspects are, according to us, minor compared to the former, they nonetheless contribute to one's expansion and knowledge of oneself and of others. A concrete example is in order. We all heard of ' Zineddine Zidane', the French football star of the Algerian origin. The fact that he is currently a member of 'Real Madrid', the famous Spanish football club, (or that the he is married to a Spanish woman), has introduced a change in his identity. Put in other words, he has gained a kind of a 'new 'identity, but his original basic identity is always there, unique

unchangeable, wherever he is, and whomever he interacts with. Byram (op.cit) thinks in terms of 'national' and 'international' identity. One's mother tongue or NL has symbolic significance that is related to one's national social identity: "It symbolises that complex process of secondary socialisation which takes place largely in primary and secondary schooling and which establishes the individual's relationship to a whole range of social groups" (Byram, op.cit: 168). That is why, minority groups in dominant cultures wish their children to attend their own schools, to help them know their NC, and build their actual identity, to quote Byram again (p168),

> people are ' German ' because they speak German –but it also embodies the values and shared meanings into which 'Germans' have been socialised, as they internalise the language (Vygotsky, 1971) . It is the form in which those values and meanings are made available and exchanged between group members […] [the] language through which the socialisation process can take place.

However, 'Germans', for Byram, are also ' Europeans '; this constitutes their international social identity, and so is the case of other European citizens. Acquiring an 'international' identity does not (or should not) negate or affect one's 'national' identity.

2. A Socio-Cultural View of Communication

Jiang (op.cit) compares communication to swimming, where language is the swimming skill and culture is water. Communication can as well be compared to transportation: the vehicle is language and culture is traffic lights; language enables communication to take place, and culture regulates communication in that it may facilitate or hinder it. In fact, culture provides rules as to what to say or not, to whom, when, where and how communication begins, proceeds and ends.

2.1. Communication and Culture
2.1.1. Communication as a Culture-Specific Act

Many of the civilizations of today allow for the free unconditioned use of language: people constantly talk, and any subterfuge is good to make them express themselves, ask questions, make comments…. This way of using language is not universal, however. Communicating in primitive cultures, for example, proved to be quite limited to some prescribed circumstances; in these cultures, people de not talk

at any time and about anything. As far back as 1959, Hall (in Damen, op.cit: 73) wrote "Culture is communication and communication is culture". Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967; in Damen, op.cit: 74) add: "if communication is culture, and vice versa, then human beings cannot not communicate".

The ability to communicate or to use language appropriately in communicative interactions depends on the context of use: " In different times and places we may be obliged, permitted, encouraged, or even forbidden to communicate; and the quality or quantity of the language we use will be subject to social evaluation and sanction" (Crystal, op.cit: 48). By context, reference is not only made to the immediate context or the context of situation; as seen previously, it also refers to the context of culture or the broader culturally-determined context. Context is central in communication, for one reason, the same word or utterance may have many meanings. One may use the same word in different contexts to mean so many different things. Thus, for an effective interpretation or production of a piece of (oral or written) discourse, we need to make use of contextual information. We need to know about the subject of conversation, for instance. We need as well to know about the culture in which the conversation takes place, if not, it would be like 'understanding all of a joke except the punch line' (Seelye, 1997: xiv). In a communicative interaction, culture is present in the social environment or context in which the interaction takes place: "Communication is an intricate matrix of interacting social acts that occur in a complex social environment [...]. This social environment is culture, and if we truly are to understand communication, we also must understand culture" (Porter and Samovar, 1982; in Damen, op.cit: 32). It is also ingrained in the meanings exchanged between sender and receiver, on the basis of their cultural backgrounds. Successful communication depends partly on the extent to which participants share cultural assumptions and background knowledge. Damen (op.cit: 75) states:

> the inference of culture in communication is most evident in the social environment . [...] the assignment of meaning or attribution assumes that communication is the kind of behavior that can be assigned meaning and defined in terms of its attributions or what the receiver and sender think it means .The meanings are also culturally colored so that each sender and receiver may be drawing upon different 'meaning reservoirs'. These various meanings are developed throughout the human lifetime as a result of cultural and personal experiences.

Contextual cultural dimensions are provided by the daily routine of the members of a culture, their history, religion, philosophical values, the way their society defines role and gender, the way it sets proxemic boundaries, the way it perceives temporality, the way it views power and deals with ambiguity, whether it is individualist or collectivist ... .

2.1.2. Culture in Cross-Cultural Communicative Interactions

Communicative interactions of people from different cultural backgrounds require an understanding and an appreciation of the cultures involved. Seelye (op.cit:1) argues that "When communication is between people with different worldviews, special skills are required if the messages received are to resemble the messages sent". It is highly agreed upon that the use of the same one language does not imply successful communication. Usually communicative breakdowns are due to "hidden" causes that are culture–rooted. They are hidden   because it is not evident to analyse and bring them to light. Zhihong (op.cit) refers to what is consciously implicit and what is unconsciously implicit in intercultural communication ("L'implicite conscient" et "l'implicite inconscient"). The former denotes   what is meant, but not explicitly stated   by the speaker ; the latter has to do with what is culturally deeply rooted and goes beyond conscious recognition –both fall in Tylor's (1978; in Hill, op.cit) field of the unsaid. According to Zhihong, misunderstandings usually result on the basis of what is unconsciously implicit in linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours, given the fact that they are taken for granted by the speaker, and hence may remain as a source of confusion or misinterpretation for the hearer. That is why, intercultural communication is a process which is often more marked by failure than success. Smith (1985: 4) thinks that this failure is simply due to our tendency to expect others to use language in the same way as we do, as if we overlook the fact that they are different from us and that they belong to another culture: ''Even though we are aware that our interlocutor is from anther culture, we often interpret what he or she says as if a fellow national had said it. When English is the common language, we somehow seem to expect the words, sentences, and discourse to have common meanings even when we have ample evidence to the contrary''.

As mentioned before, every participant in a communicative interaction is actually the product of a specific culture with a specific mode of communication.

S/he enters an interchange with a set of expectations. A cross-cultural interchange rests on assumptions each party makes about one's own and the other party's culture. The problem with such assumptions is that they are often inaccurate and misleading. Background assumptions and expectations concerning, for example, requests, positive and negative responses to an offer or an invitation, initiating a conversation, ending an exchange, use of gestures…may cause serious misinterpretations, and hence the breakdown of communication. In fact, the way discourse operates differs from one culture to another. In other words, cultures build their discourse styles differently, on the basis of their rules of verbal and non-verbal behaviours. There are preferences in relation to the expression of feelings and opinions, and different conversation conventions and genres. In some styles, facts are referred to more explicitly than in others; some allow for a direct expression of one's wishes and emotions unlike others. In some cultures, people use more non-verbal than verbal means of expression; in others, overt negation is not tolerated. Some cultures tolerate only mild and indirect forms of complaint, whereas others may accept direct and severe ones. Linguistically speaking, the frequency of exclamatives and interrogatives varies across cultures, and so do forms of address and self–reference.

Even linguistic routines, which are usually, fixed communicative formulas such as greeting, parting, thanking, and complimenting formulas are highly culture–specific. In other words, understanding a communicative routine properly requires knowing not only the words, but also the cultural assumptions underlying them. For example, one is purported to say "congratulations!" to someone who has had a baby; in Ewe in west Africa, the same context requires one to say something like "God is strong!" or "ancestors are strong!", expressions which reflect the basically religious culture of the Ewe people (Goddard and Wierzbicka, op. cit). Another instance is the American English phrase "see you later". This leave-taking formula does not necessarily mean that the speaker really intends to see the hearer later. The misinterpretation of this phrase often engenders stereotypes on the part of foreign interlocutors. Under the heading of "Differential stylistics", Mackey (op.cit.) argues that, in everyday life situations, what is said in a language (or a culture) does not correspond in form or content to what is said in another in the same context: "One language may require a long utterance, and in the same situation, another language

may require not more than a word or simply a gesture. It is a matter of style". An example is in order: a German speaker would offer his/ her seat to a stranger saying 'bitte' ('please'), whereas an English speaker would do it non-verbally, i.e., through a gesture. Furthermore, what is in English a stress-based distinction is in French a question of vocabulary: "that's my business" ("C'est mon affaire") versus "that's my business" ("C'est mon metier") (Mackey, op.cit.).

Lyons (1983: 187) believes that most speech acts are culture – bound in that "they depend upon the legal, religious or ethical conventions and practices institutionalized in particular societies". For example, the need to apologize and the degree of apology may be determined on the basis of factors as age or social status, depending on the priorities of a culture (Olshtain and Cohen, 1991). With respect to inviting, a German would say what corresponds to the English utterance "Are you coming to dinner tonight?", which for the French fits a reminder of a previously extended invitation (Kramsch, 1993: 25) .The function of establishing and maintaining social relationships is proved to be more valued by some social groups compared to others, and so is poetic language use. In English–speaking cultures, for instance, proverbs are not common in everyday life speech, while they are in the Egyptian culture. Even speech acts that can be said to be universal such as making statements, and asking questions still depend on culture variables such as politeness. Under the heading of contrastive pragmatics, another research points out that Grice's (1975) 'maxims of conversation' do not apply equally to all cultures: (Goddard and Wierzbicka , op.cit: 234)

> In Malagasy village society (Ochs Keenan, 1976), for instance, people are not expected to satisfy the informational needs of co-conversationalists because, firstly, withholding information brings a degree of status, and, secondly, there is a fear of committing oneself to particular claims lest any resulting unpleasantness bring tsiny ("guilt") to oneself and one's family.

Lyons (op.cit.) points to the fact that linguists and philosophers have for a long time neglected context in their dealing with Grice's maxims. That is why they have failed to see the cultural specificity of language use. What is considered sincere, polite or rational is not necessarily manifested in the same way in all cultures.

According to Beneke (2000), the cultural differences that are at work in the communicative process are "all those unspoken assumptions that members of ethnic or cultural groups have as to what are "normal" conduct and "normal" modes of communication". Cultures often have differing views of what is correct behaviour. The transference of socio-cultural norms from one culture to another may be very offending, and may cause serious misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication. Strong emotional reactions may even be manifested. According to Cushner and Brislin (op.cit), some people may feel very upset and would, henceforth, avoid what they think are unpleasant encounters; others may seriously misunderstand their interlocutors and misjudge them, hence the phenomenon of 'unwarranted' stereotyping across cultures. Some others, however, become conscious of the impact of cultural differences and attempt to understand and communicate with those who are different from themselves.

2.1.3. Instances of Cross-Cultural Communication Breakdown

Instances of communication breakdown abound in cross-cultural communication studies. An Australian interacting with a Japanese usually ignores the fact that the act of "refusal" in Japan is often meant and implied and not carried out directly and explicitly, as it is the case in Australia. An utterance like, "I will give it positive consideration" is in Japanese meant as a negative answer, but it gives "great expectations" to Australian businessmen (Koyama, op .cit:2). The Japanese resort to an indirect refusal so as not to cause offence, but much misunderstanding may be engendered as a result. This example reminds us of the Arabic culture which, like the Japanese, considers a negative answer as impolite in some contexts. Instead of "no" an Arab may say "may be" or "Insha Allah" ("if God is willing")[1] . This conversational strategy is known as "indirectness". It is closely linked to the issue of face and politeness. Ethnographers of speaking and conversation analysts have noted that indirectness is more frequently used in some cultures.

The Japanese culture is generally characterized by 'indirectness' and 'restraint' in verbal interactions. According to research findings by Naoki and Dean (1983; in

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[1] It should be noted, however, that "Insha Allah" is not always used as a substitute for "no". It refers to any future event, given the fact that only "God", in this culture, is believed to be knowledgeable about the future, and only "He" can control future events.

Damen, op.cit.), the Japanese, unlike the Americans, have a passive form of criticism. This goes in harmony with their reluctance to assert their own opinions and to express opposing ideas (Koyama, op.cit). This is due to the Japanese ideals of 'enryo' and 'omoiyari', i.e., reserve and great sensitivity to others' feelings, respectively (Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit). Accordingly, the Japanese favour silence as apposed to explicit verbal expression, and place high value on what is thought to be socially acceptable, as opposed to individual feelings. This is in sharp contrast with the Americans' very active way of communication that is characterized by a ''lively give – and – take, opinion expressing, up–fronting style'' (Damen, op .cit: 20). It appears that what is an ordinary discourse style in the Anglo–American culture may seem quite shocking or offensive in the Japanese culture. In a like manner, the Japanese discourse style may seem quite boring and colourless from the American standpoint.

To go back to the world of business, the instance outlined above shows that successful communication between business partners requires knowledge and the observance of certain rules of conduct without which the parties would be involved in awkward situations and misunderstandings. Another example is the Asian ritual of giving presents to a business partner on a first visit. This may be misunderstood by Western business people, who do not find it 'normal' to receive presents from utter strangers. They may even interpret this act as an attempt at bribery, though it is, on the part of the givers, 'natural', ' spontaneous' and 'well-meant'. Beneke (op.cit:64) explains this cultural discrepancy on the basis of the fact that Asians and Middle Easterners "do business only with friends", but for Westerners, "business and pleasure do not mix". Beneke refers to another aspect in the world of business, namely, ''exploratory preliminary communication'', an initial stage before getting to talk business. How much preliminary communication is appropriated and allowed for is culture–bound. For Asian businessmen, establishing a personal relationship and a system of mutual obligations is a precondition for a successful business relationship. On the other hand, for Westerners, this would be arrived at after many meetings. What is more, as part of this "exploratory preliminary communication", "doing the honours", that is to say, taking care of the visiting business partners is necessary in the Asian culture, where respect and deference are highly valued. However, the Western business partners do not always appreciate this "doing the honours" from

their Asian counterparts, because they "worship" autonomy and resent dependence of any form.

Research findings in contrastive pragmatics have proved that politeness strategies do not operate in the same way in all cultures (Brown and Levinson, op.cit; in Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit.). For the French, saying something like "Quand vous arrivez en France, n'oubliez pas de me téléphoner, vous avez mon numéro de domicile, je vous inviterai à passer un week–end chez moi, ..." (Zhihong, op.cit : 44) does not necessarily mean a real invitation, but a way of manifesting politeness and respect vis-à-vis friends of a foreign nationality. For the Japanese, however, an invitation is an invitation, and if it is not carried out, they will be disappointed and may even be led to believe that the French do not keep their promises. The British in particular are very sensitive to politeness forms and acts; they do not tolerate an utterance like 'I want to ask a question' in a meeting, unless "preceded by elaborate apologies for the intrusion" (De Jong, op. cit: 97). In some cultures, the conventional form to make a polite request is to use an imperative followed by an expression meaning "please". In English, this form is viewed as too direct or patronizing and may, thus, be inappropriate in some situations. Nevertheless, being "too polite" in particular contexts may invite misapprehension. White (1993) explored the use of "please" by Japanese users of English. He noticed that though many of their utterances are grammatically correct, they are functionally confusing or inappropriate, and often lead to problems of cross–cultural communication, 'pragramalinguistic failure' in his words. It appears that polite forms of expression are common in many cultures, and are usually indispensable for a successful communicative interaction. However, their use follows defined socio-cultural pragmatic rules. In the French language, "bonjour" is used in a wider way than is "good morning" in English. Using "good morning" to greet someone in the afternoon may be ironic; this does not apply to "bonjour". Bengali and Wolof are said not to have greetings that are time-bound (Crystal, op.cit).

All these instances demonstrate the importance of knowing about others' cultural rules and the need to negotiate 'in-between' positions. One needs to be curious about how others think, to be able to enter into fruitful dialogue with them. Everyone needs as well to get at a certain distance from one's own self, to objectively analyse what actually happens in intercultural interactions.

2.2. Cultural Studies of Communication

2.2.1. Ethnography of Communication

Ethnography of communication is an important approach to language and culture developed by Hymes and Gumperz in the seventies (in Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit). According to them, language 'communicative competence' includes more than linguistic structural competence, namely, the ability to use language in culturally appropriate ways. Hymes believes research should be based on the 'speech events' of different cultures, i.e., activities involving speech like a job interview, a chat, a university lecture. He points out that data about communicative events across cultures can be gathered in relation to the following dimensions: (Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit: 232)

S setting and scene (where and when does it happen?)
P participants (who is taking part?)
E ends (what do participants want to achieve?)
A act sequence (what is said and done?)
K key (what is the emotional tone, for example serious, sorrowful, light-hearted?)
I instrumentalities (what are the 'channels' for example verbal, written and the codes, for example languages, speech styles?)
N norms of interaction and interpretation (why should people act like this?)
G genre (what kind of speech event is it?).

The aim is to relate patterns of behaviour (linguistic and non-linguistic) to their immediate and broader socio-cultural context. Hence, questions such as who is supposed to speak to whom, when, what type of language to be used, in which context, how much should be said or left unsaid, how to make a request… are central in this regard. Communication between speakers of different cultural backgrounds is, as demonstrated in the previous section, difficult, given that different cultures have different rules of language use. Such difficulties, however, may even be encountered intraculturally.

Methods of gathering data in the framework of this approach are participant observation and consultation with native speakers. The N (norms) dimension is the one that is most highlighted by ethnographers, given its importance in the description and interpretation of communicative events in cultural terms .The ethnography of communication does not, however, offer methodological clues to investigate these

cultural norms which are often unconscious, and require indirect means to be uncovered and analysed.

2.2.2. Intercultural Communication Studies

Intercultural communication studies are relevant to this discussion. They are essentially based on the comparison of various national cultures with Anglo-American cultures, in order to facilitate business and international relations. Focus is on the analysis of the difficulties and obstacles encountered in intercultural communicative interactions, whether related to the verbal or the non-verbal medium. This field draws insights from many disciplines such as anthropology, communication, linguistics and psychology, and borrows concepts and terms from them. Thus, it is an eclectic domain of research. According to Hoopes (1979; in Damen, op .cit), intercultural communication emerged as an academic discipline beginning from 1959, with Hall's publication "the silent language", in which the relationship between language and culture was analysed. The need for communication across cultures increased during and after world war two, resulting in further attempts to understand others' languages and cultures, and fostering the development of academic interest in the field of intercultural communication. In addition, training in intercultural communication was more needed than ever, with the arrival to USA of groups of foreign students, business workers, technicians.... for educational and / or working purposes, leading to further developments in the field. Hoopes notes that the first cross- cultural training manual did not appear till the nineteen seventies in USA, while the first basic textbook on intercultural communication (by Condon and Yousef) was in 1975. Undeniable is the contribution of the above-mentioned disciplines to lay the theoretical foundation for the field of intercultural communication, which, in turn, offered new insights to old concepts.

A note worth mentioning at this stage is the distinction between the terms 'intercultural' and 'cross-cultural'. These two terms are, in a sense, synonymous and are often used interchangeably. However, to be more accurate, the former designation ('intercultural') is used to point to the interaction between individuals or groups from different cultural areas. The emphasis is on the interaction itself. The term 'cross-cultural', on the other hand, focuses on the differences existing between the participants in the interaction. This differentiation is pointed out by Scollon (op.cit:183) when he writes ''Cross-cultural studies are those studies of different

groups in isolation that are then compared or contrasted on the basis of structural differences, behavioural displays, habits, customs, and the like . Intercultural studies, as I use the term, are those that focus on situations in which members of different groups have direct contact with each other". Moreover, cross–cultural communication does not entail the interaction of different languages; speakers of the same one language do have different culturally–coloured communication styles such as the Australians, the British and the Americans (Trudgill, op.cit.).

When researchers attempt to analyse cultures, they are faced with the problems of their own bias due to the influence of their NC. In fact, they have been raised in a culture which shapes their views and interpretations of the world. In relation to culture and discourse studies, Goddard and Wierzbicka (op .cit: 231) put it clearly that:

> As in all cross-cultural research, the overriding methodological problem is ethnocentric bias, that is, the danger that our understanding of the discourse practices of other cultures will be distorted if we view them through the prism of our own culture – specific practices and concepts. There is a need to find a universal, language–independent perspective on discourse structure and on cultural values.

In this regard, Goddard and Wierzbicka suggest 'the cultural script' approach which aims at supplying an accurate, culture-independent scheme to describe the cultural norms of discourse. This approach is compatible with and complementary to other ethnographic and pragmatic approaches, in that it provides them with a non–ethnocentric metalanguage to formulate cultural rules. This metalanguage was elaborated on the basis of simple meanings expressed by morphemes or words in all cultures, such as PEOPLE, SOMETHING, GOOD, BAD... . For example, this script is typically but not exclusively Japanese: (Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit: 236)

> If something bad happens to someone because of me
> I have to say something like this to this person:
> 'I feel something bad because of this'

This script elucidates why Japanese "apologize" very frequently and in a variety of situations. Their apology is not based on the English speech act verb 'apologize'. The latter is culture-bound since it presupposes the element "I did something bad to you"

(p 236). On the other hand, Japanese is purported to apologize even in situations where hurt or discomfort are indirectly caused by the speaker. Put in other words, the Japanese 'apologize' in their own way, which is different form the English way.

2.3. Beyond "Communicative Competence"

"Intercultural competence" is defined as the "ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures" (Meyer, 1991; in Cortazzi and Jin, op.cit:198). "Intercultural communicative competence" is said to transcend 'communicative competence' to include other skills that consider the discrepancy between the interacting cultural and social identities. Byram (op.cit: 165) argues that the concept of communicative competence has been conceived on the basis of native speakers' communicative interactions, and is, thus, inadequate when it comes to communication between people of different cultural origins and backgrounds: "an ability to understand people of other national groups does not only depend on 'communicative competence' but on the awareness that cultural meanings and values embedded in the foreign language are specific to national groups". Along these lines, Thanasoulas (op.cit: 3) writes "we cannot go about fostering 'communicative competence' without taking into account the different views and perspectives of people in different cultures which may enhance or even inhibit communication. After all, communication requires understanding, and understanding requires stepping into the shoes of the foreigner ". According to Byram (2000), "intercultural communicative competence" includes all the components of communicative competence:

- 'Linguistic Competence', i.e., the ability to use one's knowledge of the rules to produce and interpret correctly spoken and written language.
- 'Sociolinguistic Competence', i.e., the ability to give meanings to language, whether assumed or negotiated meanings.
- 'Discourse Competence', i.e., the ability to use strategies for the production and interpretation of texts.

"Intercultural communicative competence" includes, in addition, other elements, namely:

- Attitudes of curiosity and openness;
- Knowledge of other social groups, their products, practices and patterns of interaction;
- Skills of interpreting meanings from other cultures and relating them to meanings in one's own culture;
- Skills of discovery and interaction with others under real – life time constraints;
- Critical cultural awareness, that is, the ability to critically evaluate perspectives and behaviours in one's own and others' cultures.

The cultural component, in our viewpoint, is already strongly felt in Hymes' paradigm of communicative competence (in Canale and Swain, 1988) which encompasses:

-The grammatical aspect (whether and to what degree something is formally possible);

-The psycholinguistic aspect (whether and to what degree something is feasible);

-The sociocultural aspect (whether and to what degree something is appropriate;

-The probabilistic aspect (whether and to what degree something is actually performed).

The two last mentioned aspects are culture-based, since it is according to the cultural rules of a community that one can assess the appropriateness and the probability of occurrence of a piece of language, in a given speech situation. For instance, according to the English cultural rules of discourse, the utterance 'good bye' is inappropriate when greeting someone. According to the same rules, this utterance is exactly what a native speaker is likely to say when ending a routine telephone conversation, and it is more probable than an utterance like "may God be with you" in this context, in this culture. In the Arabic culture, the second utterance is used in many contexts. At a party, an English-speaking person would greet his / her friend saying, for instance, "awfully nice to see you here"; an utterance like "I apprehend an atmosphere of spontaneous delight with your arrival" (Bereksi, 1993: 157) would not only be inappropriate, but also highly improbable. Inappropriate language use of such kind occurs when foreign speakers of the language are too formal, too in formal, or too abrupt, where they should not. Sometimes, they do not know how to start a conversation in a spontaneous way. In other words, they fail to use the appropriate

style in the appropriate speech situation, because of their ignorance of the socio – cultural rules of language use.

For Dubin and Olshtain (op.cit: 76) 'communicative competence' subsumes the cultural component:

> a generally accepted definition begins with the idea that communicative competence entails knowing not only the language code or the form of language , but also what to say to whom and how to say it appropriately in any given situation . It deals with the social and cultural knowledge that speakers are presumed to have which enables them to use and interpret linguistic forms. It also includes knowledge of who may speak or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, how to talk to persons of different statuses and roles. A well-known description of communicative competence has been that it includes knowledge of what to say when, how, where and to whom. In effect, it takes in all of the verbal and non-verbal mechanisms which native speakers use unconsciously to communicate with each other.

Likewise, Al Mutawa and Kailaini (1989) believe 'communicative competence' to be a comprehensive concept, for it includes:

- Linguistic competence having to do with the mastery of language phonological, orthographic, grammatical and lexical systems;
- Pragmatic competence that is related to knowledge of language functions and speech acts but also discourse strategies;
- Strategic competence, i.e., the ability to solve communication problems whether in relation to production or interpretation;
- Fluency competence, namely, the ability to express oneself without difficulty;
- Sociocultural competence related to knowledge of the socio-cultural aspect of language: to know what is expected socially and culturally by the users of a language; to know what to say, where, when, why and how; to know how to respond verbally and non-verbally on the basis of one's communicative purposes.

They put it clearly that "Ignorance of cultural features would either create misunderstanding or lead to incapacity to use the language. The social use of language involves, among other things, cultural allusions or conventions such as ways of thinking, customs, mores, art forms, idioms, beliefs, etc" (p169).

2.4. Culture and Non- Verbal Communication

Communicating does not merely mean speaking, for it is often carried out through hand gesturing, eye shifting, eyebrows raising, winking, body leaning, back slapping, arm punching, or through light signals, as well as a variety of other signs that are part of the culture of a community. Language is but one means of communication, though it is the most outstanding one. Any culture embodies other systems of communication in addition to verbal communication. They convey meanings that may complete, clarify, weaken or add an emotional tone to what is communicated verbally. They may also be used to manage the interaction, that is, for example, to give up the floor or to provide feedback about the listener's attitude: boredom, disbelief, relaxation, admiration. The non-verbal mode of communication is the target of such studies as kinesics and proxemics.

2.4.1. Culture and Kinesics

To begin with, kinesics has to do with the non-verbal visual means of communication, namely, gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, body posture, and other forms of body movement (Crystal, op.cit). Expressions of the face and movements of the body can reveal clues as to a person's mood and personality. One's face may clearly mirror one's emotional state: fear, happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, interest, disgust.... Sometimes, we pay more attention to the way a person looks than to what s/he says, and hence the utterance 'the expression of his face told me that he was lying' (Crystal, 1971: 24).

Visual signals operate differently from one culture to another. In some cultures, there is a whole vocabulary of hand signals and waves. Some cultures (like the Italian culture) make extensive use of gestures and facial expressions, while others (like the Japanese) use very few (Crystal, 1997). Besides, the same visual effect may be thought to be universal, while it actually conveys different meanings cross-culturally. For example, gestures, which usually accompany speech and may even replace it in some communicative interactions, follow (very) different rules in different cultures, and may signify diverse meanings cross–culturally. It is noted that a back-and-forth nod of the head, for example, does not mean "yes" in all cultures; in some communities it rather means the opposite. Other aspects of body language

such as the inclination of the body towards the speaker may express attention in some cultures but not in others (Damen, op.cit). Eye-contact may also vary in significance from one culture to another. In the French culture, for instance, establishing eye-contact in communicative interactions is a must (Zhihong, op.cit); not to do so would either reflect timidity, or insincerity. In China, however, eye-contact especially between males and females may be negatively interpreted, for in normal situations, no eye -contact is made between speakers and hearers (Zhihong, op.cit.). Similarly, in English-speaking countries, direct gazes in communicative interactions are rather considered rude (Keiko, 1991). In the Malay culture, meaningful looks constitute a conventional non-verbal strategy of communication: they may express anger (through a kind of glare), disapproval (by widening the eyes), boredom (by lowering the eyes and turning the head away), (Goddard and Wierzbicka, op.cit.). Sercu (op.cit: 269) so aptly states that people "betray their membership of a particular culture not merely through their accent but also through the way they express or do not express their emotions, the way they stand, the way they look or do not look into the eyes of their communication partner".

2.4.2. Culture and Proxemics

''Proxemics is the study of one's perception and use of space'' (Ivannia, 1996:32), i.e., it studies how physically close to each other people may be, when communicating with one another in different cultures . It is mainly determined by the culture one belongs to. Different cultures have different proxemic systems; for instance, when conversing, North Americans observe a respected space, while South Americans stay very close to each other – privacy, thus, is more valued by the former. Proxemics has three major aspects: space, distance, and territory.

Personal space is "an area with invisible boundaries surrounding a person's body into which intruders may not come'' (Sommer, 1979: 26; in Ivannia, ibid.). British people, for example, maintain a larger space from one another compared to the French. When personal space is violated, people react more or less furiously by defensive gestures, change in posture, and moving away. There are three types of space (Hall, 1959; in Ivannia, ibid.): 'fixed–feature' space, i.e., the way houses, buildings, cities, objects are organized; 'semi–fixed feature' space which is important

in interpersonal interactions given that its use is significant and communicative: it may be a sign of involvement, closeness and warmth, or the opposite, leading to quick withdrawal; and 'informal' space which is related to the distances people unconsciously maintain in interactions. According to Hall (op.cit:32), "informal spatial patterns have distinct bounds and such deep, if unvoiced, significance that they form an essential part of culture. To misunderstand this significance may invite disaster".

Distance is "a relational concept, typically measured in terms of how far one individual is from the other" (Leather, 1978; in Ivannia, op.cit: 33). Individual distance may be outside personal space; when one is alone, individual distance, unlike personal space, is infinite. Personal space may disappear in crowding. According to Hall (op.cit), four types of distance can be identified: 'intimate', 'personal', 'social', and 'public' distance. 'Intimate' distance ranges from body contact to approximately half a meter. This intimate space is used differently in different cultures. For instance, North Americans feel discomfort when a proper distance is not respected by their interlocutors, and hence the expressions "get your face out of mine" and "he shook his fist in my face." Costa Ricans and Arabs, on the other hand, feel uneasiness when their interlocutors stand far from them, and hence the utterance "I don't bite" or "I don't eat". 'Personal' distance may be close when it allows one to touch the other, or far when it does not. 'Social' distance ranges from four to twelve feet. It is the casual interaction distance between people in business meetings, classrooms and impersonal social affairs. Physical objects such as desks, tables, and counters serve as barriers to keep this distance between people. It is believed that the Arabs' social distance is the Westerners' intimate one. 'Public' distance suits interaction with strangers or large audiences. As previously mentioned , cultures can be subdivided into two types : ' high - contact' cultures , the cases of the Arabic, Latin American, Greek, Turkish, French, Italians cultures, and 'low- contact 'cultures like the Chinese, Japanese, Thai, German, Dutch and North American cultures. The former generally keep small distances one from the other, whereas the latter maintain large spaces among themselves, while interacting.

Territory is the third aspect of proxemics. It refers to "any area controlled and defended by an individual or group of individuals with emphasis on physical possession" (Ivannia, op.cit: 33). Leather (op.cit) identifies four types of territory: 'public' territories, i.e., for everybody such as restaurants ; 'home' territories for

relatives and family members; 'interaction' territories for informal meetings like a local gym; and 'body' territories, i.e. , the space we occupy ourselves, the space we claim and protect, like the case of a student in class and a father at home.

It should be noted that the choice of verbal and / or non-verbal patterns of communicative behaviour depends on the socio-cultural situation in question; they co-exist alongside one another. Worth noting as well is the correlation existing between these two modes of communication, in that cultures which curb the verbal expression of interpersonal feelings and emotions are low-contact cultures, where interlocutors are supposed not to touch or directly look at one another, and vice versa.

Conclusion

Culture shapes one's thoughts and experiences as well as one's sense of identity and worldview. It regulates one's attitudes and behaviours, linguistic and non-linguistic. It follows that, in communicative interactions, knowledge about the other's cultural (or sub-cultural) assumptions, beliefs, values, norms and expectations is more than needed for mutual understanding. In the modern world of today, people have little choice but to communicate interculturally, being linked by satellites and webs, hence the significance of 'intercultural communicative competence'. The relevance of this discussion to FL teaching / learning will be tackled in chapters three and four.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PLACE OF CULTURE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Introduction

In the previous chapter we saw that language and culture are inextricably tied, that language use is meaningful only in a context, and culture is part of such context. One important implication is that language cannot be taught without its culture. Today, some language teaching professionals believe that culture teaching is an indispensable component in language pedagogy: "It is a truism to say that teaching language is teaching culture" (Kramsch, 1993:177).

Is culture that crucial in language teaching / learning? Is it really important to do more than what is (or used to be) done in language classrooms? Would it not be detrimental for learners to learn about a culture other than their own? Does the dichotomy EFL (English as a Foreign Language) / ESL (English as a Second Language) matter in this regard?

The goal of this chapter is to throw light on the place of culture in the language classroom. Different types of culture will be defined, and their relevance to FL teaching /learning substantiated. The way the cultural component has been handled in the major language teaching approaches and methods that have characterized the field over the course of time is also examined.

1. Approaches to Culture in Foreign Language Teaching

Notwithstanding the inseparability of language and culture, the FC is not always 'welcome' in the FL class. Some teaching professionals put forward heated arguments against incorporating it in language courses and textbooks. Others believe it to be a 'taken-for granted' component in FL teaching, for several other arguments.

1.1. Against Culture Teaching

To begin with, Altan (1995) thinks that FC – based situations such as "finding a flat in Manchester", "purchasing a pet", "playing rugby", "watching a game of cricket", … and their ingrained values, beliefs, and norms are irrelevant to the learners' native environment and background. Coursebooks depicting the culture of, for example, English speakers are, in his opinion, "stubbornly Anglo-centric" (p 59). Moreover, it is thought that teaching the literary and cultural aspects of a FL is of little use in a world where FLs are basically needed for science, technology, business and

international communication. On these grounds, the FC as a target is unfit for today's schools and universities; it does not meet their needs and aspirations.

Further, FC – based textbooks are, for Altan, culturally based in the sense that they implicitly or explicitly belittle the learners' NC. In the specific context of Africa, Turum-Barima (1986: 92) writes:" the impression is given that Africa has been 'all void or full of sin and shame' and must be filled with European knowledge and ideas". Altan raises the issue of the likely incompatibility or conflict between NC and FC, the fact which makes learning the latter a threat to the former, in that one runs the risk of having one's own culture overwhelmed and mind warped, when immersed in a new cultural system. In other words, it is thought that instruction in a FC would be detrimental, since it would entail reshaping their patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving to fit the FC patterns. Holly (op. cit) explains that learning a FL whose corresponding culture is politically and economically dominant usually results in what he calls "ideological colonisation"; by this he means "not a willing submission but, rather, a hopeless sense of inadequacy in the face of vaunted excellence. It is 'alienation' in the basic sense of a loss of self-confidence to an 'other' set of experiences which are felt to be somehow superior" (p16). He states that, in the contemporary world, English is the best example of a language serving as a means of ideological, economic, technical and military imperialism – an evil influence leading to Westernization. In the context of FL teaching, Altan writes: "While it is a known fact that foreign language learners are usually interested in learning about the people who speak the language they are learning, this interest is often lessened due to an underlying fear of losing one's native culture" (p 58). The Western culture is not always depicted as a 'superior', 'more powerful', 'more dominating' and 'more compelling' world than the developing world's. It is equally viewed as 'racist', 'reductionist', 'prejudiced' and 'hostile', conflicting with the learners' native cultural codes and values, particularly in the Arab world (Obediat, 1997). It is thus a concern over the gradual Westernization of the younger generation, accompanied by a perceived loss of native and traditional values, which make some language teaching professionals decide against FC teaching.

In case the TL is English, Altan advocates the perspective of 'international' English, a variety of English that is emptied of the English culture themes, beliefs, values and norms. Similarly, for Post and Rathet (1996), learning English, nowadays, means learning a lingua franca, just like what used to be the case of learning Latin in

Europe, during the medieval period. Actually, English enjoys the status of an international language used for specific purposes, in various cultural environments. It is no longer viewed as a vehicle of the English–speaking people's culture and way of life. Put otherwise, it no longer belongs uniquely to them, but to anybody who knows it. Through time, it has been emptied of its cultural connotations and particularities. Some educators refer to teaching English as a purely 'functional' or 'instrumental' tool: "nothing more than a linguistic means to certain ends, such as fuller employment and a stronger economy, as in tourism, international banking, […] [so that] the cultures behind the language can be 'contained' and the unwanted side-effects of English learning reduced." (Hyde, op.cit:296). Hyde observes that language as a system of communication is to be distinguished from the ideology it is used to convey. It is this ideology which can be dangerous or harmful, according to him:

> The idea that any particular language is intrinsically 'good' or 'bad' is discarded. Language is seen as a tool for communication, and as such is not to be confused with ideology, that is, the subject matter of specific messages that people choose to convey through the medium of that particular language. To believe that a language per se is dangerous is to hold a confused and ill–founded notion of language.

This ESP (English for special or specific purposes) approach encourages the learners' 'instrumental' rather than 'integrative' motivation which denotes the learner's identification with the FC and its people.

Other educators recommend the 'nativization' of the TL, that is to say, to use it to reflect the local NC, to make up a kind of "Algerian English", for example. Altan (op.cit:58) is for incorporating elements from the learners' NC in the FL teaching curriculum: "if cultural elements of learned native countries are integrated into ELT materials, these elements will certainly strengthen the learner psychologically for the learning situation to be encountered". For Post and Rathet, the adoption of the learners' NC as cultural content in FL classrooms does not only enhance their self-confidence and motivation to learn, providing them with the opportunity to explore their own identities and interests through a new 'linguistic environment', but it also supports the findings of the schemata theory research, that familiar content positively affects the learners' comprehension and assimilation of the TL, and vice versa. Thus,

to use a foreign cultural content instead means "to overburden our students with both new linguistic content and new cultural information simultaneously " (Post and Rathet, op.cit:12). In a like manner, Altan (op.cit) notes that a foreign cultural input would engender further difficulties for FL learners to cope with, in addition to the already existing linguistic complexities: "passages and units with foreign cultural themes and topics not only cause difficulties in comprehension, but actually seem to increase misunderstanding and confusion about the non-native culture" (p 59). He adds that learners seek just 'to learn' English and not 'to master' it. Only the latter, he argues, requires knowledge of the target culture (TC): "there needs to be an understanding of the difference between mastering and learning a foreign language. Mastery necessitates native-speaker proficiency in language use and cultural knowledge […] most learners do not aspire to become masters of another language, they simply desire to function with communicative fluency" (p 60).

1.2. For Culture Teaching

1.2.1. Culture and Language Teaching

''Except for *language*, *learning*, and *teaching*, there is perhaps no more important concept in the field of TESOL [Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages] than culture. Implicitly or explicitly ESL teachers face it in everything they do'' (Atkinson, op. cit: 625). For language teaching professionals and lay people alike, learning a FL is not merely mastering an academic subject, but it more appropriately denotes learning a new means of communication, a new culture. It is now increasingly recognized that it is impossible to operate a divorce between language learning and learning about the TL culture (Valdes, 1986; Robinson, 1988; Byram, 1989; Harrison, 1990; Kramsch, 1993); in De Jong's words (op.cit:17), "learning norms and values is part of the language learning process". In the eighties, Hirsh (in Malkina, 1995) advanced the notion of "cultural literacy" acquired essentially through language learning. In return, cultural aspects make of language learning a meaningful, rich and versatile experience.

Though the concept of 'communicative competence' has highlighted the role of context (immediate and large) in language use, and hence in language learning/ teaching, it did not provide genuine help in language classrooms. Attention shifted to

'cultural competence' on the basis of which language patterns and structures should be taught with their culture-specific meanings. Many language teachers, nowadays, put it as their goal to include culture in their courses. However, as reported by De Jong (op.cit:8), many other teachers still focus on vocabulary and grammar, while "learning proper behaviour in another cultural environment should receive at least the same amount of attention". In a like manner, Thanasoulas (op.cit) notes that though language pedagogy has transcended the behaviourist and structuralist era, some of its old beliefs are still sensed in modern classroom methodologies and FL curricula, undermining the role culture should play in FL courses. He defines FL learning 'deterministically' in culture terms: "foreign language learning is foreign culture learning, and, in one form or another, culture has, even implicitly, been taught in the foreign language classroom – if for different reasons" (p 2). He insists, further, that "language teaching is culture teaching and teachers do their students a great disservice in placing emphasis on the former, to the detriment of the latter" (p 7).

1.2.2. Arguments For Culture Teaching

Proponents of the cultural component in FL teaching usually advance one of two central arguments. The first argument has to do with the very nature of language: linguistic forms acquire unique colouring and bias, depending upon the beliefs, values and practices of the speakers. This intrinsic interweaving of language and culture makes it impossible to separate them in teaching / learning. Hence, dealing with the TL culture is indispensable, if not unavoidable, in all stages of the language teaching / learning process. The second argument is geared to instrumentality, in that cultural understanding is advocated as a prerequisite to communicate effectively with the TL speakers, and to function appropriately in the cultural context in question. Another argument that is often put forward, in this regard, has to do with psychopedagogy. It is believed that cultural pursuit stimulates language learning, in that it awakens interest and curiosity even in less–motivated learners, broadens their intellectual horizons, develops their imaginative powers and critical thinking, and sustains their motivation to work at a productive rate.

1.2.2.1. Interdependence of Culture and Language

Byram (1989) has explored the role of cultural studies in FL education. To him, as well as to other scholars, cultural awareness contributes to language awareness and proficiency. He believes that a language curriculum necessarily includes (whether implicitly or explicitly) elements of the culture of its speakers, because language invariably reflects their knowledge and perception of the world and their cultural concepts and values. Thus, one cannot learn a language and disregards its culture: "to speak a language is to speak a culture, to exchange language which embodies a particular way of thinking and living" (Byram, 1992:169). According to Byram (ibid: 170), cultures share 'translatable' similarities, but there are as well cultural differences which need to be learned, to be understood: "In learning the group's language, an outsider has also to learn new ways of thinking and living, some of which may contradict those peculiar to his own culture". In a like manner, Seelye (op.cit: 6) makes it clear that "unless the student is learning the language in the target culture, the cultural referents necessary to understanding a native speaker must be learned in addition". Corder (op.cit:77) states that as long as there is an overlap between cultures, as long as translation from and into languages is possible, learning a FL is not an impossible task, but is more or less difficult, depending on how close are one's NL / TL, and NC / TC:

> The learning of a second language does clearly involve some degree of recategorization ; […] learning a second language does involve learning to see the world as the speakers of that language habitually see it, does involve learning their culture. But this is not an impossible task […]. Learning a new language is emphatically not a question of acquiring a new set of names for the same things; it is not just the learning of an automatic translation device, the internalizing of a bilingual dictionary. On the other hand, learning a language does not involve learning a new 'worldview'.

It can be implied that Corder adopts a middle position: he acknowledges the fact that a language reflects a culture, and that cultures are different, but they are not categorically and totally different to make learning a new language impossible, or to equate it to acquiring a drastically new worldview. There are similarities between cultures, as there are differences. After all, we are all human beings who have similar needs and who live in the same world.

Tang (1999) also subscribes to the view that language and culture are two sides of the same coin. For her, the question of including (or not) culture in the FL classroom is pointless: "questions of this sort and research of this sort appear to me to presuppose that culture can be separated from language, that culture is something that needs to be introduced into the language classroom and to the learner, and that learner and teacher have some sort of a choice as to whether 'cultural integration' is to be included in the syllabus or not." (p1). In her opinion, language is not merely interwoven with culture, but "language is culture" (p1). Speaking a language implies thinking in that language, hence taking on the identity of its speakers. She suggests going beyond the question of the inclusion (or not) of culture in a FL curriculum, to consider "deliberate immersion" versus "nondeliberate exposure" to it. In the fifties, this question was analyzed by H., Nostrand (1956; in F.B., Nostrand, 1974:196) who put it plainly that:

> we cannot help teaching the foreign culture… As we teach a people's language or literature, we unavoidably form our students' ideas of that people's way of life. The factual curiosity of our students impels them to find answers to their common-sense questions in whatever we say, even if we were never able to indulge in a single explicit generalization about the foreign people's values, or worldview, or strengths or weaknesses. What is worse, our students are bound to practice the fallacy of judging any fragment of the foreign culture as though it were intended to fit into their own scheme, unless we are prepared to help them draw an informed comparison instead.

According to Valdes (op.cit: 20), in a FL curriculum, language and culture always go together "like Sears α Roebuck or Mark's α Spenser". From the very beginning, culture is introduced along with language, even though some teachers may ignore or deny it: (p 20)

> 'From the first day of the beginning class, culture is at the forefront. Whatever approach, method, or technique is used, greetings are usually first on the agenda. How can any teacher fail to see the cultural nature of the way people greet each other in any place in any language? Not calling it a lesson in culture does not prevent its being one. Every language lesson, from repetition drills, and fill-in-the-blanks to sophisticated compositions in advanced classes, must be about something, and almost invariably that something will be cultural, no matter what disguise it travels under."

This is identical to what is advanced by Ladu (op.cit:129): "Language cannot be separated from the culture in which it is deeply embedded. Any authentic use of the language, any reading of original texts, any listening to native speakers will introduce cultural concomitants into the classroom whether the teacher is conscious of them or not. By not making them explicit, the teacher permits misconceptions to develop in the students' minds". In other words, mere fluency in the production of FL utterances without any awareness of their socio-cultural implications, or reading texts without a realization of the underlying values and assumptions is not language learning. If it is the case, that culture is unavoidable in a language class, why not making the most of it, for the ultimate benefit of the learner.

1.2.2.2. Interdependence of Culture and Communication

The impact of cultural knowledge on the success of intercultural communication is undeniable. Misunderstandings and communication difficulties may be solved or alleviated by the resort to further information-giving and-requesting on both sides of the communicative interaction; "does not cross-cultural communication involve a lot of give-and-take on both sides of the cultural divide?" (White, op.cit: 201). Nevertheless, one's effectiveness as an intercultural communicator is in part a function of one's knowledge of other peoples and their cultures. One needs to adopt a culturally appropriate style to meet the expectations of foreign interlocutors; for instance, to speak up or in a low tone, to make or not eye contact, to be more or less confident, to state one's opinions, to act dependently or independently from others. Lack of cultural knowledge results in inappropriate language use, misunderstanding, and breakdowns in communication. Accordingly, why not designing a teaching curriculum that would meet these needs and give learners insights into what communicating in a new culture might be like. Peck (1984:1) states:

> Knowledge of the codes of behavior of another people is important if today's foreign language student is to communicate fully in the target language. Without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete. For FL students, language study seems senseless if they know nothing about the people who speak it or the country in which it is spoken. Language learning should be more than the manipulation of syntax and lexicon.

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1.2.2.3. Culture and Learning Motivation

Kitao (op.cit: 4) reporting the outcomes of a culture training programme notes: ''they [trained learners] demonstrated a more international outlook with greater understanding of the target culture and they understood themselves better, showed more self-confidence, and had increased motivation for foreign language study''. In other words, the benefits of teaching about the TL culture, as revealed by this work, are two-fold: to enable learners to have a better understanding of others and of themselves, but also do motivate men to learn more of the TL. According to the experience of Mavi (1996:54) in FL teaching, ''teenaged pupils become more motivated when they learn about the life style of the foreign country whose language they are studying''. Research in the field of language learning and motivation has shown that among the most important variables that affect learners' motivation, positive perceptions of the TL people and culture hold a major place. According to Niederhauser's (1997:11) experience, ''bringing cultural content into the language classroom is one of the best ways of increasing motivation. In a society in which the conflict between globalization and nationalism remains unresolved, many members of the younger generation greatly appreciate the opportunity to learn about life in other countries and to exchange ideas with teachers who are sensitive to both cultures''. In Bal's study (1971; in Kitao, op.cit), two groups of American learners of German were compared. The first group relied only on a textbook to study the TL, but the second had an additional cultural instruction. It was found out that in the former, three learners dropped the language course, while no one did so in the latter. Besides, learners who were taught about culture achieved better (in terms of grades) than those who were not. It can be inferred that learning about FCs may serve as a motive to learning FLs. Kitao gives an account of a number of other studies: Keller and Ferguson (1976), Klayman (1976), Leward (1974), Steiner (1971) which all demonstrate that learning about a FC results in learners' short – and long – term motivation to study the corresponding TL. Culture may serve as well to arouse the learners' instant motivation, giving light relief, or pervading lessons, where language learning is sometimes felt to be boring or limited: "When pace lags, when the eyes drop, when the heat comes, the smart teacher will have the cultural unit" (Steiner, ibid.). This is due to the fact that cultural matters generally stimulate learners' interest: (Kitao, op.cit: 7)

> Students like activities based on culture, including singing, dancing, role playing, skits, doing research on countries and people, etc. […] there was a high correlation between the FL which students were studying and their choice of foreign countries to visit or live in. The study of culture increases students' curiosity about and interest in the target countries, their people, and their culture.

For Valdes (op.cit: 21), recognizing and highlighting the cultural component in a language lesson promotes learning and completes its usefulness:

> How much more effective for the language learner if the teacher is cognizant of the cultural nature of what he is teaching and adds interpretation, explanation of underlying values, along with word order, tense, and aspect. Attention to cultural details doubles the usefulness of the lesson, not only in adding another dimension, but also in making the lesson more interesting and therefore easier to learn.

Likewise, Kitao (op.cit: 7) thinks that culture instruction makes of language learning a meaningful and a purposeful enterprise, facilitating comprehension and assimilation: "studying culture makes studying foreign languages real. Students have difficulty relating to the people of another culture without knowing anything about them. […] explaining cultural aspects of language would help students relate the abstract sounds and forms of a language to real people and places". F.B., Nostrand (op.cit: 200) was among the first scholars to draw language teachers' attention to this fact: "It makes sense to teach something of the lifestyle of the people at the same time that one is teaching the language. […] in many texts the dialogs, the sentences used as examples, and the reading materials sound contrived and artificial. Lacking cultural authenticity, they are, in my view, dull". Put otherwise, culture contextualises language learning and language use, brings authenticity to the language class and reduces its artificiality.

1.2.2.4. Intercultural Understanding

Knowing about FCs promotes cross-cultural understanding, tolerance of diversity, and perhaps even a liking for others and others' cultural ways, overcoming stereotypes and ethnocentrism: (Peck, op.cit:1)

> Humanistically, the study of different cultures aids us in getting to know different people which is a necessary prelude to understanding and respecting other peoples and their ways of life. It helps to open our students' eyes to the similarities and differences in the life of various cultural groups. Today, most of our students live in a monolingual and monocultural environment. Consequently, they become culture-bound individuals who tend to make premature and inappropriate value judgments. This can cause them to consider the foreign peoples whose language they are trying to learn as very peculiar and even ill-mannered.

Culture study enlarges the learners' horizons and general knowledge, being a basic part of their general education. The Islamic thinker Imara (2003) points out the need to read about others, to raise one's awareness about them, their civilization, culture and religion. This awareness is, according to him, a first step to overcome their potential hostilities. In other words, he urges one to consider others' standpoints to be able to defend and protect oneself, if need be. On the other hand, he asserts that it is only through the others' view of oneself (even if 'these others' are one's enemies) that one may come to truly know oneself and one's failings, hence the need to open up to the world, rather than be isolated and restrained within the limits of one's culture, language and civilization. This window on the world will be a mirror to reflect one's persona, to cite Goethe (in Limbach, op.cit: 25) "Compare yourself! Recognize who you are!". This means that one can better understand one's thoughts and behaviours, when comparing and contrasting them with the others'. In this respect, Tavares and Cavalcanti (1996:18) explain: "the development of people's cultural awareness leads us to more critical thinking as citizens with political and social understanding of our own and other communities". Indeed, as one learns more about other people from various cultures, one also discovers more about oneself. Elements of one's own culture one is not actually aware of would be brought out when the others' models are studied. In other words, the experience of entering a new culture prompts many questions not only about 'others', but also about oneself and one's NC; it points to differences and similarities which question or confirm one's beliefs

and feelings. It is what strikes one most in another culture which will be most revealing about oneself and one's society and its functioning mode.

As far back as 1956, H., Nostrand (in F.B., Nostrand, op.cit:195-196) wrote: "Surely it would advance the understanding between peoples, as well as self-knowledge, if we could make comprehensible the essential content of each culture…". Byram, Zarate and Neuner (1997: 66) deem it 'essential' that in FL learning "the learner receives information about the people of the target country, about the way they organise their daily lives (routines and rituals), about their ideas, attitudes and beliefs etc., because this will help the learner to reflect upon his own position (similarities or differences) and come to terms with possible communication "traps" in the foreign language (misunderstandings, blockades; etc.)". For Brière (1984: 563), knowledge about FCs enhances one's sense of self and awareness of one's own identity:

> It is obviously not possible to become aware of one's own identity as a member of a national culture without making contact with foreign cultures. One must leave the United States intellectually or physically in order to become aware of what it means to be an American. Such an objective is so important that it should stand as sufficient justification for making the study of foreign languages and cultures a requirement in American schools.

Cortazzi and Jin (op.cit: 219) affirm that intercultural understanding leads to the "stabilization" of one's sense of identity: "A cultural focus on intercultural competence has communicative ends, but there are further important advantages: it may not only encourage the development of identity, but also encourage the awareness of others' identities and an element of stabilization in a world of rapid change".

Being teachers of language and culture and encouraging reflection on self and on the FC is "being much more than teachers of language knowledge and skills"; it denotes undertaking "the responsibilities of *educating* young people" (Byram, 1992: 175). Harmer (1991; in Cheung, 2001: 60) puts it so aptly that "language teaching is not just about teaching language". This is to say that it is as well about educating. Porto (2000: 90) thinks that teachers have to conceive of their role as being educators and not just language trainers, for, according to her, "language teaching is bound to be educational". The FL classroom is ideal for cultural education since the

subject matter lends itself for the discussion of everyday issues and of a variety of topics that make up the TC. Porto asserts that the cultural component plays a more influential role in a language class than actually recognized. Suffice it to say that it contributes to the overall learners' linguistic, social and cognitive development.

1.3. Our Viewpoint

We hold the viewpoint of those who believe in the interlocking of language and culture; hence, learning the latter along with the former is a matter of fact. Learners do not need to study the FL only to act appropriately in intercultural communicative interactions, but also owing to the fact that culture is an inherent feature of language, and its understanding enables a better knowledge and use of language itself. In addition, learning another culture enlarges the learners' general knowledge, and incites them to understand better their own culture. However, we do not agree with those who believe that to learn a FL and its corresponding culture means to take on the foreign identity of its speakers. An Algerian, for instance, does not become 'suddenly' French or "less Algerian" when speaking or learning French or about the culture of the French, as long as one knows who one is and what one's NL and NC are. Learning a new culture, as noted by Byram (1992:170), does not mean letting down one's own culture, for by the time one engages in learning a new language, s/he would have internalized a set of values, beliefs, pertaining to the language and the culture of the people s/he belongs to:

> For when learners discover, in the part of the circle of culture which does not overlap with their own, contradictions of and differences from the values and meanings of their own culture, they cannot simply cast off their own and adopt the other. Since their own identity is in part formed through their internalisation, in secondary socialisation, of the values and meanings of the social group to which they belong, they cannot simply 'put aside' one set of values and meanings as if it were separable 'cultural baggage'

Along these lines, Porto (op.cit: 92) states: "although language learning may involve awareness of different dimensions in the perception of reality, this does not entail undermining one's values. Language teaching does not alter the learner's cultural perspective dramatically, for one may appreciate different values and still remain within one's culture ".

We do not exclude the possibility that a language may be used to refer to cultures other than its own, as well as to international concepts and phenomena. A target FL can, for example, be used to introduce learners to aspects of their own NC, though not as perfectly and authentically as when the NL is used. This is not to be understood as an urge to 'nativize' the TL, which is to curtail it to a tool to refer exclusively to one's NC. This nativization process is, in our viewpoint, only conceivable in contexts where the TL is a second language, enjoying a specific historical background. In the case of English, reference is being made to regions which witnessed a past English-speaking colonist, i.e., ESL countries. And even in these contexts, we believe that such a 'nativized' language would not escape artificiality. At the same time, we cannot concede that a language can be 'emptied' of its cultural content. In Hyde's (op.cit: 297) opinion, "stripping English of its cultural baggage would also strip students of invaluable knowledge". It would mean also causing language to lose its essence, in other words, "dehumanizing" it. This disassociation of language and culture is possible only theoretically, for if this is manageable in class, how could it be so outside, in a world essentially characterized by a revolutionary global information technology? (Hyde, op.cit: 297):

> Information, mostly in English, is flooding the world, through advertisements, magazines, newspapers, books, instruction manuals, satellite television, films and rock music, videos, radio, telephones, the post, fax and telex machines, computers and information technology in general, tourism and migration for economic and educational reasons, and business relations.

Byram, Zarate and Neuner (op.cit: 57) put it aptly that "there is no foreign language teaching without socio-cultural content. Even if the socio-cultural component is not defined as an explicit cognitive objective or the target language is used as a lingua franca it is represented in all other factors of competence".

It appears that both the ESP instrumental approach and the nativization approach do not offer a sensible solution to the issue of what culture to teach in the framework of FLT. Being based on 'censorship', they fail to address the core of the question of cultural imperialism. They above all ignore the intimate relationship a language has with its culture. One way to cope with cultural imperialism in FLT, in my opinion, is by developing the learners' analytic and critical skills with respect to

cultural inputs. This presupposes a firm and a critical awareness of one's own language and culture.[1]

According to Brooks (op.cit), language teachers need not be exhorted to teach culture since this need has long been felt by them, though not always actually applied. What they rather need is to see clearly what is meant by culture, and how it can be incorporated in their daily tasks. They need as well materials specially designed for this purpose, and tests to assist them in evaluating learners' progress in this area.

2. Culture in the Most Common Language Teaching Approaches / Methods

It may be thought that the introduction of culture in language courses is relatively recent. However, a review of relevant literature indicates that culture has always been present in language instruction. Indeed, as far back as a century ago, Jespersen (1904; in Kitao, op.cit) recognized the value of culture stating that the most important goal of language courses is teaching about another culture. Nevertheless, this goal has not been given due care until more recent years, namely in the seventies, when it was considered a 'new' tendency in language pedagogy, just like the individualization of language teaching trend. Even then, the question of culture teaching was not duly investigated, and culture did not play a significant role in language classes.

2.1. The Grammar–Translation Method

At the time of the grammar–translation method, namely in the nineteenth century, a FL was not studied for communicative purposes. Rather, FL teaching was devoted to reading and studying literature. One of the goals was to shape the learner's personality by introducing him / her to the target cultural, civilizational heritage in an "international [European] community" (Byram, Zarate and Neuner op.cit: 61). Literature had the basic role of depicting the outstanding figures, historical events and achievements of the TC.

The grammar–translation method, thus, embraced a 'civilization' approach, that is it only considered capital 'C' or high culture. This cultural component was, in addition, an autonomous part of the curriculum. Texts were explored for their

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[1] This point will be further discussed in chapter four.

grammatical (rather than cultural) value, and they (indirectly) fostered a stereotypical view of the TL culture (Damen, op.cit: 255): the

> civilization approach reflected stereotypic conceptions more frequently than it did ethnographic reality. Few who struggled with such texts escaped confusion and disappointment when they moved from the gallery of one-dimensional natives who graced the pages of their textbooks to the real world. Students searched in vain for those merry-making, carefree Italians, eternally dancing Mexicans, Indian-fighting American cowboys, or blue-frocked, sabot-clad Frenchmen.

2.2. The Direct Method

Some scholars believe that the significance of culture in FL teaching began with the direct method, at the end of the nineteenth century. The socio-cultural component was dealt with explicitly in FL instruction. Then, the goal was to promote international communication and trade exchange in a Europe characterized by competition and imperialism. Focus was on knowledge about the TC geographical, historical, political, economic and technical facts, and their comparison with one's own cultural data.

2.3. The Audio–lingual Method

Heusinkveld (op.cit) observes that the teaching of culture before the sixties was 'sporadic' at best. It was assumed that the study of language leads automatically to culture understanding and appreciation. In the sixties and seventies, the significance of culture in language learning / teaching developed with the audio-lingual (audio–visual) approach, when the relationship between culture and language was pointed out by structural linguists and anthropologists. The need of cultural knowledge to understand even a simple poem was highlighted. It was demonstrated that language structures are culture-loaded and their use depends on cultural rules, for instance, the use of pronouns in Spanish and Japanese, and the use of singular and plural forms in English (countable versus uncountable). It was also agreed that similar words have different cultural connotations in different languages and cultures.

In USA, the aim of FL education in the late sixties was to promote 'international understanding' that can be achieved through learning about other

cultures and studying other languages. This need of linguistic and cultural learnings had been particularly felt with the decline of isolationism, namely during and after world war two, when American soldiers were sent abroad and interacted with speakers of the other languages, and of different cultural backgrounds. The army, then, designed a training programme to enable the Americans to bridge the linguistic and cultural gaps they had with their enemies. The increase of necessity of intercultural communication resulted in the increase of the need to teach about others' cultures. Learning other languages and about other cultures did not only help the Americans to understand others and communicate effectively with them, but also to understand themselves and each other, namely their own individual backgrounds characterized by bilingualism or multilingualism, and hence biculturalism or multiculturalism. Since the sixties, bilingual / multilingual education has been encouraged in USA, but also all over the world.

At that time, scholars like Hall, Nostrand, Seelye and Brooks toiled to make the FC more accessible to FL learners. It became the object of language teaching conferences to investigate questions concerning what should be taught in the name of culture and its objectives. The very definition of culture was a crucial question to be handled, let alone designing appropriate strategies for incorporating it in an already crowded language syllabus. As previously mentioned (p 6), there were three hundred definitions examined by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (op.cit). While the type of culture drawing attention then was capital 'C' culture (i.e., art and literature), small 'c' culture (that is information about everyday life) became the focal point in teaching. Brooks (op.cit) was the first to distinguish capital 'C' and small 'c' culture, and it is mainly thanks to his seminal works and writings that attention in the language classroom shifted from teaching literature, geography and history, to the more anthropological facet of culture, namely the lifestyles of everyday people. Hence, culture began to be valued for the sake of language learning and not for the study of literature. Thanasoulas (op.cit: 4) insightfully puts it that Brooks "helped dispel the myth that culture […] is an intellectual gift bestowed only upon the elite. Admittedly, the main thrust of his work was to make people aware that culture resides in the very fabric of their lives –their modus vivendi, their beliefs, assumptions and attitudes– rather than a preoccupation with aesthetic reflections or high falutin ideas". Rivers (1968) suggested six categories of objectives to FL education, among which two pertain to culture. Culture teaching techniques developed by that time were 'culture

capsules' (Tayler and Sorensen, 1961), 'culture assimilators'(Piedler, Mitchelle and Triandis,1971), and 'culture clusters' (Meade and Morain, 1973) (in Kitao, op.cit.). There were even attempts by some scholars (like Nostrand, 1974) to tackle the question of testing cultural learnings[1].

Notwithstanding all such developments, Byram, Zarate and Neuner see that the audio–lingual method pertains to "the pragmatic concept of FL teaching". Though the cultural component raised in importance in the audio-lingual class, it was subordinated under other objectives related to language usage. Small 'c' culture related to day-to-day interaction emerged as an aspect of FL learning, but it was handled implicitly, mainly through visual aids and vocabulary words. The cultural content was, furthermore, reduced to serve some pragmatic social roles (tourist, consumer). The aim was to develop in learners a set of habits in relation to some socio-cultural behaviours, to make the learners 'do as the natives do'. The outcome was highly inadequate: "sociocultural aspects have a service–function for the development of linguistic systems and skills, and the result is a rather superficial, random, stereotyped, and sometimes even distorted representation of sociocultural features of the target language" (Byram, Zarate and Neuner, op.cit: 63). Put simply, the structural approach gave priority to language usage over language use; the result was that "the content of language teaching could remain virtually context-free" (Clarke and Clarke, op.cit: 32), and hence culture-free.

2.4. Communicative Language Teaching

Beginning from the seventies, culture gained more significance in the framework of communicative language teaching (CLT), where major importance is conferred on the context and situation of language use. The instructional goal has become to enable learners to communicate within the cultural context of the TL, that is, to develop 'communicative competence' in the TL. Then, F.B., Nostrand (op. cit: 193) wrote:

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[1] Culture teaching / testing objectives and techniques will be tackled in chapter four.

> As I write this in the fall of 1973, the teaching of culture in the foreign-language classroom has been accepted as part of the curriculum by a great number of teachers over a large part of the country [USA]. Students have shown that they are interested in this area of learning, not only in relation to foreign languages but, to the other disciplines. Many professors and teachers now acknowledge that the lifestyle and the value system of a foreign people is a legitimate part of a foreign language and even of a literature program.

Canale and Swain (1980:31; in Lessard Clouston, 1997:1) think that the communicative approach allows for "a more natural integration" of language and culture, than the preceding approaches.

However, worth mentioning is the fact that CLT was in its beginnings devoted to the promotion of the pragmatic, functional perspective in language teaching. It investigated learners' communicative needs in socio-cultural situations (at the post office, shopping, at work, at the university…). The topic-areas dealt with basically reinforced these functional objectives. Their socio-cultural content served merely as background information to communicative activities. Thus, culture was not explicitly and systematically taught. In addition, the grammatical aspect was still an operational factor in content selection and presentation, the fact which results in a distorted image of the TC. Byram, Zarate and Neuner (op.cit:65) demonstrate this point stating:

> In our research on the influence of grammar on the presentation of topics in textbooks of English as a foreign language we have discovered that in a given topic – e.g. the presentation of New York– entirely different aspects are displayed when combined with different grammatical aspects, e.g. present perfect, gerund, passive voice or indirect speech – with the result that socio-cultural information remains superficial, that it excludes almost all controversial or critical questions, and that it concentrates on aspects reinforcing the preconceived stereotyped positive image of living in that big city.

In the eighties and nineties, the value of culture learning in language teaching was further investigated (Valdes, 1986; Robinson, 1985; Damen, 1987; Kramsch, 1993). The growth of relevant disciplines such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics and ethnography resulted in an increased focus on culture and culture learning. A new trend in FL teaching research emerged under the heading of 'cultural studies'

(Byram, 1989). New insights considered the importance of developing learners' comprehension and analytic skills to enable them to function appropriately as 'foreigners' in a new culture, and not only with respect to a set of fixed situations and roles. What is more, a common core of universal socio-cultural experiences, including topics as personal identity, family, education, work, health care, communication, values was elaborated (Byram, Zarate and Neuner). In this light, attention was drawn to the need to teach the socio-cultural component in an explicit way. It was more and more realized that FL learners need to be made knowledgeable about the people of the TC, their daily life routines and rituals, their beliefs, their values, and should be encouraged to reflect upon them as well as upon their native ones (similarities, differences…). This would be conducive to empathy and acceptance of others. Thus, by that time, the importance of teaching culture in FL instruction was widely acknowledged, and culture together with communication became the two cornerstones of FL education. From then on, culture teaching continued to be improved.

2.5. The Intercultural Approach

Traditional culture teaching was restricted to providing the learners with a body of information about the native speakers of the TL and their way of life. It proved to be an inadequate approach to culture teaching. Its perspective is objective culture rather than culture as a social construct, or as the product of subjective perceptions (Kramsch, 1993). It presents facts without catering for means susceptible to stimulate the learners' study and synthesis skills. Besides, culture was essentially defined in behavioural terms. The focus in culture instruction was thus based on the mere description of observable behaviours, such as how to celebrate religious or other feasts, how to do shopping, how to interpret gestures and other forms of body language, without attempting to understand their underlying rules and the conditions of their occurrence.

In the sixties and seventies, intercultural communication scholars such as Brooks, Nostrand and Seelye attempted to find common grounds and set up universal bridges between cultures. Their aim was to bring the FC to the language classroom, and make it more familiar to the language learner. However, their work, which was based on insights from contrastive linguistics, social anthropology and cross-cultural psychology, dealt with culture in structural terms. One structuralist

approach to culture teaching is underlined by the principle of teaching texts from the learners' NC, before proceeding to the TC (Byrnes 1991; in Kramsch, ibid.). Another structuralist approach underlines patterns of meaning common to the TC and NC (Swaffar 1992; in Kramsch, ibid.). These two approaches delineate a linear proceeding from the universal to the particular. Kramsch (ibid: 226) thinks that cross-cultural communication is simultaneously based on both: "The universals can get their proper meaning (or weighting) only from the particular voice of the writer and the particular voice can be listened to and understood only through the universal". In the framework of these approaches, learners are left without means to proceed from the universal to the particular, and from their NC to the TC. One wonders if such a transition is possible.

In the eighties and nineties, that is, in the post – structuralist era, scholars such as Byram (1989) called into question the structuralist approach to cross-cultural teaching. Advances in pragmatics and sociolinguistics were timely to bring in change in the field of language and culture teaching. Teaching professionals advocate in present times an 'intercultural' approach based on reflection upon and an analysis of cultural data, as well as on comparison of TC and NC. Learners do not only need to know about cultural matters. More important is the need to practise what is taught and apply it in actual socio-cultural situations. De Jong (op. cit: 97) explains: ''Knowing lists based on (…) differences between everyday occurrences is not sufficient for the language learner to avoid cultural pitfalls. What is necessary is training in recognition, observation, understanding and participation in situations requiring the use of phrases like these, as well as appropriate non-verbal behaviour''. Learners need also to develop intercultural skills such as gathering one's own information, assessing it critically, taking the other's perspective, to become interculturally competent. Byram (1997: 19) refers, in this regard, to 'learning to learn' or 'savoir apprendre' about another culture, that is, discovery and analysis skills that enable learners to develop by themselves understanding of another culture. Similarly, Seelye (1993) believes that increasing the learners' ability to communicate across cultures means developing in them a set of skills, not just a mass of facts. He points to the importance of 'cultivating' the learners' curiosity about the TC and empathy toward its bearers, and of making them recognize the role of socio-cultural factors in shaping speech and behaviour. Equally crucial, in his opinion, is to develop in learners the ability to assess the validity of a generalization about the TC, and to

search for and to organize cultural data. Kramsch (1993) is for 'a critical language pedagogy' which is based on encouraging the learners to be critical , that is, not to accept passively what is presented to them , to question it , to relate it to their own experiences and worldview , but most of all , to adopt a 'third place' between their NC and TC.

The intercultural approach to language teaching is basically learner–centred. This is reflected in its characteristics as outlined by Byram, Zarate, and Neuner (op.cit). Firstly, the learners' native cultural background and socio-cultural experience are not excluded from the FL teaching class, given their impact on the perception and interpretation of the FC .They may serve as a basis for the selection of topics and the design of activities. Secondly, effective FL use is not merely the result of a 'habit formation' process based on mechanical imitation. Rather, the development of intercultural competence calls for the learners' cognitive skills in that it requires them to think, interpret, analyse, compare, infer and negotiate meanings in a FC. They are supposed to synthesize target cultural elements and their past experiences to form new symbols and meanings. It can be implied that, in the framework of the intercultural approach, culture is not merely regarded in behavioural terms but more importantly in cognitive and symbolic ones (as previously elucidated in chapter one). Thirdly, the development of socio-cultural competence in the TL is embedded in the learners' general socio-cultural competence concerning their world and the world in general. The aim is to achieve a balance between personal and social identity. Fourthly, both 'declarative' and 'procedural' knowledge are catered for in the intercultural approach, i.e., the learners are not only provided with facts and information about the TC people, institutions and achievements, but attention is given as well to developing their understanding and communication skills[1] . Fifthly, content selection criteria are cultural representativity, accessibility and interest[1]. Sixthly, differences between NC and TC are dealt with even at the beginning stage of FL learning notwithstanding their level of difficulty, since they are vital for understanding, communication and survival in a FC. Seventhly, 'metacommunication' defined by Byram, Zarate and Neuner (op.cit: 76) as "discussing the learner's way of perceiving, of creating ideas and images, and of dealing with experiences with the foreign language in situations of comprehension and interaction" is a crucial aspect of

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[1] More about this point will be tackled next chapter.

intercultural FL teaching / learning. On the whole, the intercultural philosophy denotes, by definition, cultural interchange for a better mutual understanding and enrichment. It assumes thus that the cultures involved are all valuable and equal. It is a look upon one's own society and its functioning mode, stimulated by confrontation with other societies and cultures.

New approaches to culture teaching are four, as identified by Kramsch (1993):

- ''Establishing a 'sphere of Interculturality' '', by which is meant an intercultural approach based on reflecting on both NC and TC, as delineated above. According to this approach, "understanding a foreign culture requires putting that culture in relation with one's own" (Kramsch, ibid: 205).

- ''Teaching culture as an interpersonal process'', according to which, teachers should not merely present facts about the TC but should more importantly provide for ways to enable learners to understand these facts and all what is 'other' or 'foreign'.

- ''Teaching culture as difference'', on the basis of which, to have a different culture does not only mean to have different national identities; age, gender, regional origin, ethnic background, social class are other factors that determine one's cultural personality.

- ''Crossing disciplinary boundaries'', on the basis of which, culture teaching is viewed in relation to anthropology, sociology, semiology and ethnography. Language and culture teachers should accordingly have readings in these disciplines.

These approaches reflect, by far, more than an incidental encounter with or random reference to cultural matters. Worth noting is that special emphasis on culture is far from being wasteful of class time, as claimed by some teachers, given its relevance to language learning / teaching.

3. Culture or Cultures in the second/ Foreign Language Classroom?

It has been demonstrated that language and culture are closely entwined. In a language classroom setting, where learners form a small socio-cultural group, language and culture particularly interrelate in various and complex ways. Indeed, talking about culture in the classroom entails a reference to more than one culture: culture as content, as a medium of communication, and of learning, in relation to both foreign and second language settings.

3.1. Culture as Content

The cultural content as portrayed in textbooks, or culture as content (CC), is but one facet. Any type of teaching shapes values and beliefs, let alone language and culture teaching: "When it comes to teaching a language, ultimately one teaches the distinctions that are recognized by and are important to those who normally speak the language, one teaches types and ways of reasoning, and one almost certainly, more indirectly but more specifically, promotes particular substantive values through the material one uses" (Barrow, op.cit: 3). The CC of the textbooks for English used in the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools is a basic theme in this research, and will be dealt with in detail in Chapter five.

3.2. Culture of Communication

According to Jin and Cortazzi (op.cit), in addition to CC, there should be a consideration of a 'culture of communication'. They define it as "a systematic pattern of culturally specific emphases in ways of speaking which mediates language and culture in verbal interaction" (p100). In other words, speakers of different languages communicate in culturally different ways; they have different patterns, emphases, priorities,… .[1] FL learners should be made aware about the culture of communication associated with their TL. Jim and Cortazzi point to the need of ' a language to talk about culture', that is, a kind of 'metalanguage', whether in the learners' NL or their TL to convey knowledge about the TC, and 'a culture to talk about language', that is whether to resort to professional academic ways and terms relevant to linguistics and pedagogy or not.

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[1] This theme has been tackled in some detail in chapter two.

3.3. Culture of Learning

Jin and Cortazzi (op.cit: 100) refer to another culture in the FL classroom, namely that of learning. 'A culture of learning' has to do with "culturally based ideas about teaching and learning, about appropriate ways of participating in class, about whether and how to ask questions". In other words, the culture of learning called as well the cultural medium or culture as medium (CM) refers to ways of learning / teaching, patterns of interaction and relationship between teacher and learners, expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning / teaching. It is part of what Jordan (op.cit.) calls 'academic culture', that is, the cultural norms of academic institutions (schools, universities). CM is deeply rooted in the learners' and / or teachers' NC. Different cultures have different perspectives with respect to the teacher's and learners' roles, the appropriate ways of learning and participating in the learning / teaching process, the lesson content and focus, the status of FLs and FCs. The teacher, for instance, is sometimes viewed as a knower, a dominator, and sometimes as a facilitator and a mere guide. This, doubtless, implies different classroom interaction patterns and teaching / learning modes. Cortazzi and Jin (op.cit:196) make it plain that culture "is not only content, but also a series of dynamic processes, including those involved in teaching. From an early age, students (and teachers) are socialized into expectations about what kinds of interaction are appropriate in class, about how texts should be used, about how they should engage in teaching and learning processes." One's CM thus determines the way one perceives, filters, interacts with and learns (or teaches) the TC.

For Western teachers, that is, teachers from USA, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Western Europe, the textbook is viewed as a resource to be adapted to particular classroom contexts. Its contents are to be critically approached and evaluated by them as well as by learners. Focus is on the development of communication skills through a task-based or problem-solving methodology in which learners are assigned a major role. This CM underlies Western language teaching methods and approaches like CLT. CLT is said to be built upon a set of assumptions in the matter of learning processes, learning modes, teaching styles and classroom relationships that are Western culture-based: first, it emphasizes language use rather than language knowledge, fluency and appropriacy rather than structural correctness; second, classroom techniques depend upon spontaneity and trial and error on the part of the learners who are encouraged to

engage in extensive interpersonal interactions; and third, the classroom environment should be relaxing and not excessively formal to be conductive to useful learning. These principles conflict with the traditionally established principles of some teaching contexts, especially in Eastern cultures. Chinese learners, for instance, have a CM that is completely different from that of Western learners. In fact, they view teachers and textbooks as sources of absolute knowledge to be unquestionably followed and respected. To them, effective learning takes place through attentive listening and memorization, and language learning means merely the mastery of grammar and vocabulary. Their care for face and group harmony curbs their active and creative contribution in class. These Chinese characteristics are inspired from the Chinese traditional culture of Confucianism, Toasim and Buddhism, in Hird's (1995:23) words:

> Chinese tradition of language study focuses on a meticulous analysis in a textbook-based approach involving a systematic unlocking of the meaning of each fragment of language. Perfection is sought through a painstaking understanding of every language item. Personal creations and interpretations are not heavily promoted or valued […] Memorization is a long established teaching technique, especially in the language field. Teachers expect their students to receive rather than construct; learning and classroom relationships are based on formality, with a high degree of teacher-centeredness.

Old Chinese sayings such as 'It's the noisy bird that is easily shot dead', 'a real man should be good at thinking, but weak at speaking', and 'keep silent unless you can burst on the scene like a bombshell' (Hui, 1997: 38) clearly discourage speaking or oral communication, a factor that is in conflict with CLT principles. These Chinese characteristics are, according to us, quite similar to those of Arab learners. The latter's CM is also teacher– and textbook– based. Learners are more often viewed as passive recipients of information; they are supposed to keep silent rather than to take part in the learning / teaching process. Critical reflection on and evaluation of textbook contents is uncommon.

The teaching / learning situation is complex in case teachers and learners do not share the same CM, that is, when they come from different cultural backgrounds, for instance, when the teacher is a native speaker of the TL and is teaching foreign learners. In such a case, teacher and learners would have mismatched expectations as to what is effective teaching, classroom roles, relations, activities and patterns of interaction. Consequently, the learning process is likely to be negatively influenced.

The examples just mentioned, i.e., Western teachers and Chinese learners, illustrate the point. Asking questions about the CC of the textbook, for instance, will not be exploited fully in class, for though the teacher thinks it to be a very useful technique, an opportunity for further learning, learners do not perceive its value. They rather consider it as a waste of time , a way to show off , or an embarrassing , face-losing act , in addition to its being a burden to the teacher .The Western instructor believes in learner- centred classrooms , while Chinese learners seem passive , unwilling to speak and even resist work in pairs or groups. They, by contrast, believe in teacher-centred classrooms .The teacher for them is a model for pronunciation and a provider of cultural and linguistic knowledge. Interaction and practice with peers are futile and may even be harmful, given that they expose them to others' errors. That is why Hui (op. cit: 38) states, "group discussion may be less fruitful than individual essay-writings" for Chinese learners. Because of these differences in teaching / learning styles, behaviours of teacher and learners may be mistakenly judged on either side. Valdes (op.cit: 27) draws a sharp contrast between western and non-western CMs:

> The American-British theory of learning which requires that the student examine the information he is given, even in scientific and technical subjects, analyze it, compare and contrast it with other information at his disposal, test it, and even apply in ways of his own devising not specified for him by the teacher […] is mind-boggling to students of many other cultures. In most non-western cultures, the student is given information and is required to accept it without question; his is not to reason why, or even if. Hypothesis is not for him. And to be required to do something on his own with the information he is given is beyond thinking about. Students from these cultures who go to western countries to study are sure to undergo culture shock in this area, if in no other.

3.4. What Culture to Consider?

When the textbook includes more than one TC (the TL–culture, the source culture (NC), international TCs), the learning/teaching situation may be intricate. It becomes even problematic when learners do not come from a single cultural background and bring many NCs and CMs to the FL classroom. What is more, when teacher and learners have the same CM, the latter may not be in harmony with the CM on which the FL textbook is based ; as noted by Mee Cheah (op.cit: 202) "materials and methods for language teaching are themselves never value free". In

this case, the teacher is likely to understand the learners' approach to the text, but may not be able to go beyond it to adopt the CM expected by the textbook designer, and which better suits the TC or CC. Cortazzi and Jin see culture learning through a textbook in a FL classroom as a 'three-party' dialogue with CC (as contained in the textbook) i.e., a dialogue between teacher, learners and textbook. Each of these elements influences the process of culture teaching / learning in that it brings a culture and a CM, which may not be similar or congruent with those brought by the other elements. They believe that in most cases, it is the source culture of learning which overwhelms the others: "The problem is that the students' and their teacher's culture of learning may not be consonant with each other, and either could be out of synchronization with the TC. Source cultures then dominate the interaction so that the culture content becomes filtered or distorted by the participants' approach to interaction with the text" (Cortazzi and Jin, op.cit: 212). Moreover, teachers and learners are urged to transcend differences in order to promote interculturalism: "When there are such mismatches, it will not be a solution to include more representative elements of target cultures in texts. It is necessary to go beyond this, to reflect on ways of using the human resources of the classroom more effectively for intercultural education" (Cortazzi and Jin, op.cit: 197).

On the basis of what is mentioned, we can imply that to learn and teach successfully about a TC, we should not regard only the cultural content of textbooks, we should as well give due care to the way this cultural content is to be handled by teacher and learners, that is considering their CM(s) and hence their NC(s)[1], and the way they match (or not) the CM of the approach underlying the textbook being used: "paying heed to cultural materials and methods is insufficient. Attention also needs to be given to teachers' and students' ways of learning, and, by extension, each side needs to pay attention to the other side's culture of learning" (Cortazzi and Jin, op. cit: 216-217). In some situations, significant adjustments and compromises need to be operated to achieve success.

A crucial point worth raising in this discussion has to do with the distinction between foreign and second language situations. Some scholars see that CLT is adapted and is more suitable to ESL learning contexts (in case the TL is English). In these contexts, opportunities for oral language practice abound outside the

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[1] More about the NC in the FL class will be discussed in chapter four, sub-section 4.2.2.

classroom; there are as well infinite instances of appropriacy in language use; the motivation and need to communicate using the TL is greater than in EFL settings. In the latter, the teacher who is almost always a non-native speaker of English is the major source of communicative competence including all its components: "It would be a remarkable person who could be an adequate teacher in all these areas in an EFL context" (Hird, op.cit: 23). Many EFL teachers have little access to natural language occurrences and may therefore be unable to teach the TL socio-cultural rules. EFL, thus, is like any other school subject that depends on contextual factors such as the teacher's proficiency, the availability of teaching resources, the governmental educational policy, national and curriculum goals: "Reconsidered in this light, the EFL teacher could be doing the student a disservice by focusing on oral skills when, for example, the examination is testing for translation skills" (Ellis, op. cit: 215) or for other skills such as reading and writing, as is the case of EFL in Algerian schools. In a like manner, culture teaching in EFL contexts is viewed with doubt. Some educators wonder whether it is useful to teach the culture of a FL like English to non-native speakers in non-native settings, where there is little or no opportunity to interact with the native speakers of English; as put forward by Strevens (op. cit: 62) "in the great NNS [nonnative speaker] populations English will be taught mostly by nonnative speakers of the language, to nonnative speakers, in order to communicate mainly with nonnative speakers". Morgan (1993: 66) distinguishes between FL and SL contexts with respect to motivation to learn about the TL– culture: "Much of the work in this field has been in SLA (second language Acquisition] one needs to question whether the motivations in an FL classroom will be equally strong if students have no contact with the target culture". So, why bother teaching culture in FL contexts?

The question above assumes that culture is an independent component to be added to the language whole, while there is general agreement that language and culture are inseparable. Culture is intrinsically embedded in language and language reflects and expresses culture. Therefore, even if English is used in areas where it is not native, it still carries the culture of the natives. It is probably true that culture learning is more relevant to and even inevitable for learners who are living in the TL country or where the TL is prevalent, mainly ESL contexts. This does not mean that the cultural component is not necessary in EFL settings. Valdes (op.cit: 25) writes: "Is EFL in a non-English speaking country as susceptible to cultural transfer as ESL?

Actually, no, not so much; but still susceptible". He argues that including culture in FL teaching methodologies and materials enhances learning and is highly motivating to learners. Culture 'penetrates' even into an EST (English for science and technology) class, where the aim is to handle technical English. Reading technical literature may at first sight seem remote from any cultural pertaining. However, it is cultural, for one thing, different cultures have different rhetorical styles. Western cultures, like the English one, favour a succinct 'straight-arrow' approach, whereas Oriental Eastern cultures adopt a more elaborate style. This is due to the fact that cultures have different patterns of thought, values and priorities: (Valdes, op.cit:26)

> Succinctness is certainly not admired by most Orientals or Middle Easterners. When they read texts in English , so bare and brief, they tend to feel cheated, to fear they have missed something, or even that the author does not know his subject well enough to write about it. Lack of respect for the writer leads to inadequate learning of the materials as well as a frustrated feeling that something is missing from the information gained.[1]

We believe that even if the latter are not likely to live in, or visit the TL-speaking country, cultural insights should be available in the textbook, and their grasping one of the goals of FL education. Modern technological means of communication (such as the internet) have made it possible for people of different nationalities, and hence different languages and cultures, to interact, for various purposes. Consequently, one does not need to live in or travel to the TL country to communicate with its people: "In the contemporary world, a person does not need to travel to encounter representatives of other cultures: popular music, the media, large population movements, tourism, and the multicultural nature of many societies combine to ensure that sooner or later students will encounter members of other cultural groups" (Cortazzi and Jin, op.cit: 198). Put otherwise, in the contemporary era of globalization, where the internet is being extensively used by almost everybody, the necessity to learn FLs cannot be put into question, "And since effective control of the language requires at least a minimum of knowledge of the cultural implications in formulas, idioms etc., presentation of the culture is really inescapable" (Tucker, 1978: 228). It is worth mentioning, however, that the EFL

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[1] Valdes explains other culture–related difficulties learners may encounter when reading in a FL and culture. They will be discussed in chapter four, sub-section 3.1.5.1.

learners' contact with the foreign world remains indirect, just like that outside the classroom, that is to say, through the media (texts for listening and reading, photos, films, songs, etc). Byram, Zarate and Neuner (op.cit:72) point out that EFL learners build, as a result, their own image of the TC world, an image that is highly based on their experiences within their native socio-cultural environment :

> The result of this indirect contact is the stimulation of an 'inner event' (Inneres Ereignis) which in its essence is fictional and in which cognitive-mental and emotional-affective dimensions are interwoven. The learner, through the series of "filters" (the foreign language; the media; the regulation of information by grading and sequencing; his own socio-cultural perspective; etc.) establishes a 'fictional scenario' of the foreign world in which he individually arranges this 'inner stage' with projections and properties taken from his own world (knowledge; experience) and from bits and pieces of information about the foreign world that he has gathered. The learner gives all of this its dramatic quality by identifying with the 'dramatis personae' (e.g., members of the peer group; people of the foreign world that interest him) and their interaction.

Actually, many ESL teachers are reported to impart the TL– culture to learners in their language courses. For instance, Anglo-Saxon values such as efficiency, pragmatism and individualism are emphasized to the exclusion of the learners' native cultural values (Kramsch, 1993). On the other hand, many EFL teachers do just the opposite, that is, they transmit with the FL a worldview based solely on the learners' NC. We back the teaching of both TC and NC, with much focus on the former since learners are socialized within their native cultural framework, and have the possibility to know more about it through several school subjects such as history, geography, sociology, economics, study of the native language and literature. However, the FL class is, we suppose, the only context in FL settings to know about and understand the FC. Care should be taken to avoid situations which offend local sensitivities or violate cultural taboos.

Conclusion

Culture, whether CC and / or CM, has always been present in classrooms. It has been more or less spotlighted in language teaching approaches and methods.

Nowadays, its importance is more and more recognized in foreign as well as second language teaching settings.

If culture cannot be escaped in the language classroom, it seems reasonable to make the most of it. Chapter four attempts to show how this can exactly be done.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEACHING CULTURE

Introduction

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Conclusion

Introduction

Teaching a FL as part of the school curriculum is often regarded as similar to that of any other school subject. Nevertheless, FLs are socio-cultural phenomena and are to be viewed and dealt with as such. Most other curriculum subjects are more or less concerned with teaching elements of the learners' NC, using their NL. FL learners are not only faced with a new linguistic system (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation), but also with a totally new system of beliefs, norms, values and views. FL learners / teachers are bound to be FC learners / teachers as well.

How can such a vast topic as culture be incorporated into an already crowded language syllabus? Should it not be dealt with merely incidentally? Is it to be taught implicitly or explicitly? Is the learners' NC to be included as well? The goal of this chapter is to argue for the systematic teaching of culture, and to demonstrate how FL teachers can incorporate it into their lessons. Questions as to why, what, when, and how to teach will be discussed at length, drawing on the works of prominent scholars in the field.

1. Why Teach Culture

Decisions related to questions such as which languages or language varieties are to be taught in schools, from what age, for how long, time tabling etc. do not only depend on findings in the field of FL learning and teaching and relevant disciplines, but are essentially taken with reference to an official governmental policy, and a given popular opinion, according to which "languages can be actively promoted, passively tolerated, deliberately ignored, positively discouraged, and even banned". (Crystal, 1997: 368). Broadly speaking, world countries are nowadays in favour of a bilingual or a multilingual educational policy to ensure greater access to world opportunities. Bilingualism or multilingualism implies biculturalism or multiculturalism.

With language content expanded to include cultural matter, syllabus designers, textbook writers and teachers face compelling questions: which socio-cultural aspects are relevant to language learning? When and how should they be dealt with? Are they necessary for all language courses? Should rules of socio-cultural interaction be presented in a discrete or in a holistic way?... . These issues and others are, again, governed by socio-political and / or institutional factors. The socio-political factors define the relationship between the NC and TC worlds (whether 'friendly'–'adverse' / 'dominant'–'dependent' / Neutral). The institutional factors

determine the pedagogical framework of education in general and of FL and FC education in particular, namely, its status, goals and approaches.

1.1. Rationale

1.1.1. Nature of the Culture Teaching / Learning Process

As argued in the previous chapter, teaching the culture in which a FL is embedded is paramount to truly teach this language. However, culture learning / teaching is not a short experience with immediate easily–attainable outcomes. Developing understanding of the TC is a whole laborious process that proceeds along stages of excitement, frustration and tolerance. Wildner- Bassett (1997) refers to learners as cultural 'travelers'. Mantle–Bromley (1997:454) thinks that teaching about culture is 'a formidable task'. It is a process that necessitates particular teaching skills and an appropriate methodology. In her book 'Context and Culture in Language Teaching', Kramsch (1993) states that learning about a FC can only aid the attainment of FL proficiency, but she cautions that FC acquisition is even not simple for non-native speakers who are proficient in the FL, and who had years of experience with the FC. They, according to her, struggle to find themselves at the intersection of their NC and TC.

Every culture is unique and should be dealt with in its own terms. To begin with, what is distinguished in a culture and readily expressed in its language may not be so in another. FL and FC learners will, therefore, encounter difficulties when dealing with a culture that is different from their own. Though cultural differences do not make learning impossible, as evinced by Corder (op.cit), they do make of it an onerous enterprise. Learners should develop the ability to view the TC as the beliefs and behaviours of others, and hence cannot be understood in their own terms. Foreigners are often hindered by their ethnocentrism and stereotypes, factors that filter received information and engender erroneous beliefs. The latter are transmitted as general 'truths' from one generation to another. They have long been recognized as "very serious obstacles to the understanding of another culture". (Lado, op.cit: 121). Jandt (op.cit:7) puts it clearly that "we can have no direct knowledge of a culture other than our own. Our experience with and knowledge of other cultures is forever limited by the perceptual bias of our own culture. An adult Canadian will never fully understand the experience of growing up an Australian".

Additionally, culture is difficult to teach given its very nature. Unlike grammar and vocabulary, it does not lend itself to pedagogical considerations. In other words, teaching culture is fraught with difficulties: culture is not easy to define and to sub-divide into teachable units; it is not readily selected, graded, taught and tested. That is why, most textbooks are grammatically and lexically organized. That is also one reason why culture is still missing in many language curricula and classrooms, despite the fact that language and culture have long been acknowledged by language teaching professionals to be inextricably linked. Allen (1985; in Lafayette, 1997: 120) adds that grammar "is a subject matter the classroom teacher can teach him or herself, if necessary, using an advanced grammar text, and which, once mastered, is unlikely to change", which is far from being the case of culture, given its intricate, ever-changing, and challenging nature. Some aspects of it elude scrutiny and learning: "although nonnative speakers can acquire certain culturally determined concepts and aspects of behaviour, others may not be easily taught or learned" (Hinkel, op.cit:10).

What is more, culture teaching may correlate with many problems. On the one hand, learners may have little or no close contact with the natives of the TL and TC. They may also have little time, even to learn the formal proprieties of language. They may not be interested in the TC, or not motivated to learn it. On the other hand, teachers may lack the appropriate resource materials or the competent skills to do their job adequately. As previously mentioned, even he fact of living in the TL country and interacting with its native speakers in natural settings does not guarantee culture acquisition, if void of explicit elucidations; in Finocchiaro and Brumfit's (1983:26-27) words:

> Nor is cultural immersion – simply living in the target country – enough to overcome the gap (this is true of some native speakers as well). Unless newcomers receive a tremendous amount of varied input (stimuli) from near-native or native speakers of the target language and culture, they may spend years acquiring the significance of gestures, distances, or cultural allusions. Explicit information will be needed especially if the newcomers to the target country live and work in areas where they continue to hear their native language / dialect.

1.1.2. Principles of the Teaching of Culture

Explicit information about the TL community is even more needed by classroom learners. Accordingly, a FL curriculum should provide for explicit as well as implicit culture teaching. The fact that cultural aspects may be "naturally" embodied in the dialogues and reading passages purported for teaching does not mean that they are actually grasped and acquired by the learners. Kramsch (1993) considers important the question of how many of socio-cultural meanings must be made explicit and how many can be left implicit. What is more, discussing cultural issues as they 'incidentally' arise in language teaching materials is not enough. This approach does not focus on culture as a basic component in the language teaching syllabus and classroom techniques. While the focus of teaching may be laid on syntactic or phonetic structures…, culture may be referred to in an unintentional secondary manner. FC teaching should rather be purposeful, systematic, planned and evaluated, that is, the study of culture should be taken as seriously as the study of language: "The cultural content of a foreign language course should be as carefully planned and systematically presented as the language content to insure that knowledge of the foreign life and culture will progress hand in hand with that of the language". (Ladu, op.cit:130-131).

Mantle- Bromley (op.cit:454) thinks that the culture learning process requires first of all the involvement of learners:

> The language teacher must understand that just as language learning is a process, so too is culture learning. Facts, artifacts, textbook vignettes, and slide shows will not, by themselves, assure that language students reach beyond the first level (that of stereotypes and disbelief) or cross-cultural understanding. Students' participation and emotional involvement in the culture learning process are necessary first steps to acculturation.

In a like manner, Ladu underlines the importance of relating cultural tuition to learners and their background: (p131)

> In order that knowledge about the culture may be assimilated rather than learned as a list of facts, it should be made to live in the hearts and minds of students through experiences and activities of various kinds, in a classroom atmosphere of delight and discovery. In this way, the facts assume meaning and are incorporated into students' knowledge, appreciation, and attitudes from which they will build a broadened base for value judgements in later life.

This is to say that culture teaching is not a mere listing of facts or transference of a body of knowledge from the mind of the teacher to that of the learner; it is no doubt more than that. Hinkel (op.cit:5-6) thinks that:

> It is probably simplistic to imply that culture can be examined, taught, and learned through exercises for reading newspaper headlines and helps-wanted advertisements or that customs, cuisines, and courtesies delineate the extent of the impact of culture on one's linguistic and interactive behaviors, although they can serve as springboards to more in depth discussions.

Kramsch (1993) notifies that a common approach to culture teaching considers presenting to learners 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow' cultural information, that is, literary and artistic works (capital 'C' culture) and the rituals of everyday life, foods, fairs, …(small 'c' culture), respectively, in addition to statistical information about the TC country. This approach fails to address the TC underlying meanings, namely, its values, assumptions and beliefs, and the learners remain unaware of the many aspects of both the target cultural identity and of their own. Culture instruction thus does not consist in presenting to learners rote facts and surface features of a TC. Rather, it teaches them how to approach these facts and features by looking beneath them, that is, by exploring the patterns and values that underlie them. In other words, it assists them to react actively to cultural knowledge and develop analytic and interpretive skills vis-à-vis the FC and their own. Otherwise, the outcome might be either an insignificant tourist's perspective about the TC and / or reinforcement of already existing stereotypes and prejudices, instead of genuine cultural understanding. According to Kramsch (ibid). an adequate approach to culture teaching considers culture both as facts and meanings, and views cultural knowledge not only as part of language learning, but as an educational objective in its own right. It takes into account the differences existing between native and target cultural meanings, and the conflicts and paradoxes that may result from these differences, and incites learners to reflect critically upon them. It makes one experience new feelings and modes of thinking and acting, and view life from one's own and the other's perspective, in a 'double- voiced' discourse philosophy (Kramsch, ibid). It can be implied that culture teaching is a matter of raising awareness and changing attitudes, not only of inculcating culture-specific knowledge. As asserted by Sapir and Whorf in the fifties, and Hymes, Gumperz and Geertz in the seventies, to acquire a

new language and a new culture implies readjusting one's NL and NC. Given that language use involves a system of socio-cultural meanings and normative behaviours, using a language other than our own in intercultural communicative interactions entails readjusting one's cultural norms and behaviours so as to meet those of the other interactants.

For Byram (1992), discovering new ways of thinking and acting gives learners insights into "intercultural communicative competence" which, according to him, encompasses three levels of understanding: the relativity of their own and the other culture; the divergence between the two; and the fact that each culture has an interpretation of the other within its cultural meanings, often in the form of stereotypes.In this intercultural perspective, teaching culture does not only mean providing knowledge about this culture; it means more importantly, developing the learners' intercultural skills. This entails the consideration of the culture the learners bring with them to the classroom or their NC. Jin and Cortazzi (op.cit : 98) state that:

> It is commonplace to think of foreign language teaching as bringing a target culture to learners. This is culture as content. The aim is that students should acquire knowledge of a target culture. The learning of intercultural skills, in relation to target culture peoples is less often emphasised. It is less usual to consider the culture learners bring to the foreign language classroom and its relationship to the target culture. This is, we argue, more than simply a background influence.

Moreover, intercultural understanding outstrips knowledge about a culture's way of life to take account of the appreciation of its underlying bases, namely its values, assumptions and views. According to Byram and Escarte – Sarries (1991: 179-180)

> The notion of language for intercultural understanding implies that foreign language teaching is a major factor in maintaining the expansion of young people's range of experience and helping them to acquire new ways of thinking and new ways of valuing their new knowledge and experience. […] it is not enough to offer them new experience which they assimilate to their established framework as a tolerable variation on the 'normal' way of doing things. It is necessary for them to make sense of that experience through the framework of meanings and values which underpin the ways in which people in that other culture talk about the experience themselves. Thus learning the language and experiencing the culture are ultimately identical.

They imply that teaching about the TC cannot be merely an "idealised" tourism-dominated course. Byram (1989) puts it clearly that there is a fundamental difference

between catering for tourist curiosity and developing the learners' intercultural communicative competence.

It appears that teaching about culture is no longer an unplanned secondary addition to the language lesson or a support to and a positive influential aspect in language learning / teaching. Rather, culture with all its facets is viewed as an integral component in FL education. As aptly expressed by Kramsch (1993:1), culture is not a fifth extra skill to be added to the four main skills –speaking, listening, reading and writing, but "it is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them". She deems that the whole business of language learning / teaching should be re-thought over and reframed so as to consider its principles as far as the cultural aspect is concerned.

1.2. Objectives
1.2.1. Types of Objectives

To teach culture effectively, goals and objectives should be clearly and accurately set at the inception of the syllabus design process. Socio-cultural objectives are not easy to define. As stated by Byram, Zarate and Neuner (op.cit:58), "they are interwoven in a rather complex didactic system of factors and can be described separately only for theoretical purposes, e.g. as checklists of topics or as systems of general or specific semantic concepts". Besides, as mentioned previously, the study of a FC must not be understood as the mere learning of historical geographical or other notions about the FC community and its people, but as raising one's awareness of the socio-cultural values, beliefs and worldviews underlying the others' culture and developing critical understanding of both NC and TC. Cultural awareness would contribute to language mastery and effective use in communicative contexts, and is, thus, to be not only encouraged, but pursued as a key pedagogical goal.

To develop the learners' cultural awareness means to make them recognize or bring to a conscious level the characteristics of the TC patterns of thought and action, to examine, interpret and assess them in a non-evaluative way. For Cortazzi and Jin (op.cit:217), cultural awareness includes understanding and communicating: "Developing cultural awareness means being aware of members of another cultural

group: their behavior, their expectations, their perspectives and values. It also means attempting to understand their reasons for their actions and beliefs. Ultimately, this needs to be translated into skill in communicating across cultures and about cultures". According to Byram (1992), cultural awareness does not simply mean cultural understanding. Learners are not only required to know about the others' way of life and way of thinking, but to experience this as well, in other words, to take the others' perspective, rather than merely learning ''the requisite information to 'get by' on holiday'' (p172). Accordingly, culture teaching / learning should not be viewed only as a means to enhance one's communication skills with the TL world and to enlarge one's general knowledge about it. It would more importantly be considered to develop one's ability to take on a variety of perspectives (the perspective of the other as well as one's own), through culture-based experiences (role plays, dramatization, simulation, travelling, reading…). Pesola (1997:183) expresses the impact of culture as a curricular goal stating:

> Acquiring the culture of a group means more than simply mastering the appropriate gestures and social forms required in the new setting, more than being able to describe practices and relationships of daily life or the significant symbols and monuments of a people –although it also means all of these. It is even more than being able to function within the group without making serious gaffes. It means being able to take on the perspective of an individual from that culture and understand the actions of others and of oneself in terms of that experience.

For Barrow (op.cit: 6) 'developing' people's ways of thinking is exactly what language and culture education is about: "For if education is not about developing people's ways of thinking, it is hard to see what it is about or why we do the various things that we do . The tighter the connection made between language and thought, the more evident it becomes that all education, and not just second language teaching, necessarily involves presenting particular beliefs and values." In the British 'National Curriculum'[1], cultural awareness denotes the learners' ability to: (D.E.S, 1991: 256 in Byram, 1992: 172)

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[1] The 'National Curriculum' is applied in English and Welsh State Schools.

- consider and discuss the similarities and differences between their own culture and those of the countries and communities where the target language is spoken;
- identify with the experiences and perspectives of people in these countries and communities (…);
- learn the use of social conventions (…) and become increasingly aware of cultural attitudes as expressed in language; (…)
- investigate, discuss, and report on aspects of the language and culture of these countries and communities.

Scholars in the field conceive of cultural goals in more or less the same terms. For the Nostrands (1970; in Lafayette and Schulz 1997: 578-579), there are nine cultural goals:

1. The ability to react appropriately in a social situation.
2. The ability to describe, or to ascribe to, the proper part of the population a pattern in the culture or social behaviour.
3. The ability to recognize a pattern when it is illustrated.
4. The ability to "explain" a pattern.
5. The ability to predict how a pattern is likely to apply in a given situation.
6. The ability to describe or manifest an attitude important for making one acceptable in the foreign society.
7. The ability to evaluate the form of a statement concerning a culture pattern.
8. The ability to describe or demonstrate defensible methods of analyzing a sociocultural whole.
9. The ability to identify basic human purposes that make significant the understanding which is being taught.

Lafayette and Schulz (op.cit:581-582) believe that there are only three 'realistic' cultural goals that can be tested in Secondary Schools: 'to recognize', 'to explain' and 'to use' cultural information:

1. *Knowledge*: the ability *to recognize* cultural information or patterns. This goal focuses on factual information about selected patterns of the target culture, the student's ability to recall, recognize, and describe cultural information.
2. *Understanding*: the ability *to explain* cultural information or pattern [s]. The student needs to comprehend a cultural pattern in terms pf its meaning, origin and interrelationships within the larger cultural context. This goal presupposes not only factual knowledge, but also implies reasoning ability. Students should see the "logic" of pattern in its own cultural context.

3. ***Behaviour***: the ability ***to use*** cultural information or pattern [s]. This objective refers to behavioural skills, such as the ability to act meaningfully, unobtrusively, and inoffensively in real or simulated cultural situations.

It appears that 'cultural knowledge' is different from 'cultural understanding', in that, as illustrated by Heron et al. (2002: 37), the former "denotes factual accumulation (e.g., the Mona Lisa resides in the Louvre)", while the latter " engages the student in reflective thinking as well (i.e., the fact that the Mona Lisa, an Italian work of art, is in the Louvre, a French museum, suggests a relationship between its Italian creator and the French)". 'Cultural knowledge' is to be distinguished as well from 'cultural information'. In Byram's (1989:120) viewpoint, 'information' is an 'arbitrary' and 'decontextualised' collection of facts, whereas 'knowledge' is 'structured information'.

Byram and Zarate (1994) refer to 'four savoirs' as attainment targets of an intercultural language course: attitudes and values (savoir-être); ability to learn (savoir apprendre); skills / know how (savoir faire); and knowledge / knowing what (savoirs). Approximately the same elements constitute the components of cultural proficiency as elaborated by Heron et al. (op.cit):

− culture–specific knowledge (i.e., acquisition of knowledge and skills pertaining to one specific culture);

− culture–specific understanding (i.e., engaging in reflective thinking about aspects of the TC namely understanding its values, beliefs, assumptions and underlying meanings);

− general knowledge (i.e., ability to learn about a culture other than one's own);

− the ability to behave appropriately in the TC; and

− developing critical attitudes towards one's own culture and TC.

Sercu (op.cit) believes that attaining 'a critical understanding of otherness' is the target of intercultural language teaching. It includes:

− self-cultural knowledge that is founded not only on insights about one's own culture but also on the awareness that one's culture shapes one's perceptions and behaviours and interpretations of others' behaviours;

− the ability to compare interculturally or to view things from the others' and not only one's own perspective, in other words, to put oneself in the other's shoes before making judgements;

- the adoption of a critical questioning attitude even towards the sources of one's knowledge; and

- the ability to mediate between cultures based on discussing similarities and differences, and negotiating meanings.

As to Kramsch (1993:228), she phrases the aim of cross-cultural education in terms of 'bridges' and 'boundaries': "What we should seek in cross-cultural education are less bridges than a deep understanding of the boundaries. We can teach the boundary, we cannot teach the bridge. ". She means that teachers and learners can deal with and understand cultural differences, differences in values, beliefs, attitudes, but they cannot directly tackle the question of how to resolve eventual conflicts.

1.2.2. How Much Culture to Teach

An important question worth raising in this regard is: to what extent should foreign patterns of thought and action be taught to learners and actually adopted by them? This question generates other related issues: whose cultural or pragmatic rules are to apply in intercultural communicative interactions, those of one's NC or FC, or are there other universal rules? Is it not 'imperialistic' to impose native speakers' rules on non-native users? Does cultural 'competence' entail cultural 'performance', i.e., the actual observance of the TC norms? Are FC teachers supposed to urge learners to be and behave like the TC bearers, or to be critical vis-à-vis them and their culture?

With respect to the writing skill, for instance, some professionals think that it is desirable to acquire the rhetorical modes of the TL. Others believe it legitimate for FL learners to use the rhetorical patterns preferred in their NC, given the fact that no language and no culture are superior: "Just as no language is more or less logical than another, no rhetorical pattern is more or less logical. "(Kachru, 1995 a and b; in Kachru, op.cit:84). Kachru further states "language and rhetorical styles are too intimately bound with cultural identity to be dictated from the outside. "[1] (p86). Banon and Reymond (2001) wonder whether it is possible to teach communication strategies (verbal and non verbal) in a FL class. Learners, according to them, should be made aware of the socio-cultural aspects characterizing a conversation, but should not be recommended or constrained to appropriate them, particularly when it

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[1] This point will be re-examined when dealing with integrating culture into lessons on the four skills.

comes to gestures, mimics, and other body language forms. In Kramsch's (1993) opinion, FL and FC learners should be made aware of cultural differences in discourse styles and conversational behaviours, but it is up to them to conform or not to FC norms.

In our viewpoint, it would be presumptuous to claim that the aim of integrating culture into FL courses is to teach culture as such. It is rather to teach about it. The point is for learners (and teachers) to become aware that different languages reflect and express different cultural meanings, that different cultures may attach different meanings to similar behaviours, that other cultures may have other standards of behaviour that are not inferior or superior to one's own, and all these factors and others may lead to misunderstandings and sometimes even to distrust of 'otherness'. In fact, many scholars believe that the goal of FC teaching is not to make learners acquire it the way it is actually acquired by its natives, through the process of socialization. This is quite ambitious, but also irrelevant and impossible to realize in the context of the FL classroom. It is just a question of decreasing the cultural and social distance between the learners and the TL country and people. Moreover, teaching about another culture neither aims at the merging of the NC and FC into one, nor aims at assimilating learners to the latter. It basically aims at developing understanding of another culture without losing sight of one's own, i.e., in a more technical word, 'acculturation'. This assumes the learners' awareness of their own culture and their willingness to know about another one. Cultural differences should be understood and tolerated.

2. What and When to Teach
2.1. What Culture to Teach
2.1.1. Aspects of Culture to be Included

As pointed out before, "Today, learning a foreign language is likely to mean learning a great deal about the foreign civilization and culture at the same time." (Crystal,1997:372). CLT has transcended the structural aspect of language to include semantic and cultural aspects deemed equally if not more important than the former to truly learn a language. In this perspective, teaching syllabi consist of many components. According to Dubin and Olshtain (op.cit), the communicative syllabus has expanded the content of the language teaching syllabus in many ways. On the one hand, not only is conceptual meaning considered, but functional meaning as

well, and language is viewed in discourse form. On the other hand, variables related to the socio-cultural context of language use such as the participants' identities, roles, attitudes and settings are also catered for to serve socio-cultural appropriateness. Similarly, AL Mutawa and Kailani (op.cit) consider that the inclusion of the TC in the language syllabus, together with forms, notions and functions assists learners to develop communicative competence. Holly (op.cit) uses the metaphor of the "unspoken curriculum' to portray the unavoidability of culture in language teaching contents. Language teaching, in his opinion, necessarily conveys cultural or ideological messages. Robinson (1991) notes that teaching programmes generally fail to achieve the cultural goals because practitioners have not looked at what it is that is acquired in the name of culture learning,. So what is (or should be) acquired in the name of culture learning? What is the 'great deal' in Crystal's quotation above exactly about?

Once the socio-cultural objectives of the course are specified, the selection and sequencing of content are to be undertaken accordingly. Decisions need to be made regarding to many issues: should all the aspects of culture be given equal importance in the FL curriculum, or should particular aspects be highlighted and taught in greater depth depending on the actual needs of the learners? Is the TC to be described as it is in the present state (synchronically) or is it to be dealt with as a developing phenomenon (diachronically)? Is the focus to be on people and their daily life, small 'c' culture, or institutions and cultural artifacts, literature, arts, big 'C' culture? Is the TC defined as the culture of the elite or of common people? And who are the elite? Don't common people have a culture? Are sub-cultures defined on the basis of factors such as age, gender, region, ethnic background, religious beliefs, social class … to be all considered as TCs? What is representative of a given culture? Is it to be determined by the 'outsider', the ethnographer, or the 'insider', the native of the culture in question? If English is the TL, which TC should it represent, the British, the American, the Australian or other cultures? If it is the British culture, can the English, the Scottish or Welsh cultures be distinguished? Is a TC defined by language, political borders, value systems, ethnic origin, or others? How are multicultural societies like USA to be handled? Is the NC to be considered in FL and FC teaching? Is it possible to have an objective view of one's own and others' cultures? What socio-cultural meanings could make learners reflect on both TC and

NC? What cultural features should be communicated explicitly and what could be left implicit?

To begin with the last question, Post and Rathet (op. cit) distinguish between 'implicit cultural content' and 'explicit cultural content'. The former is inherent in the language syntax, vocabulary and other features. They call it the 'intrinsic cultural flavor'. Explicit cultural content, which is of more interest to us, is provided by the contents of the curriculum. Socio-cultural content has for a long time been subordinated under other dominating aspects particularly structural elements. It has accordingly been approached implicitly in vocabulary, visual aids, the situational context of dialogues or the context of certain authentic text types like advertisements. Due to the intricacy of culture, it is not an easy task for teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers to select those aspects of it that should be dealt with, whether implicitly or explicitly, at various stages of instruction. The choices range from supplying learners with factual information about a culture, to potentially influencing their attitudes vis-à-vis the TC and its people, and developing their intercultural communicative skills as well as their ability to process complex cultural phenomena. In our viewpoint, the cultural component may sometimes be implicitly, sometimes explicitly dealt with. What counts is that it should not be ignored or dealt with incidentally.

Both big 'C' and small 'c' cultures should be considered. Many people think of culture as big 'C' or high culture, sometimes referred to as well as 'formal' culture, while equally if not more important, particularly for sojourners, is little or small 'c' culture, known also as 'deep' culture. Researchers have defined big 'C' culture as a civilization's salient achievement in literature and fine arts, architecture, music and the like, its social institutions, its history, geography, technology and political systems, and little 'c' culture as aspects of lifestyle or patterns of daily living, including the thought processes, beliefs and values of a given people. It was big 'C' culture which was first introduced in language teaching, while attention was drawn to little 'c' culture, beginning from the late sixties. The functional approach relates exclusively to small 'c' culture, in the framework of everyday events and interactions, but it deals with it implicitly, as background information to communicative activities.

In relation to big 'C' culture, learners could be taught, for instance, how to recognize and explain major geographical monuments, historical events, institutions (administrative, economic, political, religious, social, educational institutions), artistic

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monuments (architecture, arts, literature) and national products. Pesola (op.cit) conceives of what can be taught under the heading of culture in big 'C' culture terms, namely literature, social studies and arts. The use of culturally – based literature is, in her viewpoint, useful in culture teaching, as it enables learners to experience elements of the culture, rather than just be informed about them. As to social studies such as history and geography, they can, in her opinion, be relevant to culture teaching when they are used to uncover and elucidate the similarities and differences between native and foreign settings. History in particular may have the strongest natural connection to culture; a historical account can include significant information and can elicit emotional understanding of the TC. The TC can as well be approached in fine arts and music, and Pesola suggests many samples of activities in this respect.

As far as small 'c' culture is concerned, everyday sociocultural conventions and patterns such as eating, shopping, greeting people, making a living, using public transportation, chatting are to be delineated, but also what relates to social stratification, marriage, work, schooling system, what Lafayette (op.cit) refers to as 'active' and 'passive' everyday culture, respectively. 'Active' cultural knowledge denotes what a learner needs to know to be able to act appropriately in the TC, whereas 'passive' cultural knowledge enables him / her to have a better understanding of the TC patterns. Spinelli (1997:214) uses the term 'functional' culture to mean all what "must be learned in order to function while traveling, living, studying, or working in a foreign culture". Teaching small 'c' culture has to do, accordingly, with developing learners' intercultural communicative skills, that is, teaching them how to act appropriately in common everyday situations, whether verbally or non-verbally, orally or in writing. This entails teaching them about the TC assumptions and values. These aspects are presupposed by native speakers but need to be elucidated to the non-native speakers. Attention should also be drawn to the cultures of TL- speaking communities in international settings, international TCs or C3, C4…, in Lafayette's words. It should be remembered that cultural objectives, as mentioned in the previous section, must take into account the learners' ability to recognize cultural information and patterns, the ability to explain them, and the ability to use them actively when engaging in intercultural interactions.

Brooks (op.cit) is among the first scholars to highlight the importance of culture and its relevance to language teaching. He defines this complex concept in terms

that are meaningful to classroom teachers. He identifies five meanings of culture: (p22)

Culture 1 - biological growth
Culture 2 - personal refinement
Culture 3 - literature and fine arts
Culture 4 - patterns for living
Culture 5 - the sum total of a way of life

He believes that culture 4 should be the focus in a language class. According to him, it is the least understood, yet the most crucial in the early phases of language instruction. He defines it as: (p 23)

The individual's role in the unending kaleidoscope of life situations of every kind and the rules and models for attitude and conduct in them. By reference to these models, every human being, from infancy onward, justifies the world to himself as best as he can, associates with those around him, and relates to the social order to which he is attached.

In more practical words, he specifies it as: (p24)

What one is "expected" to think, believe, say, do, eat, wear, pay, endure, resent, honor, laugh at, fight for, and worship, in typical life situations, some as dramatic as a wedding or a court trial or a battlefield, others as mundane as the breakfast table or the playground or the assembly line. And just as important is the extent to which that expectation is met.

Brooks asserts that whatever the type of culture, one should not lose sight of the individual who is, according to him, the core of culture: (p26)

What is important is to see an individual relating to the people and the life around him. As long as we provide our students only with the facts of history or geography, economics or sociology, as long as we provide them only with a knowledge of the sophisticated structures of society such as law and medicine, or examples and appreciative comments on artistic creatures such as poems, castles, or oil paintings, we have not yet provided them with an intimate view of where life's action is, where the individual and the social order come together, where self meets life.

Brooks, furthermore, distinguishes between 'surface' culture, that is, the overt easily-seen characteristics of a society, such as types of clothes, eating habits, gestures,

and 'deep' culture, namely, the values, assumptions and beliefs that underlie the way of life of a people.

H., Nostarnd's work (1974; in Thanasoulas, op.cit) in this field has also significantly contributed to make cultural knowledge comprehensible and accessible to language teaching practitioners. He defines culture at the individual and the societal levels. His 'Emergent Model' is a cultural scheme underlain by six categories:
- Culture (value systems and habits of thought);
- Society (organizations and familial, religious and other institutions);
- Conflict (intra/interpersonal conflict);
- Ecology and technology (knowledge of plants and animals, health care, travel etc.);
- Individuals (intra/interpersonal variation); and
- Cross-cultural environment (attitudes towards other cultures).
In other words, teachers should be knowledgeable of all these aspects to be able to present them to FL and FC learners.

For Finocchiaro and Brumfit (op. cit), teaching about culture means teaching what is relevant to the socio-cultural appropriateness of language use. According to them, language is made up of four main subsystems: the sound system, the grammar system, the lexical vocabulary system and the cultural system. Cultural knowledge includes knowledge about the significance of gestures, facial expressions, distances maintained, unarticulated sounds, and cultural allusions of all kinds, having to do with values, taboos, habits, art forms, rituals etc. Lack of this knowledge often results in misunderstandings and misinterpretations and, therefore, breakdowns in communication between natives and non-natives, whether orally or in writing.

According to Moran (1990), to attain the general goal of culture instruction which is to raise the learners' cultural awareness, learners need to know information about the TC, to develop skills to behave appropriately in real or simulated experiences in the TC, to reflect upon and understand the underlying features of the TC., and to compare and contrast it with their own NC, namely, what he refers to with the cultural categories 'Knowing About', 'Knowing How', 'Knowing Why' and 'Knowing Oneself', respectively. By 'culture as knowing about', he means knowledge, information, facts, data about the TC. The 'culture as knowing how' category has to do with skills, behaviours that ensure effective participation in the TC everyday life. 'Culture as knowing why' relates to the unobservable features of culture, what Brooks calls 'deep culture', namely, its values, attitudes and assumptions. These aspects

necessitate the learners' meditation and appreciation. The 'culture as knowing oneself' category brings the NC in the FC classroom and invites the learners to reflect upon their own culture for a better self-awareness. Riley's (1989; in De Jong, op.cit) model is not very dissimilar from, but less comprehensive than Moran's. Cultural knowledge, in this regard, is viewed as encompassing three major components: 'Know That', i.e., background knowledge, beliefs, values, assumptions, what is taken as true; 'Know Of', i.e., knowledge of current events, news, what is happening in the present time; and 'Know How', i.e., skills, actions , behaviours, communicative competence. Byram and Escarte- Sarries (op.cit) state that there are only two types of culture to be catered for in language textbooks and syllabi: 'Knowing How' and 'Knowing That', i.e., knowing how to operate in the TC, 'operations', and knowing 'truths' about it, respectively. For them, the cultural 'Know-How' should not be restricted to 'linguistic performance', that is, learners should not only be taught 'what to say' in a particular situation, but also how to behave, what to do or not to do. Besides, the 'Know-How' category should not be merely based on tourist situations, and should be dealt with in an explicit way. The cultural 'Know What' does not mean unstructured, unconnected, partial, incidental facts, depicting an unrealistic or biased image of the target country and culture. Contextualization, systematicness and realism are required when selecting and presenting cultural data and facts. What is more, there should be a balance between the two types of culture in the syllabus, the textbook and classroom procedures. O'Malley & Chamot (1990; in Byram, Zarate and Neuner, op.cit:77) refer to the same two cultural categories with the terms 'declarative' and 'procedural' knowledge: "All the things we know about constitute **declarative** knowledge and the things we know how to do are **procedural** knowledge". The socio-cultural curriculum should, thus, include both types of knowledge, i.e., information about the TC and ways to develop the learners' comprehension strategies (text comprehension, comprehension of the behaviour of one's interlocutors) and communication skills (initiating a conversation, sustaining it, requesting explanation…). For example, one way to stimulate the learners' communicative and interactive strategies is to include the TC routine formulas in the curriculum.

It is possible, according to Byram, Zarate and Neuner (op.cit:79-80), to elaborate a common core of socio-cultural topics for all groups of learners, at the elementary stage, on the basis of "universal human experiences of (verbal)

interaction", i.e., on the basis of topics referring to general socio-cultural experiences, ''people and their day-to-day interactions", and the learners' "conceivable encounters with the foreign world". These topics would stimulate the emotional involvement of the learners. Kramsch (1993) draws attention to the fact that culture should be presented with all its interpersonal dimensions (age of the TC bearers, their gender, social class, religion, ethnicity …). This aspect introduces learners to sub-cultures, i.e., to the variety and heterogeneity existing within the same one culture, and invites them to examine their stereotypes and prejudices, to attempt to see beyond them, to view and interpret things form the other's perspective. Seelye (1993) has also worked on cultures within cultures and recommends their inclusion in language teaching curricula.

We may conclude that teaching about a TC consists of teaching about its observable and unobservable features, about its aesthetic and sociological facts, about its past and present. It means also teaching pragmatic skills and competencies, and not merely facts and statistics. Most important of these skills are intercultural communication skills, hence the need to teach, for example, about the non-verbal means of communication and the way they operate in the TC, as well as about the socio-cultural characteristics of language use, concerning both spoken and written discourse. We believe, additionally, that the NC as well as the cultures of the TL-speaking communities should form part of the overall target cultural content, to enable learners to see things form a variety of perspectives. In this regard, it is also useful to draw their attention to sub-cultures or cultures within cultures, for a better understanding of the heterogeneous and complex nature of each culture.

2.1.2. Criteria of Selection of Content

In every teaching method and teaching manual, and for every teacher, choices are done, and others remain to be done as to what to teach. In most cases, these are conscious choices which depend on a defined set of criteria. The cultural content in particular should be carefully selected. Byram, Zarate and Neuner (op.cit) identify three types of criteria: subject-matter-oriented criteria, learner-oriented criteria and teachability / learnability of cultural concepts. First, the cultural content is to be selected on such bases as: systematicness (cultural information should be complete, structured); completeness (cultural information should be complete, exhaustive); and representativity (cultural information should be representative, characteristic, typical).

Second, the cultural content should be in harmony with the learners' factors. Reference is made to the learners' interests, such as curiosity to know about the TC way of life, cultural similarities, differences, outstanding figures in the target world…; the learners' needs, which may be professional, vocational, communicative, and / or survival needs; and the learners' attitudes, capacities, background knowledge about and experience with the target world. This divergence in the learners' factors shows that a common core of socio-cultural topics is hard to elaborate. Concerning the teachability / Learnability criterion cultural aspects that can be easily represented in the language class through, for instance, objects, visual aids, simple explanations, or direct comparison in the NC, as well as those which can easily be integrated in a language course are opted for.

Brooks (op.cit:32) cautions that culture-related materials should be selected with care. His criteria for the selection are mainly subject-matter-oriented: "What is selected for presentation must be authentic, typical, and important; otherwise false impressions may be created". Plecinska (2001) also points to a subject-matter based selection of cultural content. For her, authenticity and variety should characterize FL teaching materials in order to represent as faithfully as possible the TC, but also to generate and sustain the students' motivation to learn and to enjoy learning. Artal, Carrion and Monros (1997) consider two factors when selecting and sequencing cultural material: first, relevance to the learners' lives and experiences to promote intercultural learning; and second, cultural explicitness in passages, pictures, film scenes…: the more explicit culture appears in the material, the better it is.

Straub (1999) draws attention to a fundamental learner factor –sensitivity. In fact, when designing a cross-cultural course, one has to bear in mind that there are particular topics that are too delicate to be discussed in class. They may offend local sensitivities and violate cultural taboos. Examples of these topics may be male–female relationships, controversial political issues like revolutions and wars, and volatile subjects like alcohol, sexual orientation and drugs. This point raises the question of censorship in a language and culture class. It is up to the teacher to censor by filtering the cultural input to his / her students, or to expose them to all available cultural information, whatever its nature, and whatever its impact on them. To opt for censorship may be viewed as eluding one's responsibility, as teachers, to provide the learners with opportunities to discover world truths, to see other cultures as they actually are, and to equip them with the necessary means to deal with facts

in an analytic and critical way, to defend themselves and their standpoint if need be (Hyde, op.cit). The question, thus, is not whether to deal or not with such topics, but how to deal with them and to what extent.

One may wonder which criteria are to be applied. Byram, Zarate and Neuner recommend "as much teaching and learner orientation as possible, as much subject-matter orientation as necessary." (op.cit: 79). It is useful to note that subject-matter–oriented criteria were particularly applied in the framework of the grammar–translation method. The audio-lingual and communicative approaches are based on a more learner–oriented selection of cultural content. FL teachers are able to decide on aspects of the socio-cultural content on the basis of the type of learners they have to teach: school pupils? University students? Tourists? Businessmen? Scientists? Immigrants? Beginners? Advanced learners? Different groups of learners have different cultural perspectives. The objectives of the course are also important to take account of in addition to the learners' factors. The general objectives of FL teaching are usually determined, as previously stated, by the socio-political system of the country where the FL is taught. For Bibeau and Germain (1983), the general goals of teaching constitute a 'norm' according to which teaching contents are to be designed. They put it clearly that any (linguistic, cultural) element selected for teaching should have been submitted to a two-dimensional study: firstly, the 'norm' dimension refers to the objectives and goals of teaching as specified by the socio-political and educational institutions of the country, to be considered by syllabus designers, textbook writers and teachers; secondly, the 'pedagogical' dimension refers, in their viewpoint, to methodological principles, having to do with progression, functionalism, contrastive analysis findings, degree of specialization, interest, method of presentation and illustration. Questions about the type of cultural content to include the role of the teacher, the context in which the textbook is to be used, syllabus goals and learners' cultural background(s) are all connected to the process of selecting the cultural content of teaching materials.

2.1.3. Progression

A final question to treat in this sub-section is how to grade cultural contents. Byram, Zarate and Neuner suggest various models of grading. The 'linear' progression or progression according to structural complexity is not suitable for socio-cultural content given that, on the one hand, the 'grammar' (or the structural building)

of culture has not yet been adequately developed (Byram, Zarate and Neuner); on the other hand, this gradation implies disregarding the learners' factors. In the 'spiral' progression, an elementary stage is defined on the basis of a set of elements, a, b, c, d…, having equal weight, to be then added on at different stages of teaching/learning: a-a', a"; b-b', b"; c-c', c"; … . The 'contrastive' progression comprises an analysis of the content in terms of similarities and differences between NL / NC and TL / TC, then, the arrangement of its elements accordingly. One possible procedure is to start with similarities supposed to be easier to deal with than differences. The opposite procedure highlights differences to help learners cope with them right from the beginning of the learning process. Which procedure to adopt remains a question mark[1]. Besides, systematic comparative / contrastive research in the field of culture is still lacking (Byram, Zarate and Neuner). The progression based on 'pragmatic considerations' is primarily concerned with the learners' needs (linguistic, cultural). In the progression based on the 'teachability' and 'comprehensability' of socio-cultural phenomena, cultural elements that are easy to present in a language class using concrete objects, audio-visual media, simple explanations in the TL or NL are dealt with first.

When designing the language and culture syllabus, one element may be considered as a core around which all other elements revolve. In most available FL textbooks, it is, usually, grammar which provides such a core on the basis of which language functions, vocabulary, socio-cultural topics are organized. Another possible procedure is to consider these various elements on equal footing, that is, to combine grammar, culture and function in such a way that, at different steps of the syllabus or the textbook, one of the three elements dominates.

Given that the aesthetic sense of culture, namely, what relates to literature and arts may only be appreciated by advanced language learners, it seems logical to begin with its anthropological or sociological sense, i.e., what has to do with everyday patterns of behaviour and interpersonal relations. In addition, learners should first be taught about the basic socio-cultural rules of communication, for example, how to address somebody to whom one must show respect, or somebody one does not know, how to start a conversation or how to end it. More subtle rules for the management of communicative interactions have to be considered at advanced

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[1] Some scholars recommend presenting to learners cultural similarities first, for psychological reasons; see section 4. 2 for more details.

levels. Then, learners may be made aware of the significance of implicit cultural meanings and connotations, of how the use of one linguistic form rather than another may have interactional and social implications of "the way cultural reality is constructed through language" (Kramsch, 1993:30).

2.2. When to Teach Culture

When should culture be taught? Is the language class to concern itself with language proper and postpone cultural matters until the learners become more mature and more competent in language? Will not emphasis upon culture right from the beginning of language instruction be wasteful to precious class time? For Brooks (op.cit), the answer is 'no'. He believes that learning about culture should be programmed beginning from elementary courses. It is precisely at this stage that culture is most needed in his viewpoint: "It is during the early phases of language instruction that the inclusion of culture is at once the most significant and the most baffling." (pp12-13). His argument is that many students do not have the opportunity to reach advanced levels. Therefore, the sooner culture is introduced, the better it is for the majority of learners: "Because of the large decrease in population in language classes with each succeeding year of advancement, the concept of culture can be communicated to only a relatively small number of students unless this is done in the earliest phases of their instruction." (p14). Brooks further states that culture should be regarded as an indispensable component at the beginning stages of FL learning, to assist young FL learners to avoid inappropriate language use: "instruction in a foreign language, even at the start, remains inaccurate and incomplete unless it is complemented by appropriate studies in culture" (p15).

Most contemporary scholars seem to agree with Brooks. Potter (op.cit: 79), for example, thinks it a 'need' to consider the cultural component of language use, at the threshold of learning: "Foreign language learners (of English and other languages) have need of exposure to the sociocultural aspects of language use from the outset in the classroom where the differences in sociocultural rules of use may be freely discussed". Byram (1992: 173) even encourages beginners to reflect upon language and culture and their interconnectedness: "Since language embodies the meanings and values of the culture, the language learner has constantly to reflect on the relationship of language and culture, in both the foreign and his own society. This has to happen from an early stage". Byram, Zarate and Neuner share Brooks' view as to

what it is that should be introduced in terms of culture at the elementary stage of language learning, namely small 'c' culture. Such a programme "will centre around 'people and their daily life' (aspects of universal sociocultural experience of the self and the peer group), around imagined encounters with foreign language use in 'everyday situations' (comprehension /communication) or around one's own point of view when looking at the foreign world 'from outside' " (Byram, Zarate and Neuner, op.cit:75). It would raise the learners' interest and involve them emotionally in the process of language and culture acquisition. Byram (1992) suggests that beginners contrast the cultural connotations of the commonest words related, for instance, to items of food and clothing, in the NC and FC, to discover the significance of culture in shaping meanings. This does not go in harmony with Robinson's (1991) approach, according to which culture instruction should initially highlight the similarities existing between the NC and TC. She argues that first impressions of a new culture based on perceiving the differences (which are generally salient and whose frequency is often magnified) turn out to be negative, and may lead learners to develop stereotypes and negative attitudes towards people of other cultures. Furthermore, once these impressions are formed, they are very difficult to alter.

In Germany, culture is taught from the earliest stages of FL learning through the provision of "Landeskunde" in textbooks, i.e., "geographical, historical and contemporary information about social institutions and aspects of daily life" (Buttjes & Kane, 1978; in Byram, 1992:171). In France, FCs are introduced at later stages, that is, at advanced levels (Byram, ibid). In Britain, while a foreign language is taught mainly for specific purposes (i.e., based on the learners' future needs of the language), young learners are taught a FL "to 'get by' as tourists" (Byram, ibid: 172). Hence, learners are not provided with a veracious image of the culture of the people who speak the language in question.

In relation to bilingualism / biculturalism, a question which is usually raised is: should children be taught a first language then a second in a 'transitional' fashion, or should they have a kind of dual language instruction throughout their schooling? The proponents of the first position argue that maintaining the two languages (and cultures) together may cause the mastery of neither of them: "the children may become 'trapped' in their mother tongue [or first language], and fail to achieve in the majority language [or second language] thus reducing their access to prosperity" (Crystal, 1997: 368). Those who are for the maintenance approach believe that it

does not only reinforce the learners' ethnic identity but promotes as well linguistic diversity, cultural pluralism and tolerance: "maintaining the mother tongue is said to develop a desirable cultural diversity, foster ethnic identity, permit social adaptability, add to the psychological security of the child, and promote linguistic (and perhaps even cognitive) sensitivity" (Crystal ibid: 368). To opt for one view or another is a major step in the process of language planning, for it implies the adherence to a certain conception of the society we want to see around us: culturally pluralistic (in the maintenance view) or culturally homogeneous (with the dominance of the culture of the majority in the transitional view).

An important issue that is related to this controversy is the apprehension that the early introduction of a FC may have negative outcomes as to the young learners' cultural identity. De Jong (op.cit) believes a FC can only be introduced when learners have developed a firm knowledge of their NC, lest they become negatively influenced by this FC. This is particularly true for young children who "adapt more quickly and completely than older ones, often renouncing the previous environment virtually completely. The amount of pressure to conform is perceptibly stronger the younger one is, becoming less towards the age ten." (De Jong, op.cit: 14). That is why, some professionals see that until young learners' cultural identity is established, they should just learn FL(s) and not FC(s).However, this argument assumes that language and culture are separable, which is not the case, as argued by many scholars (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993 and others).

We think that children should first be taught their NL or first language and NC, and only then FL(s) and FC(s). Maintaining the NC thereafter is required to foster the learners' cultural identity, and to achieve the goals of intercultural education. Though culture is always present, explicitly or implicitly, in the language classroom, FL courses that are 'FC-loaded' are, in our opinion, not to be programmed at the very inception of the language learning process, but at later stages. Then, the focus would be on the TL-culture. FL textbooks featuring the FC at these stages would only foster bilinguality and interculturalilty. The learners' NC remains always accessible to them, being part of if not *their* everyday life.

3. How to Teach / Evaluate Culture

3.1. How to Teach Culture

3.1.1. Methods of Teaching Culture

Building on the notion of communicative competence (Hymes) and the speech act theory (Searle and Austin), professionals in the field of language pedagogy have become increasingly aware of the need to include a cultural component in language curricula, and the focus has been on devising appropriate techniques for addressing cultural facts and behaviours while teaching linguistic skills. It is worth noting, however, that given the complexity of culture and its multiple aspects, little research has been carried out in applied linguistics to throw light on how it can be pedagogically dealt with in the framework of language teaching, and in most cases, it is left to the classroom teacher to decide on this matter. On the other hand, teaching about culture is an aspect of language teaching that is unfamiliar to language teachers whose professional training largely focuses on the structural facets of language. Even if the FL textbook caters adequately for the TC, it is not a guarantee that it would be taught and learned as it should be. It all depends on how the textbook is used and how the cultural content is approached, i.e., on the method and the techniques applied. Cortazzi and Jin (op.cit:210) put it clearly that "the learning of culture and the development of intercultural skills depend in large part on how the textbooks are used in the classroom, that is, on the quality of interaction between students, texts, and teachers. Beyond textbooks, what is required is a methodology of cultural learning".

By the seventies, professional literature included many ways to teach about culture, but they are not all judged effective. For Heusinkveld (op.cit: xxviii), too many of them, ''presented a pastiche of unrelated cultural facts that did little to convey a deeper cultural understanding''. This is not surprising given the intricacy of culture. To know how to effectively teach about it, and how to successfully integrate it in an already crowded language curriculum can only be done in a gradual process. One difficulty lies in the fact that the comprehension of some cultural concepts may transcend the learners' linguistic abilities. Another difficulty is that culture competes for time with other language components. The former should, nevertheless, be given due care, as put by Seelye (1997: xviii), "Robust approaches to teaching culture in the foreign language classroom require more than carving out five or ten minutes at the end of each class period for cultural activities, in whatever language. An

important task for the teacher is to expand the amount of student contact time with the second language and culture." It is a basic premise for the pedagogy described in this work that culture should not stand alone as an add-on, filler, or after thought, but should rather be intrinsically incorporated in the language teaching unit.

So, how to teach effectively about the TC? Is talking about it to the learners sufficient to raise their awareness about it? Seelye (1997: xvii) does not think so: "simply talking in a foreign language classroom about culture (in English) may produce about the same results as talking (in English) about the language. Neither portends much progress toward helping students communicate with native speakers of the language". The teaching of culture, as argued previously, must not be restricted to imparting factual information about it. It should more importantly be viewed as an experience, a process. A "facts-only" approach is considered by researchers as being not only insufficient but also detrimental, for it may in some cases reinforce stereotypes. The learners do not only need to know facts about the TC; they also need to experience it, to organize their minds in culturally-specific ways (Lantolf, op.cit). Culture is recommended to be taught through process skills like inference skills, observational and interpretive skills, analytic and hypothesis formation and testing skills, skills that should be integrated within the traditional basic language skills. In other words, the learners are urged to interact with the TC and its members, and not just be passive receivers of knowledge about it.

Is the teacher to use classroom or out-of-class time for culture teaching? Both in-class and out-of-class methodologies are recommended, since they both have advantages and disadvantages: in-class procedures provide more teacher control over the content of culture learning, but time is always in short supply; out-of-class procedures extend the amount of contact with the TC, but learners do not always do their work. Should the activities be carried out in the FL or the learners' NL? The TL should be the primary vehicle used to teach culture, as well stated by Allen (1985; in Lafayette, op.cit: 134), "Of all the elements of the target culture, the target language is the most typical, the most unique, the most challenging, and –almost ironically– the most readily available. Its authentic use in the classroom from the beginning of instruction is therefore the primary cultural objective." Robinett (1978) distinguishes between teaching culture in its native context and in foreign contexts. It seems evident that both culture and language are easier to acquire when the learners are immersed in the TL and TC environment.

For Cushner and Brislin (op.cit), there are five methodological frameworks to teach culture in the classroom: cognitive training (teaching); experiential training; cultural self-awareness; behaviour modification; and attribution training. Cognitive training (teaching) teaches learners facts about the TC on the basis of lectures, group discussions, and readings. Though the learners could become well informed about the TC, this does not guarantee their ability to function effectively in it. For this purpose, they need more active strategies like experiential learning. In the framework of experiential training, the learners are supposed to take part in activities that immerse them in target-like experiences. Reference is made to role-plays, simulations, but also, when possible, field trips in the TC. Experiential activities can be very effective but they need much skill and practice. Cultural self-awareness aims at making the learners recognize the importance of culture in shaping minds and personalities, on the basis of examining their own cultural patterns, norms and values, and their effect on them. Knowing oneself is a step towards knowing others. Behaviour modification is based on the notions of reward and punishment in a culture. The learners are required to conceive of what is rewarding and what is punishing in their NC, and are then asked to learn about that in the TC, to be able to obtain reward and avoid punishment in it. It is worth mentioning that such approach fits only specific goals and learners. Attribution training teaches the learners to make culturally right judgements as to the causes of people's behaviours and attitudes in the TC, in Cushner and Brislin's words, to make "isomorphic attributions". The aim is to reduce misunderstandings in cross-cultural exchanges. The typical method used is "the culture assimilator", called also "the intercultural sensitizer".

According to Lafayette and Schulz (op.cit:580), there are three main methods for teaching about culture:

− 'Total uncritical immersion into a culture', known also as 'cultural conditioning': learning occurs by imitation and stimulus response techniques, just like the way a child is socialized into his/her own NC.

− 'Critical and analytical observations of recurring incidents which demonstrate a similar pattern of cultural behaviour': this method pertains to anthropologists, ethnographers, and social scientists, and is best applied when one is within the TC.

− 'Guided observation of selected patterns in isolation followed by explanation and interpretation of the pattern with the help of a knowledgeable person': this method

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consists in presenting the learners with a defined cultural pattern as reflected in an artifact, dialogue, reading passage, culture capsule, film, photograph, song, newspaper advertisement, etc. Only this third method, according to Lafayette and Schulz, is appropriate and relevant to the classroom context.

On the other hand, Byram (1992:173) thinks that enabling the learners to grasp the deep or the non-material aspects of culture requires "a methodology which is open-ended and gives the learners the potential for continuing to learn, as opportunities arise". This methodology should, in his opinion, be based on ethnography. Ethnography, in Robinson's words (1985:73) is "a method of describing a culture or situation within a culture from the 'emic' or native's point of view, i.e., from the point of view of the cultural actors". This method is based on observation and interviews. As far back as the fifties, to gather cultural data for a structural description, Lado suggested the use of 'the informant approach', that is, interviewing a representative sample of informants, together with the systematic observation of the TC and its members, to test the significance of the data collected through the interview. What is critical about these techniques is that they do not pre-select and pre-categorize what is to be observed, to avoid as much as possible cultural bias on the part of the observer. Besides, the ethnographers do not work in laboratories, and their data are not necessarily quantifiable. According to Atkinson, methods of studying cultural knowledge and behaviour are unlikely to fit a positivist quantitative paradigm. Ethnographic research seems more appropriate for its flexibility or "its context-sensitive emergent quality… [or for its] ability to capture some of the complex uniqueness characterizing every cultural scene, and from the perspectives of the social actors involved." (Atkinson, op.cit: 646-647).

The ethnographers' cultural accounts may serve as useful inputs for teaching about culture. However, ethnography has, up to now, approached mainly exotic cultures rather than the TCs whose languages are most commonly taught all over the world (Robinson, 1985). Findings of ethnographic research may also be relevant to how best to teach about culture, namely, by considering both the learners' NC as well as the TC when organizing instruction, and making it fit their linguistic and cultural needs, hence maximising learning. Atkinson thinks that the ethnographic approach may be applied by the learners themselves through in and beyond classroom projects. Byram (1992) suggests that FL and FC learners become 'apprentice ethnographers'. In other words, to learn the TL and TC, one should be immersed in

the FL environment to both observe (the outsider's perspective) and participate (the insider's perspective). Robinson believes that doing ethnography may be a way to overcome cultural barriers, negative attitudes and impressions, and also a way to promote self-awareness.

For the learners who do not have the opportunity to travel abroad, the necessary ethnographic data should be made available to them in the classroom. Besides, they should be taught how to deal with these data, how to collect similar data from their own culture and make comparisons between them. Basic cultural themes to be tackled in this regard are, in Byram's viewpoint, the 'family', 'education', 'work', 'social identity' and 'politics'. He notes that immersion in the target foreign country has proved to be, for some ethnographer students, a deceiving experience, in the sense that the positive impressions they initially had of the country and its people eventually become negative ones. Whether a balance in their feelings and impressions is to be established later on is still to be seen.

3.1.2. Classroom Techniques
3.1.2.1. Common Techniques

Techniques to teach culture in the language classroom abound. Damen (op.cit: 279) states "There are almost as many ways to bring cultural instruction into the classroom as there are students to teach – or so it appears sometimes to those planning culture teaching units". It is widely agreed, however, that culture can best be taught through activities that require an active participation and involvement on the part of the learners. Damen lists several techniques to teach culture. Many of them overlap in that they are based on the same or similar principles. Many of them are also familiar to language teachers, but there are cultural implications in their use in a cultural context. This is to say that FL and FC teachers need not devise activities that are exclusively culture–geared. They can combine linguistic, communicative and cultural objectives in the same task.

– **Area–Specific Studies**

An area–specific study requires the learners to gather information about a specific country or cultural area, using library resources (books, magazines, encyclopaedias, CD-ROM databases, internet) and / or by interviewing informants. Reading all types of printed material especially those relevant to the TC cannot be

but insightful. Damen (op.cit: 289) illustrates this point in the following words: "Consider how much can be said about life in the United States simply by reading the daily newspaper comic strips or following the soap operas". Informant interviewing is a technique used by ethnographers and anthropologists to collect data about a particular culture(s). It may as well be used by language learners when possible for the same purpose.

The information collected is to be organized in categories such as factual background information, values, attitudes, personality traits (or 'subjective culture'). The learners eventually write reports to be presented and discussed in class. Throughout the project, the teacher may help by providing questions, worksheets … to guide the learners in their area–specific study.

– **Case Studies and Critical Incidents**

A case study is a case analysis or a problem-solving enterprise in which the learners attempt to identify target questions and suggest solutions to them. In the field of intercultural education, these questions are related to the values, assumptions, communicative styles, role expectations and non-verbal behaviours… of the TC.

Similarly, a critical incident is a problematic interactive situation emanating from conflictual cross-cultural values, assumptions, standards, expectations. It serves the learners to successfully handle everyday intercultural problems. The learners are purported to discuss the incident in question, and suggest possible explanations and/ or solutions. Critical incidents may be used to introduce a target cultural topic, to be the subject of class or group discussions, or may be related to subsequent relevant readings. They may as well be used in role-plays, that is, teachers may have the learners roleplay the people in the incidents, and explain their behaviour from different cultural standpoints. The learners can also be asked to narrate incidents pertaining to their own experience and cultural background.

The problem-solving principle is inherent in several culture teaching techniques. When practising problem-solving in a language and culture class, the learners are required to analyse questions, to explain stands and reach solutions that are culturally appropriate. They may be presented with a problematic communicative situation coloured by embarrassment, anger or offence, and asked to figure out what went wrong and why (what was done and what should have been done), and

eventually suggest solutions (what should be done now). The teacher may help them with thought-provoking questions. An alternative activity may be to present socio-cultural situations in which the learners have to make choices. They should then be given feedback on the cultural consequences of their choices. The aim is to develop their critical thinking and analytic skills vis-à-vis matters in both their NC and TC.

– **Contrast American**

"Contrast American" is a contrastive technique that applies to any cultural group, though frequently used in the context of the American culture. Damen (op.cit: 281) identifies it as "the setting up and systematic examination of the contrastive qualities of one or more cultural groups". Analysing contrasts in the assumptions and values of the TC may be based on selected reading or televised materials, followed by discussions, case studies, role plays. It would develop the learners' awareness about the TC, and would as well provide a comparative framework for the TC, NC and other cultures. The learners may compare and contrast patterns from their own culture, for example, eating a leisurely home-cooked meal, with corresponding patterns from the TC, such as eating at Mc Donald's or in another restaurant. The comparison and contrast of these behaviours are not ends in themselves, but they should lead to the more important discussion of the cultural values underlying these behaviours: Anglo-Americans place great value on efficiency and convenience, while Arabs value the time they spend with their family during a leisurely meal.

Some scholars believe that comparing and contrasting cultures should not be overemphasized, at least at the beginning stages of culture learning. The goal should be to encourage the learners to observe and discover, not to compare and evaluate. Comparative analyses should, in this perspective, be postponed until the learners achieve some progress in understanding the TC, and become more able to handle it in an objective way. Krishnamurti (1967; in F.B., Nostrand, op.cit, 197) puts it clearly that "Comparison prevents you from looking fully…It is only when I look at you fully, not with comparative judgement, that I can understand you. When I compare you with another, I do not understand you, I merely judge you". Lado (op.cit) considers three levels of comparison between cultures: form, meaning and distribution. He underscores the importance of understanding one's own culture (before comparing it with another), which is not an easy task, given the fact that cultural behaviours are acquired unconsciously. Other professionals (like Damen, op.cit) believe that it is the

comparison and contrast of the TC and NC which engenders the need to examine one's own cultural assumptions, views and values from the perspective of the other, hence to understand better oneself and one's cultural system. In our viewpoint, similarities and differences between the native cultural context and the foreign one should always be pointed out in the FL class. It is always enlightening to make a cultural clash explicit by reflecting on issues as viewed in the NC and the FC.

– **Culture Assimilators**

"Culture assimilators" is a technique that was first designed at the university of Illinois (Fiedler, Mitchell and Triandis, 1971; Triandis, 1975; in Damen, op.cit). The first culture assimilator was developed to address communication and interaction problems between Arab and American students (Cushner and Brislin, op.cit). Like critical incidents, culture assimilators present a problematic situation. They briefly describe its episodes and require the learner to identify its attributions or causes, in Cushner and Brislin's words, "judgments about the causes of behaviour" (p42). Usually four possible attributions are mentioned: three are expected to be made by members of the learners' culture and one pertains to the TC. The learner is required to analyse the situation and choose the TC appropriate attribution for each episode, or the attribution that best accounts for the problem from the TC standpoint. This technique aims at developing in the learners intercultural skills such as cross-cultural sensitivity, and overcoming stereotyped thinking. It is based on the assumption that as the learners know about and analyse the intercultural interactions drawn from actual situations and experiences, they are likely to successfully overcome the barriers in their own upcoming intercultural interactions. In other words, as the learners receive feedback on their responses, they will gradually understand the TC values and assumptions and learn how to interpret things and judge behaviours from the TC perspective. They would accept others' attitudes and behaviours because they knew their underlying reasons and motivations.

It is not easy for a language and culture teacher to prepare culture assimilators, for they do not only require him/her to be familiar with both the learners' NC and TC, but also to work on the attributions of critical incidents in both cultures in statistical terms. However, ready culture assimilators may be found in relevant literature. They may revolve around a variety of topics: gift giving, use of personal space, giving compliments, male / female relationships, inviting and accepting

invitation, greetings. Cushner and Brislin distinguish between culture-specific and culture-general assimilators. Culture-specific assimilators are developed for specific groups and for highly specific purposes (for example to prepare Spanish doctors to live and work in African rural regions or American technical assistance advisers to work in the Algerian Sahara). On the other hand, the items of a culture-general assimilator are of widespread usefulness, fitting all types of clients (learners) and TCs. The idea of a culture-general assimilator developed on the basis of the fact that being in a FC generally engenders in people the same feelings of alienation, loneliness, uprootedness, loss, frustration,…, whoever they are, and wherever they find themselves. Besides, there are concepts such as the differentiation of roles, in-group /out-group distinctions, decision making that always come up in the accounts of people who enter cultures other than their own.

Empirical research findings (Cushner and Brislin) suggest that training in culture assimilators leads to a better understanding of and an enjoyable interaction with the TC bearers, who, themselves, acknowledge these facts. It also lessens negative stereotypes, develops complex (instead of oversimplified) thinking about the TC, and eventually results in a better adaptation and better job performance in the TC world.

– **Cultural Capsules and Culture Clusters**

Culture capsules (or culturgrams) which were first developed by Taylor and Sorenson (1961; in Damen, op.cit) describe briefly a typical incident or event in the TC and require the learners to answer comprehension questions in relation to this material. The cultural content delineates (a) difference(s) between two cultural groups. A culture cluster is a set of culture capsules that deal with the same topic.

There are available culture capsules for over eighty different countries (Peck, op.cit). Each one of them includes sections on family, lifestyle, attitudes, customs and courtesies and history. It also includes, on the first page, a map showing the location of the country in question. The learners can compare and contrast their own and the foreign customs and traditions. The cultural insights gained can be role-played for further practice. Moreover, the learners can work in groups to prepare speeches about culturgrams.

– **Group Discussions**

Group discussions are powerful means to practise the speaking skill, and if their topics are culturally relevant and appropriate, they will be very enriching in terms of cultural learnings. Besides, they develop in the learners tolerance of others and of difference. According to Mee Cheach (op.cit:201), culture should essentially be taught through class discussions rather than what he calls "top down effect in culture dissemination" or "direct inculcation of culture". In other words, a teacher and learners should, in this perspective, discuss and negotiate culture meanings, values, and beliefs instead of a one way cultural instructing or direct teaching.

Classroom discussions aimed at culture teaching should be guided by defined questions. The learners may be prompted to reflect upon both their NC and TC. Cultures should not be reduced to clichés and value judgments. Diversity should be pointed out, and stereotypes and prejudices tackled. The teacher may ask the learners to pretend they are in the others' shoes or to hold the others' views, as a means to reduce their ethnicity and overcome their bias, as well said by Damen (op.cit:288). "A useful cross-cultural strategy is to assign students to a position to which they do not subscribe. If properly explained, students find this exercise exciting. The simulation of empathy for those who hold the opposing view is a useful device to promote intercultural understanding. This is a rewarding strategy, if handled with great care." A class discussion may be triggered by a "what if" question. It more often that not generates misunderstandings and sometimes even hostilities among the learners, but these are only temporary and are a first step towards understanding and reaching consensus.

– **Role-Plays and Simulations**

Roleplaying and dramatization of simulated situations are very useful language and culture teaching activities, for they involve the learners in life-like target cultural experiences and situations, or in "an environment in which they could experience new and different feelings (…) risk-taking, shock, self-doubt, and fear". (Isbell, 1999:10). They would learn on the basis of these techniques how to cope with eventual similar situations. They would also understand that language has not only to do with the transfer of information from one person to another, that it is also used for "small talk", which is sometimes needed in order not to appear unnecessarily brusque and abrupt. The basic aim is, thus, to develop their intercultural

communicative competence, but also to promote empathy towards the TC bearers. To achieve this purpose, the activities should be carefully designed so as to avoid oversimplifications. They may be based on 'culture bumps': "A culture bump occurs when an individual form one culture finds himself or herself in a different strange or uncomfortable situation when interacting with persons of a different culture… [it] occurs when an individual has expectations of one behaviour and gets something completely different". (Jordan, op.cit:105). It should be noted, in addition, that role-plays are not easy to carry in a language classroom: "Undertaking role play or other active, participatory activities often seems to call for more explanation than participation. Many of our students simply don't seem to know how to play our pedagogy games." (Damen, op.cit:20).

Though many scholars believe this type of activities to be "one of a whole gamut of communicative techniques which develops fluency in language students, which promotes interaction in the classroom and which increases motivation" (Porter, 1987: 7), some others question its validity in the matter of improving the learners' socio-cultural and communicative skills: "roleplaying seems to imply that learners will acquire appropriate social norms of the target language-culture by assuming the identity of a member of that speech community. However, in most instances it is not at all clear just how the learners are supposed to get the information they need to adequately enact this identity" (Dubin and Olshtain, op.cit:135). Doubtless, the teacher has a significant role to play in this regard.

– **Situational Exercises and Dialogues**

A situational exercise, as its appellation shows, presents the learners with a particular situation on the basis of which they are supposed to write scripts or complete skits. This serves at the same time as a culture-teaching and testing activity. Kramsch (1993) particularly recommends this type of activities, because they train learners to have an 'insider's' and an 'outsider's' outlook of culture right from the early stages of language and culture learning. Constructing cultural contexts is a situational exercise that consists in writing an ending to a conversation between two native speakers of the TL, or to a short story taking place in the TC, on the basis of the characters involved, and the cultural context in which the event takes place.

Situational exercises may be based on dialogues. The latter are traditional classroom techniques which can be exploited to present, elucidate or practise target

cultural patterns. They may even be used to evaluate cultural learnings, when they are to be produced by the learners themselves, following given instructions. Their value lies in the fact that they call for meaningful language use, and can be geared to serve various target socio-cultural situations and language functions (for instance, applying for a job, shopping, chatting with acquaintances or friends from the TC).

Kramsch (1993:28) conceives of culture teaching as a kind of 'dialogic' education in which the teacher and learners are not just speakers and hearers but they are as well interested "in genuinely exploring the intentions, frames of reference, and reactions of the other participants in the classroom dialogue". So is (or should be) the case in the actual cross-cultural dialogue: each party tries to take the other's perspective, to see the world through the other's eyes, to understand the other without losing sight of oneself.

– **Culture Discovery and Culture Self-Awareness Techniques**

Culture discovery skills or exploratory skills may be developed on the basis of variety of techniques such as undertaking community research projects, field trips, surveys, polls, library research … . The aim is to make the learners discover for themselves cultural information.

Culture self-awareness techniques aim at raising the learners' awareness of themselves and of their personal assumptions, values, attitudes, and worldviews. They may consist in self-assessment questionnaires, problem-solving activities, and value-orientations checklists. Their contents usually deal with general human problems.

– **Media Units**

This has to do with the use of the various audio-visual media to teach about the TC. Reference is made to televised materials (films, news reports, commercials, documentaries, songs and other programmes), radio broadcasts, pictures and photos, internet, printed material etc. . These means have rich cultural contents, and have as well the potential to involve the learners, to elicit their reactions, and to develop their hypothesizing and analytic skills. The learners may be asked to write media reports from radio and / or television, an activity that may cover a variety of current cultural topics. Media may be used in conjunction with other techniques such as role-plays and group discussions to maximize learning.

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– **Culture Quizzes**

A culture quiz is a technique used to evaluate or test culture learnings. The learners are supposed to provide culturally-appropriate answers. Quizzes may be used in conjunction with culture assimilators, capsules or clusters, to evaluate their effectiveness as culture learning techniques. They are also said to stimulate cultural awareness.

3.1.2.2. Activities for Young Learners

Peck (op.cit) suggests several culture teaching techniques that best suit beginning levels such as cultural islands, celebrating foreign festivals, vocabulary activities, translating TL jingles and proverbs, and map tracing.

Teachers are recommended to make of their classrooms small cultural islands through the provision of cultural items such as posters, pictures, maps, charts, books, magazines, newspaper clippings (articles, advertisements, comic strips), and realia of all kinds (money, stamps, costumes, records of contemporary music, pieces of pottery, artifacts…). The learners should take part in the renewal of these items at regular intervals, to sustain their motivation and interest. Their attention should be drawn to the foreign goods existing in their culture and the words, names they already know. These procedures familiarize them with the TC, or help them build mental images in connection with it. Inviting guest speakers (whether native or non native speakers) to give talks in class about cultural aspects is also important and rewarding. It has the further advantage of breaking with the everyday routine, and adding authenticity to the classroom, especially at later stages of language and culture learning. Letters of invitation and thank may be written by the learners themselves.

Celebrating foreign festivals needs much planning in which the learners should be involved, namely decorating the classroom, drawing posters, preparing foods, … . Furthermore, they may take part in the foreign cultural festival by learning, for example, some relevant folk songs, dances and talks. These activities are said to be highly enjoyable among children. They use culture as subject matter to learn both language and culture. Perhaps, there is no need, in our opinion, to actually celebrate foreign festivals or rituals; the learners may just discuss related issues and compare the foreign ways with their own.

To look up names of the TC products in the supermarket, names of artists, restaurants etc is an example of a vocabulary activity. The learners can cut out the names from magazines or newspapers. The teacher should help them to pronounce these names correctly. This technique proves to be motivating for young learners, since it makes them see the immediate usefulness of their FL class. Translating TL jingles and proverbs is also both fun and insightful.

Beginners' maps can be very simple including merely bordering countries, rivers, mountains and the capital city. Then, learners would proceed to the study of more complex ones (large relief maps). Follow-up activities based on maps are numerous. The teacher may ask the learners to infer answers related to climate, sports, on the basis of the map, or to locate the TL-speaking countries on it. Through these activities, the learners will be at the same time practising grammatical and phonological structures.

3.1.2.3. Recommendations

Organizing trips to learn about a FC in its 'home', or to take the learners 'into the field' as ethnographers would express it, remains the most effective technique as it is, besides, to acquire the FL. Byram (1997:18-19) so aptly puts it that such visits "are the richest and most complex opportunity for learning which can be offered to learners in any of the prioritised sectors of education. The total experience of another environment, provided pupils are well prepared and given the opportunity not only to experience but also reflect on the experience, is unlikely to be matched by classroom learning". If FL learners were given the opportunity to be immersed in a TL environment, for a short or a long period, they could engage in a variety of activities such as conducting interviews, field observation of foreign behaviour in specific places or situations, taking photographs of things or people, attending political meetings, studying street graffiti or foreign drivers' behaviour in an accident, going to the theatre or museum, not only to applaud plays and admire pieces of art, but also to discover who goes to the theatre or museum, why and how often.

Nevertheless, most FL pupils and students learn the TL in their own culture, where they have little direct exposure to the TC, and may have no contact with its natives. As an alternative, the teacher should attempt to bring the TL and TC to them, in the classroom. One way to achieve this purpose is the intensive use of audio-visual media, which make available a rich input in terms of authentic language, and a

wealth of information about its culture. The teacher should also provide them with opportunities to use the language as it is actually used in its natural context, to develop their intercultural communicative skills. In addition, distance exchange, i.e., interaction with the TL speakers via both traditional and modern means of communication (letters, telephone, e-mails, …) is equally crucial to develop the learners' intercultural competence, and adds significantly to classroom learning. These projects can be started as class activities, then the learners may continue to have pen-pals and e-friends, and may share the contents of their mails with classmates. Moreover, contacts and exchanges between schools in different countries should also be encouraged as extra-curricular learning opportunities. Within the same school or university cooperation with the teachers of relevant disciplines, be they teachers of science, economics, history, geography, social studies, music, art, or others is also noteworthy to complete the learners' view of the TC. There may even be language clubs with various interests (linguistic and cultural) for further research on both language and culture.

In most of the aforementioned techniques, reflection on cultural events, experiences, symbols, artifacts and patterns of thought and behaviour etc., whether pertaining to the TC or NC, is recommended as an effective means to truly understand a culture. Reflection on cultural matters enlarges the learners' (as well as the teachers') knowledge; it enables them to channel the flow of cultural information to which they are exposed from different sources, and which they may see and/or hear but not grasp; it makes them detect what lies beneath surface matters. Nissilä (1997: 71) expresses the importance of reflection in culture learning in the following words:

> Reflection is a key to the internalisation of knowledge: the trainees' conceptions become more definite and comprehensive through reflection. School pupils should also be given time to reflect and talk about their experiences of foreign cultures. Once the process of becoming sensitive to another culture has started, pupils as well as the trainees will continue making observations and resolutions.

It is worth noting that not all culture teaching activities need to be explicit. Sometimes, just creating an environment in which culture is noted and tolerance and respect are observed is enough to instil awareness.

Another important methodological point worth ending this section with has to do with reviewing cultural items. Finocchiaro and Brumfit (op.cit) advocate the "spiral

approach" for the teaching of cultural items. In this approach, the same socio-cultural item is viewed and reviewed in great depth, at successive levels of language learning, leading to the integration of past and new learning: "We have found that - in regular courses particularly - students return pleasurably to a culture topic and integrate their knowledge with some point of information they have already acquired or an experience they have already had. This is preferable to trying to treat a topic exhaustively all at once" (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, op.cit:129).

Many of the culture teaching techniques and activities outlined previously fit better a culture-based syllabus. However, they can readily be integrated in a structural or a functional communicative syllabus. In our opinion, any activity may be geared to culture teaching, if it is designed on the basis of a cultural context. Taking account of the cultural aspect in FL teaching is basic to enable the learners to read, write, speak and understand speech in the FL.

3.1.3. Integrating Culture through the Four Language Skills
3.1.3.1. Listening Comprehension

Culture is an intrinsic component in listening comprehension. McCarthy (1991) observes that listeners (and readers) resort to an 'outward' or 'exophoric' reference, i.e., reference 'out of' what is said (or written), whether a reference to the immediate real world context or to the assumed shared knowledge between sender and receiver, to be able to comprehend spoken (or written) discourse. This knowledge is partly of the cultural type: "Exophoric references will often be to a world shared by sender and receiver of the linguistic message, regardless of cultural background, but equally often, references will be culture-bound and outside the experiences of the language learner" (McCarthy, ibid:40). Indeed, FL learners cannot identify the referents of such items as for instance 'the city', 'the chancellor', 'Halloween', 'the brunch', by mere anaphoric reference in discourse. Rather, they need to consult an encyclopaedic source or an informant (the teacher). According to Crystal (1997:372), even the 'names' of known representatives of the TC have their weight in understanding everyday discourse: "in every country, knowing the names of the most famous men and women of a culture, whether they are political figures, folk heroes, or media stars, is a major factor in really understanding the meaning of a newspaper report, a debate on television, or the course of conversation."

Passages intended for listening comprehension in a FL class should be authentic, in the sense that they should reflect actual language use in actual communicative situations. Yet, in De Jong's viewpoint, situations may be 'invented', and the language which fits them 'delineated', provided that it corresponds to what native speakers would say in the contexts in question. We believe that this could only be done by native speakers themselves as textbook writers, or at least under their close supervision. In addition, authentic language in actual communicative situations should be selected with reference to the learners' objectives, needs and interests. It goes without saying that texts should as well have a target cultural content.

Comprehension-check questions and other activities accompanying a listening comprehension passage (or a reading one) should not only elicit facts about the content of the passage in question, but should most importantly raise the learners' awareness as to the socio-cultural factors governing language use: who is talking (or writing) to whom, what is being said (or written), when, where and why. The TC patterns of spoken discourse should also be made explicit and distinguished from their NC patterns. With respect to Arab learners of English, Hyde (op.cit:301) puts it clearly that: "Arabic discourse patterns are often not transferable to standard British or American English, so students need to be instructed about target cultures if they are to be able to use target language discourse patterns, and especially if they are expected to listen to and interpret the real pragmatic force of non-indigenized English discourse". Integrating the cultural aspect in listening activities can be accomplished by having the learners listen to a cultural content and perform a task. For example, they may be given maps of the target country, and asked to circle ski or seaside resorts or trace someone's trip, as this is read aloud by the teacher. The learners may also listen to music, songs and radio broadcasts.

Given that music and songs are relaxing, motivating, and culture-rich, they have given rise to a positive affective approach to language and culture learning. This approach breaks with the routine and monotony of everyday classroom work, and makes of the teaching / learning process an enjoyable and an entertaining experience. Jedynak (2000: 30) defines music as "a manifestation of culture and of the human need to communicate". It has been used in FL classes in many ways, and for different objectives. In the framework of suggestopedia, music is conceived of as a means of relaxation. Music is also a powerful vehicle of culture in the FL classroom. Regarding songs, Failoni (1997: 400) so suitably puts it: "One of the few

music/language researchers states that a song is an ideal marriage of poetry and music and is one of the most authentic expressions of people, their feelings, and their everyday life". Both the lyrics of songs and their musical styles are culturally significant, and may be linked to a variety of activities, not only in relation to listening, but also to other skills - reading, speaking (singing) and writing, to enhance the learners' knowledge and understanding of the TC. On the one hand, musical texts may convey many themes pertinent to the TC, reflecting faithfully the values, beliefs and way of life of its members. The lyrics may also reflect cultural differences as well as linguistic variations among the countries which speak the TL. On the other hand, the choice of musical instruments, singing style and rhythm are actual manifestations of aspects of the TC. Musical styles mirror the culture they belong to, and may be a useful means to explore it. The learners will react to the music; they can talk or write about their impressions, likes, dislikes; they can as well compare what is foreign to what they are familiar with, without undervaluing the one or the other.

To be efficiently used in class, songs should be programmed together with a set of appropriate activities, such as comprehension questions, fill in blanks, role plays and writing follow-ups. As an example of the latter activity, the learners may be asked to imagine themselves the main or one of the characters of a song, and write a related story, dialogue or letter that would fit the foreign cultural context. A song is to be played as many times as needed, and may even be learned by the whole class. Some teachers find it beneficial to play melodies from the TC as background music during classroom activities. Some others choose to focus on songs accompanying dramatic play or songs that tell a story, because they are appropriate for extended activities. Other teachers prefer to make the learners work on popular music, being one of their (the learners') 'few' attractions, particularly in EFL settings, the reason why it should be exploited more regularly and more systematically in the FL classroom (Domoney and Harris, 1993). It remains always salutary to survey the learners' interests and preferences, and make selections accordingly. What should be remembered, above all, is the fact that music is a valuable tool to teach about the TC, and not only about language structures, vocabulary, pronunciation and rhythm, as well said by Brooks (op.cit:32) "Music is welcomed in the language class not because it teaches language but because it represents other elements of culture in a most appealing form".

3.1.3.2. Speaking

Culture can be clearly sensed in verbal exchanges. To begin with , forms of address , or 'markers of social deixis', in Kramsch's words (1998:131) , are language indicators of where the speaker stands socially in relation to the hearer .For example, the use of 'tu' and 'vous' in the French language is culturally significant of the social status of the speaker and that assigned to the learner: 'vous' connotes power or distance, while 'tu' solidarity, closeness, or the subordination of the addressee.

Cultures have different conventions of use regarding social deixis markers. Culture is also reflected in the interactors' adoption of social positioning, what Goffman calls 'footing', that is, "the stance we take up to ourselves and to the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of utterances." (Kramsch ibid: 42). Footing is manifested through, for instance, the tone of the voice (intonation, pronunciation), body language and the register used. These instances and others reflect the way the speaker perceives his/her role as a participant in a communicative interaction, taking place in a defined cultural context. An example is in order: "it is frequently the case in the United States that a Northerner talking to a Southerner instinctively aligns his / her way of talking on that of the Southerner, as a sign of conversational co-operation". (Kramsch, ibid: 42). By choosing one's footing or defining one's position vis-à-vis others in a communicative interaction, people implement and perpetuate their culture.

Another aspect demonstrating the presence of culture in spoken language interchanges is face-work, i.e., the strategies adopted to protect face. In the Japanese culture in particular, saving social face is crucial in any communicative interaction. The latter is framed in such a way that juniors or inferiors have to begin speaking first, taking a greater risk than seniors or superiors of face loss.

Conversational styles are also governed by socio-cultural factors. In a conversation, adopting one style or another depends not only on the situation in which the verbal exchange takes place, but also on the general cultural context. Cultures vary in the way they use discourse styles even in the same context of situation. Some cultures are said to have a more formal conversational style characterized by conciseness and exactitude. Though people can adopt various styles, they are culturally conditioned to prefer one or the other, in a particular situation. Generally speaking, however, the typical style of an 'interview', for example, is clearly different from the informal / intimate style of friendly chatting,

whatever their cultural context. The former is normally characterized by a non overlapping sequence of turns, and a sense of detachment, while the latter by overlaps, paralinguistic signals such as signs and interjections, hence, a high feeling of interpersonal involvement, in Kramsch's words, more 'literate' and more 'orate' style, respectively. The continuum orate-literate operates differently in different cultural traditions. In a like manner, the discourse styles adopted in story-telling are also culture-bound. In some cultures, people are said to be "better" story tellers than in others (Tannen, 1993; in Kramsch, 1998): they adopt a narrative style that focuses more on interpersonal involvement than on the content of the story. They do so by including, for instance, judgement about the characters' behaviours or about the message of the story. It should be remembered, however, that the criteria of good story-telling vary from one culture to another.

FL and FC learners should be made aware of all these cultural facets. They should be given opportunities to express their opinions about what is both native and foreign. In addition, they should engage in simulations and role plays that reflect the TC ways. Various other activities can be designed to develop the learners' ability to perform tasks using linguistically correct and culturally appropriate language.

Integrating the TC into lessons on the speaking skill means, as well, teaching about the non-verbal aspects of communication: "communication is not the rapid fire exchange of linguistically accurate complete sentences. It is the sometimes slow, sometimes painful, sometimes non-verbal exchange of thoughts between human beings". (Savignon, 1972:66). Peck (op.cit: 3) points out the importance of gestures in a language classroom stating: "Gesture, although learned, is largely an unconscious cultural phenomenon. Gesture conveys the "feel" of the language to the student and when accompanied by verbal communication, injects greater authenticity into the classroom and makes language study more interesting". Scanlan (1997) considers the ability to analyse a photograph or to interpret a non-verbal scene of crucial importance, and believes it to be an important FL skill that is inextricably linked to the four major skills. Morain (1997) puts forward the concept of 'visual literacy' by which he means the ability to decode visual signs in one's environment, including the non-verbal means of communication such as gestures, facial expressions, and hands movements. Visual literary in a FC is, according to Morain, needed to avoid misunderstandings.

One of the aims of a culture-teaching course may be, for instance, to raise the learners' awareness of touch and eye-contact in the TC. Another aim may be teaching about proxemics; unawareness or ignorance of one's interlocutors' proxemic behaviours may lead not only to failure in communication, but also to feelings of rejection and even hostility. As previously mentioned (chapter two, section 2.4.), there are 'high-contact' cultures and 'low-contact' cultures, depending on whether people maintain small or large distances one from the other, while interacting. FL and FC teachers and learners should be sensitive to these cultural differences. Teaching strategies based on visual media are very useful to instruct about the non-verbal aspects of the TC. Film viewing, for instance, followed by a class discussion, then by practice in the framework of dialogues or role-plays are effective means to teach about both verbal and non-verbal patterns of communication. The learners are also recommended to read relevant literature, which is always an insightful activity. They may even carry out experiments to explore people's reactions to inappropriate non-verbal behaviours: for example, to wink or to smile to a stranger, to stand closer than usual to a person, to sit in someone's usual place, or to sit with strangers in a restaurant. When possible, contact with the native speakers of the TL offers golden opportunities to observe their behaviours and attitudes. For Robinson (1991), the learners are not only supposed to know *'about'* body language and other communication patterns in the TC. This would be analogous to learning *'about'* rather than learning a FL. They should, in her opinion, acquire these communication patterns, and achieve what she calls 'cultural versatility'.

In our viewpoint, FL and FC teachers should raise the learners' awareness about the TC communicative strategies and styles, whether linguistic or non-linguistic. Nevertheless, they should not compel them to appropriate these foreign ways. The learners should feel free to go on with their own ways, and it is the teachers' duty to back them to preserve their native tradition. Their other equally important duty is to teach them how to tolerate difference and not to form value judgements about others.

3.1.3.3. Reading Comprehension

To teach about a FC in some European countries means to make the learners read contemporary or classic literature, as well as contemporary documents about

the foreign society, with a particular focus on its social and political problems (Byram, 1992). It may be thought that the simplest skill to integrate with culture is that of reading, since all that is apparently needed is to select reading passages with a cultural content. What is crucial, in addition, is to design appropriate accompanying activities, so as to make sure the texts are read for their cultural content, and not for grammatical illustrations or pronunciation practice.

The importance of the cultural content should also be born in mind when selecting the material to be read in class. Cameron Bacon (1997:331) states that what counts most is the authentic cultural content of the material rather than its grammar or other pedagogical foci: "to insist on a pedagogical grammar focus in reading, however, may unduly restrict the kinds of readings that one should introduce to students. Rather, the authentic cultural message of each text takes precedence over the pedagogical focus." Furthermore, Lee's research findings (in Cameron Bacon, ibid.) indicate that grammatical structures, such as the subjunctive, do not cause difficulties of comprehension for beginning readers of Spanish, whereas what seems to be grammatically simple such as the language of a menu does not guarantee actual comprehension. A text is said to be authentic when it is intended for a native–reader audience. Although readers may incorporate real-life cultural information, they are not necessarily authentic.

It should be noted, however, that authentic texts may be deceptively difficult and challenging, thereby causing frustration for non–native readers. FL and FC teachers should, thus, carefully select passages that are not only authentic, but also accessible to the learners. Novice and intermediate learners may first begin with reading material as available in short documents such as train schedules, menus, announcements, advertisements, and television guides. The culture lessons that can be learned from birth, death, wedding announcements, for instance, are various: they may relate to the system of (first and last) names, god parents, the importance of the extended family, the norms of Catholicism, customs surrounding birth and marriage. Then, lengthier documents such as news items, editorials, newspaper and magazine articles, extracts from books, encyclopaedias and printed media of all sorts would be gradually introduced. Eventually, literary texts (short stories, novels and other literary genres) could be enjoyed when the learners would have developed sufficient skill for such reading.

Selected passages to teach about the TC should not contain only tacit and implicit cultural information. On the contrary, focus should be on texts which deal explicitly with the TC. In addition, they should be made open to encourage the learners to express their own opinions and interpretations. The teacher may elicit the learners' reactions vis-à-vis foreign behaviours, but also vis-à-vis their own behaviours, and the way these might possibly be viewed by foreigners. This procedure stimulates the learners' interpretation skills, going beyond the traditional mere listing of facts. The other equally important teacher's task is, thus, to guide the learners to discover and grasp the cultural content of a text, as they engage in the process of comprehending it. For this purpose, appropriate activities should be designed. Professionals recommend tasks prior to reading, in order to introduce relevant cultural elements that would make the passage to be read meaningful to the learners, and post-reading activities for fostering comprehension and for expanding the learners' appreciation of the TC.

Every reading should be preceded by at least one culture-related pre-reading activity so as to set the scene and get the learners closer to the content of the reading passage. One suggestion is to ask the learners to reflect upon cultural phenomena as seen in the NC, prior to reading about them in the TC. According to the schema theory, the reading skill involves an interaction between the reader's schemata (i.e., background knowledge stored in one's mind, part of which is cultural knowledge) and the text itself. So, if the cultural content of the latter is remote from the learners' background knowledge, it is likely not to be comprehended by them. To provide the learners with pre-reading cultural (and linguistic) explanations helps them understand roughly what the passage to be read is about. This preliminary introduction should be brief, to pave the way for a deepened study and discussion of the cultural issues embedded in the text, when the students are actually immersed in reading.

Post-reading activities require the learners to process the information just read, and compare it to the information about the NC discussed before. The teacher should as well consider designing activities having other various objectives: to recognize cultural patterns via a written account, to identify cultural beliefs and values as reflected in selected passages, to empathise without judging with the motives, skills and assumptions of the TC, and so on…. The learners may work on the cultural topics embedded in the reading passage in groups. Each group deals with one

aspect on the basis of what is revealed in terms of attitudes, actions, reactions and other clues given by the writer. Given the fact that FL classes are usually constituted of mixed-ability groups, the teacher may use different cultural readings, purported for different levels, on the same topic. In this case, the same pre-reading activity would be used with the whole class, but post-reading would be done in small groups. Then, the content of the various passages could be compared among the groups.

The importance of cultural knowledge to understand written discourse is undeniable. Indeed, when the learners read in a FL, they decode what they read on the basis of their own cultural background and experiences. Harrison (1990: 45) argues that: "the 'message' in any text does not flow unimpeded, as a constant, from the writer to the reader, but that each individual reader must wrestle with a given text, and will interpret it in the light of his or her sensibility, world-view and cultural experience, in whatever cultures". And since the reader's culture (NC) is likely to be different from the writer's (TC), what is understood may be quite different from what is intended. Thus, the reader should share the same cultural assumptions and norms as the writer, to be able to fill in the unstated inferences. Valdes (op.cit:28) talks about a common schema:

> Even if the student follows the process of matching his schema to the material, he is likely to form false anticipations as he reads which will result in frustrating confusion and leave him puzzling over the meaning. Ignore the culture and read for factual information? The world is not made up of factual information, cut and dried. In order to understand the message, the reader must find a common schema with the author, who is trying to communicate by presenting the unfamiliar through overt or covert comparisons with the familiar in his own schema of the world. This can be accomplished only through the reader's understanding, in some depth, of the culture of the author.

Kramsch (1993) believes that the socio-cultural meanings of discourse as perceived by the native speakers of the TL should be made explicit to foreign readers, if they are to actually comprehend the text, in her words, to "authenticate the text" or to perform "authentic reading". In other words, failure of FL learners to read authentic material is due to cultural rather than linguistic impediments: "The issue that is raised by the use of real-life materials is that culture is a reality that is social, political, and ideological and that the difficulty of understanding cultural codes stems from the

difficulty of viewing the world from another perspective, not of grasping another lexical or grammatical code." (Kramsch, 1993: 188).

FL texts are not only seeded with aspects depicting the FC, but they are also conceived in such a way as to reflect particular discourse features and styles belonging to the culture in question. Kramsch (1998) states that culture in written discourse is manifested through cohesion and coherence devices. Cohesion displays a certain logical and rhetorical progression throughout the text. Coherence is the outcome of the reader's response elicited by the discourse being read. She believes that one cannot get the full meaning of a text unless it is dealt with as discourse, hence considering what happens in the mind of the reader when dealing with it and considering also the contextual factors of its production and reception.

When reading a piece of discourse, what Kramsch (ibid.) calls a 'literacy event', that is, the "interaction of a reader or community of readers with a written text" (p129), contextual factors interfere with one's understanding of it. These factors, as mentioned above, relate to both contexts of production and reception, i.e., they have to do with the writer's as well as the reader's contexts. The first important context to consider is the socio-historical cultural context of the text. Any text can be associated with other existing texts, 'prior texts', in that it can be seen as a response to them. A reader makes sense of a new text by relating it to other relevant texts available to him/her in his/her culture. In addition, any text puts forward a point of view, an ideological point of view that reflects the beliefs, values and assumptions of its writer, aspects that constitute the culture s/he belongs to. Understanding this point of view and its underlying bases is crucial for understanding the text being read. One has to understand as well the text's propositional content, purpose, intended audience, register, and key (or the writer's stance, whether ironic, humorous, factual etc.), elements that form, according to Kramsch (ibid.), the second important context, namely, the context of situation of the text. She notes that the difficulty to read in a FC has more to do with the cultural coherence of discourse than with its internal cohesion. She illustrates the point with the following example: "a sentence like 'Although he was over 20 years old, he still lived at home' written for an American readership, draws on the readers' cultural knowledge concerning young men's independence from their families, but might not be self-evident for readers from a culture where young men continue to live at home well into their twenties" (Kramsch, ibid: 59).

It appears that teaching reading across cultures is not an easy work. One of the basic tasks of FL teachers, in addition to selecting materials with an authentic cultural content and designing pre-reading an post-reading activities (as explained above), is to reconstitute and elucidate the cultural contextual factors of FL discourse (both in its spoken and written forms) to the learners, to make it more meaningful and coherent to them. This means raising the learners' awareness about cultural differences in discourse styles. One way to foster this awareness is to resort to role-play techniques in which foreign styles are adopted (instead of native ones). Another way is to explicitly elucidate these styles and show how much they are different from native ones, what Kramsch (1993) calls "metatalk". An effective approach to explore a written or spoken passage in a FL class, in our opinion, should go beyond providing the learners with the dictionary meaning of some lexical items or some sporadic cultural notes. It should, in addition, clarify the social, historical, political, religious philosophy which accounts for a culture's style of presentation of facts, that is, to make explicit the intentions lying behind words, utterances, textual patterns and images.

3.1.3.4. Writing

The invention of writing revolutionized the way culture was acquired and transmitted. 'Textual' tradition replaced 'oral' tradition, in Kramsch's words (1998:53): "The invention of writing around 3000 BC transformed oral tradition, transmitted through storytelling, bardic epics, mythical re-enactments and performances, into textual tradition, handed down by scribes". Written language played a critical role, particularly in the transmission and learning of religious beliefs henceforth preserved in 'sacred' books. It is worth mentioning that though what is written is perpetuated, it is usually very difficult to uncover the original meaning of ancient documents, since the context in which they had been written is lost in time and space. They need, thus, to be tentatively reinterpreted by specialists. Yet, cultural meanings as contained in written or printed texts have always been monopolized and censored by sources of power, namely, the church, first (in western countries), then the academy, the press and the political institutions. One example of the academic monopoly over the interpretation of written texts, in traditional times, was to focus the attention of readers merely on formal linguistic aspects such as the literal meanings of words and

correct grammar and spelling, excluding personal reactions to the content, i.e., to the social and cultural meanings the text incorporates (Kramsch, 1998)

A written text reflects, in its form and content, patterns of thought that are bound up with the culture of the writer. In fact, the purpose of writing, how the text should be constructed to achieve this purpose, what is considered a logical progression of the text, what is proper to write, the target audience, the circumstances of writing, and other conventions of written discourse are shaped by culture, and thus differ cross-culturally. In other words, every culture defines its 'genres' by specifying their form, content, language, audience in a way that is not necessarily shared by other cultures: "What might have been intended as an American children's story might be viewed by foreign readers as an adult cautionary tale" (Kramsch, 1993:122).

Genres of written discourse existing in a culture may have no counterparts in another. For example, as delineated by Kachru (op.cit:78), the English literary genres ballads and lyrics do not correspond, as it may be thought, to the Hindi pada and geet; "the latter are short poems meant to be sung, not just read and recited". Another example may be the written invitation entailed by a wedding in some cultures such as the Anglo-American tradition. This written form does not exist in cultures which rely above all on the oral, face-to-face invitation. It can be implied that the text genre that is appropriate in a culture (application form, business letter, political pamphlet or other…) is not necessarily so in another. What is more, there may be different rhetorical patterns associated with the 'same' genre across cultures. An argumentative text in American and British English, for instance, is based on the problem-solution design. The writer raises an issue, discusses it, suggests a solution and argues for its effectiveness. Argumentative texts in other cultures do not necessarily have the same structure and purpose. The English text is generally characterized by 'linearity' and 'hierarchy', while the Arabic by 'parallelism' and 'repetition'. The Arabs favour the 'circular' or the 'spiral' textual pattern to the straight linear one. The Germans are also said to be non-linear in their writings. In German academic texts, McCarthy (op.cit:165) notes "a greater amount of parenthetical information and freedom to digress than [in] English writing of the same kind". He points out, also, that German writers prefer to use a bridging sentence between paragraphs while the English a topic sentence. Other cultures have other different styles: the Indian Sanskrit is 'ornate' and 'metaphorical' (Kachru, op.cit), the

Japanese is 'digressive' (McCarthy, op.cit), and the Oriental, in general, is 'indirect' (Kaplan 1966; in McCarthy, op.cit).

Rhetorical styles and genres develop on the basis of the social structure of a community. Hence, it is difficult to train the learners in another foreign way of thinking and writing. According to research carried out in this domain, many years of language learning may not enable members of other cultures to write according to the rhetorical paradigms expected in the TC, or to achieve a native –like proficiency in writing. Some researchers question whether this goal is at all necessary. Besides, as observed by Kachru (op.cit:85), real texts in any language or culture generally show variation from the idealized theoretical models: "It is the tension between received conventions and the innovative spirit of the individual that produces good writing in academic disciplines, as well as in creative literature".

We think that FL learners should be taught about the 'textual patterns' of the FL. They should not only be assisted to improve their lexico-grammatical competence at sentence-level, but also, at the macro-level of discourse progression and organization. This would at least assist them in reading comprehension (as delineated in the previous sub-section). It is then up to them to adopt these patterns or not in their written performances.

Culture can be integrated in writing assignments in many ways: for instance, to have the learners write actual letters or e-mails to native speakers (pen pals, companies, travel agencies, …), soliciting information of various kinds. It goes without saying that the learners should first be taught how to write such letters (personal, business, …). Another task may be to give the learners a topic sentence in the form of one or more cultural generalization, and ask them to provide supporting details to illustrate the target cultural topic. The learners' written performances in a FL should be evaluated for their cultural as well as linguistic content, thereby encouraging adequate attention to both components.

3.1.4. Integrating Culture through Grammar and Vocabulary Lessons

When teaching grammar, the instructor is supposed to present target grammatical points and structures, and to provide for their practice in culturally relevant contexts. Concerning the simple past tense structure, for instance, instead of asking the learners about what they did yesterday or last week-end, why not asking