

EFL Teachers' Culture Teaching Perspectives and Practices

Hassan ZAID

Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Béni Mellal, Morocco

Zaidhassan37@gmail.com

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v7i4.2198>

APA Citation: ZAID, H. (2025). EFL Teachers' Culture Teaching Perspectives and Practices. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*. 7(4).71-88. <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v7i4.2198>

Received:

29/04/2025

Accepted:

21/06/2025

Keywords:

culture teaching, integration, intercultural competence, perceptions, practices.

Abstract

This study examines the perceptions and practices of Moroccan English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers regarding the teaching of culture. A quantitative survey design was used to gather data from 60 EFL teachers. Descriptive statistics were used to explore teachers' perceptions of culture teaching and instructional practices in their classes. First, the results reveal that most teachers acknowledge the importance of incorporating culture into language teaching, perceiving it as both a fundamental aspect of language teaching and crucial for reinforcing students' cultural identities. Teachers also expressed favourable views towards intercultural education, considering it essential to foster tolerance. However, opinions vary on whether students need advanced language proficiency before engaging in cultural learning. Second, teachers use a variety of cultural activities, including dialogues, role-plays, cultural comparisons, and authentic materials to teach culture in their classrooms. However, certain activities, such as cultural research projects and personal cultural narratives, are less frequently used. Finally, the pedagogical implications highlight the need for a principled approach that bridges the gap between being aware of the prominence of cultural integration and effectively implementing it in EFL classrooms to cultivate critical intercultural communicative competence to avoid idealization of the target culture and preserve local cultures.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent initiatives by the Ministry of Education in Morocco aim to strengthen the status of the English language in the educational system, reflecting its role in today's globalized world. The Higher Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research (2015) has recognized the need for English proficiency, prompting plans to introduce it in primary schools by 2025. This recognition reflects its growing significance in the educational landscape, which is put into practice through the Ministry of National Education's 2023 circular to introduce English in the first year of middle school in the 2023-3024 school year (Ministry of National Education, Preschool and Sports, 2023). Therefore, the necessity of English language proficiency has become increasingly evident in Morocco. However, a caution should be sounded that learning a language without understanding its associated culture can lead learners to become "fluent fools" (Bennett, 1993; Bennett, Bennett, and Allen, 2003). Similarly, Krasner (1999) asserts that ignoring cultural aspects in language teaching can lead to miscommunication and culture shock, as effective communication requires more than just linguistic competence; it must also involve an understanding of cultural contexts. Consequently, without teaching the other cultures or intercultural competence, language proficiency remains limited and limits learners' ability to communicate successfully.

The interconnection between language and culture has been well-established in foreign language teaching (see Lafayette, 1997, 2003). It is widely assumed that language and culture are so intertwined that they are inseparable (c.f. Damen, 1987; Hinkel, 1999; Kuo and Lai, 2006; Purba, 2011; Zaid, 2013). Therefore, it is axiomatic that culture is embedded in language (Agar, 1994) and hence culture learning needs to be implemented as a fundamental component of language classes (Buttjes & Byram, 1991; Byram & Morgan, 1994; Kramsch, 1993). In addition, Damen (1987) argues that cultural skills are considered the fifth dimension of the language classroom. Kramsch (1993) expands on this perspective by asserting that culture is not just an additional skill but an integral part of language learning from the very beginning. Therefore, the inadvertent teaching of the target language culture has been considered inescapable in foreign language teaching. However, contemporary developments in a modern approach to language education have fundamentally reshaped the goals of language education, moving from the focus on linguistic competence to communicative competence and then to an emphasis on not only intercultural competence, which represents the shift towards the teaching of culture as an integral component of the target language (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1997; Crozet, Liddicoat, & Bianco, 1999), but also a critical view that calls for a crucial cross-cultural communicative competence or C5 (Sehlaoui, 1999, 2018). Instead of solely emphasizing the target culture, proponents of intercultural education endorse an approach that raises learners' awareness of diverse cultures to cultivate C5. The remainder of this literature review explores the complexity of defining culture, its manifestations in language teaching methods, and the varied approaches to its integration in language teaching.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept "culture" poses definitional challenges, as it has evolved significantly over time and acquired various meanings across disciplines. Arnold (1869) described culture as "the best that has been thought and said in the world ... culture is, or ought to be, the study and pursuit of perfection" (cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, p. 29). In other words, culture is described in this perspective as the study of the best ideas and expressions from around the world. It is tantamount to what Sapir described as a "man of culture" or "cultured group" versus the folk, to refer to the activities of the elite (Irvine, 2002). This view, however, has been criticized for being elitist and ethnocentric, often referred to as big 'C' Culture, because it excludes the majority of humans from accessing this type of culture.

In contrast, anthropologists such as Tylor defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society" (Tylor 1871, p.1 cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, p.43). Tylor's definition emphasizes that culture is not exclusive to the elite but reflects the entire way of life of all members of society, or what is referred to as small 'c' culture. In fact, most subsequent anthropologists defined culture in terms of small c culture as behaviour patterns or way of life. The distinction between Big C (as fine arts and formal literature) and small c (everyday practices or minutiae) culture originated in anthropological studies (see Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). This distinction was later adopted in language education to address the overemphasis on elite cultural artifacts (e.g., literature, art) at the expense of lived social norms (e.g., greetings, gestures) (see Brooks, 1966) as was the case with grammar translation method teaching practices.

However, with the advent of methods such as the direct method and the audiolingual method, there was a shift in focus in language teaching towards small ‘c’ culture and communication, or speaking. While the direct method moved beyond a strict emphasis on fine arts, other methods, such as the audiolingual method and Suggestopedia, emphasized the role of everyday behaviour of the people who use the target language (Larson-Freeman, 2011). With the emergence of communicative approaches and communicative competence, a concept attributed to Dell Hymes (1972), culture is perceived as the use of language in the everyday life of people who use it or small c culture. By the 1980s, communicative language teaching had led to a shift in language teaching, moving away from dealing with big ‘C’ culture to small ‘c’ culture of everyday life (Kramersch, 2013). However, this division is inadequate. The critics argued against the risk of reducing explicit cultural content instruction to oversimplified stereotypes, which reflects subjective interpretations of culture, as shaped by the perspectives of curriculum developers or textbook designers (see Atkinson, 1999; Kramersch, 2013; Phillips, 2003), while focusing on big ‘C’ Culture remains teaching on the level of facts, such as history, literature, etc. (Phillips, 2003) or factual information (Lafayette, 1997). Therefore, contemporary approaches advocate integrating both dimensions, as seen in intercultural models (see Peterson & Coltrane, 2003; Byram, 2021). In language teaching, Canale and Swain (1980) expanded the concept of communicative competence to encompass grammatical competence, socio-cultural competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. As a result, communicative language teaching prompted language educators and institutions worldwide to reconsider their teaching methods, curricula, and instructional materials (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Richards, 2006). This evolution in understanding language proficiency shifted the focus from mere acquisition of linguistic forms to using these forms in different contexts appropriately. Consequently, foreign language teaching has placed importance on helping learners develop language proficiency through active participation in communicative activities and performing language functions. However, this perspective is still based on the premise put forth by Hymes, which puts more emphasis on social context and which can lead to a deterministic view of communication, suggesting that individuals are simply products of their social environment. On the other hand, Kramersch (2021) suggested “symbolic competence” to develop the concept of communicative competence through the aspect of symbolic power. Since we are engaging with a symbolic system and not merely a linguistic one, language teachers need to teach the symbolic dimension of language as discourse, “how it works, how it affects people, how they can harness it to represent themselves and the reality that surrounds them, to act upon it, and to create future possible worlds” (Kramersch, 2021, p. 201).

In line with this, since foreign language learning inherently connects students with cultures different from their own (Byram, 202; Secru et al., 2005), expanding communicative competence to include intercultural competence has been proposed to enable learners to navigate diverse cultural perspectives more effectively (Byram, 2021; Secru, 2006). Other researchers, such as Crozet, Liddicoat, and Bianco (1999), for the teaching of culture in language classes, suggested intercultural language teaching and how this new approach to foreign language education enables target language learners to be aware of how to negotiate a relaxed third place between the self and the other. The latter consists in neither retaining one’s own cultural reference nor embracing that of the foreign interlocutors. However, in order not to reduce the presented cultural content into stereotypes (see Atkinson, 1999; Kramersch, 2013),

researchers such as Phipps (2019) called for decolonizing multilingualism, and even multiculturalism, through critical thinking about how we present languages along with their cultures by moving beyond fixed structures tied to nation-states, especially in new foreign hosting contexts and environment. In line with this, other researchers suggested a critical perspective to intercultural communicative competence (c.f. Byram, 1997, 2012, 2021 and Liddicoat, 2019, 2024), while Sehlaoui (1999, 2018) advocated Critical Cross-Cultural Communicative Competence (C5). Therefore, as Kumaravadivelu (2008) argued, the challenges language teachers face are further intensified by the forces of globalization, which are reshaping global intellectual and cultural capital flow.

It is argued that foreign language teaching should extend beyond simple information exchange to emphasize relationship-building and understanding others' perspectives (Byram, 2021). This is because communicative approaches, though widely adopted, have not sufficiently improved intercultural competence or communication skills (Crozet, Liddicoat, & Bianco, 1999). Byram (2021) differentiates between intercultural competence in a shared language and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in a foreign language. In same-language contexts, such as a French doctor talking with a French teacher, intercultural competence involves understanding each other's professional language and perspective. In foreign-language interactions, however, ICC requires more complex skills. When speakers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, like French and German professionals, to communicate, they must bridge both language barriers and cultural differences. This demands not just language skills but also an ability to adapt to and understand unfamiliar cultural perspectives. Byram (2021) also argues that foreign language teaching should not bear sole responsibility for developing intercultural communicative competence; subjects such as literature and history also expose students to different foreign cultural perspectives. This indicates that fostering intercultural communicative competence involves teaching the culture of the target language and incorporating a variety of other cultures and other subjects.

Although culture is recognized as important in language teaching, the question of what to teach when teaching culture remains unresolved due to the complexity of defining culture. Moreover, because of the breadth and depth of culture, it is difficult to choose which of its aspect to include in the school curriculum (Lafayette, 1997). Despite this challenge, the emergence of standards-based education and the national standards for foreign languages has simplified the approach by reducing culture to three key components: practices, products, and perspectives. The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996) introduced the five goal areas known as the "five Cs" among which culture is one of them along with communication, connections, comparisons, and communities. Four of these standards focus specifically on culture: The first standard for culture 2.1 emphasizes the association between the perspectives and practices of the target culture, highlighting how cultural practices reflect underlying attitudes and values; Standard 2.2 addresses the relationship between cultural products and perspectives, which encompasses both tangible items and intangible expressions that embody a culture's beliefs and values; Standard 3.2 refers to students' acquisition of knowledge and identification of distinctive cultural perspectives accessible solely through the target language and its associated cultures; and standard 4.2 tackles students' ability to exhibit cultural awareness by analysing similarities and differences between target cultures and their

native culture. Together, these standards advocate for exploring culture through three dimensions—practices, products, and perspectives known as the 3Ps (The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 1996). Because cultures reside in persons, who in turn are hosted by communities, Moran (2001) added persons and communities to the 3Ps. He views cultural perspectives, which are collectively held beliefs and values, as being expressed through products, practices, persons, and communities, which serve simultaneously to shape them. These perspectives, whether overt or tacit, are reflected in the concrete creations (products) and behavioural patterns (practices). However, the standards adopts the same traditional dual definition of culture with a capital C and culture with a small c (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). According to Bennett, Bennett, and Allen (2003), while the standards' definition of culture—which emphasizes the interplay among perspectives, products, and practices—represents progress over other traditional definitions, “it still has the disadvantage of defining culture as something out there—a body of material to be explored and eventually mastered—as opposed to an interactive process between learners and cultural contexts” (p. 242). Moreover, they argue that standards are less explicit in suggesting how to structure cultural learning. As Crawford and Maclaren (2003) argued, cultures can not be reduced to standardized behaviour and beliefs that can be delineated or simplistic practices such as preparing the table or eating etiquette that could serve as information-based teaching content. Instead, cultures are dynamic and socially embedded phenomena that are enacted within real-world contexts. On the other hand, while the 3Ps provide a more transparent framework for teaching culture, it may also risk oversimplifying the rich and multifaceted nature of culture. By focusing solely on practices, products, and perspectives, the approach may overlook deeper cultural complexities such as power dynamics and social inequities, which are essential for a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication.

3. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

A handful of empirical studies investigating teachers' perceptions and practices in the teaching of culture and the promotion of intercultural competence in EFL classes have accrued. For instance, Rohmani and Andriyanti (2022) examined the beliefs, attitudes, and classroom practices of 144 Indonesian junior high school English teachers in relation to culture teaching. The findings indicated that teachers not only appreciated cultural teaching in language classes but also actively incorporated cultural components into their teaching through their use of various authentic materials, including films, magazines, and social media, as well as the use of Internet and YouTube, to provide students with a broader cultural understanding. Importantly, the teachers showed awareness of the negative cultural impacts on students, such as imitating fashion and food—particularly among teenagers. Also in Indonesia, Yusri and Andriyanti (2025) investigated high school EFL teachers' perceptions and practices in promoting intercultural competence in classrooms. They reported that teachers had positive perceptions of integrating intercultural competence. In terms of practice, teachers reported using various activities such as group work, collaborative dialogue, discussions, presentations, and media-based tasks. Similarly, Sabilah et al. (2025) conducted their study in two high schools (one public and one private) in Malang and found that EFL teachers employed variety of activities such as discussion, role-play, text analysis, original sources, and digital media to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence.

Hermessi (2017) explored Tunisian teachers' perceptions of cultural content in English language teaching materials. The results indicated that even though teachers generally agree on the prominence of culture in language teaching, some teachers tend to filter out culturally different elements they deem incompatible with local values. This ambivalence reflects a concern for the inclusion of "English" cultural content, which some teachers perceive as potentially alienating or carrying undesirable influences. Similarly, Adaskou et al. (1990) reported that most Moroccan teachers believed that the use of a "foreign milieu, by inviting cultural comparisons," (p.7) could lead to discontent with local culture. They argued that the problem lies not just in the novelty of foreign settings but in the stark contrasts between their culture and foreign cultures that offer greater "material advantages, economic opportunities, and freedom of behaviour" (p. 8).

In Morocco, Akharraz and Tamer (2021) conducted a study to investigate the opinions and practices of EFL teachers regarding the teaching of culture at the second-year Baccalaureate level in Souss Massa Academy. The findings of the study indicated that the participants exhibited a sound understanding of the importance of teaching culture. Notwithstanding participants' self-reported use of various activities to incorporate culture in the classroom, the results revealed a lack of emphasis on teaching different cultural perspectives (values, ideas, attitudes). The results also indicated a disconnect between foreign language teachers' views on teaching culture and their actual implementation of these principles in cultural instruction. The study identified several obstacles for EFL teachers, including the culture of assessment, limited teaching time, the broadness of the concept of culture, prioritization of linguistically dense textbooks, preparation for national exams that exclude culture assessment, and a lack of clear standards for culture teaching. In practice, Berkane (2025) implemented a week-long project-based lesson with first-year baccalaureate students about celebrations around the world to foster intercultural understanding. In groups, students first researched celebrations, second created cultural projects, and third presented their work. She concluded that project work helped students develop an awareness of and sensitivity to different cultures, critical thinking, teamwork, and respect for a variety of traditions and celebrations.

While the study by Akharraz and Tamer (2021) specifically examined teachers' perspectives and practices regarding the teaching of culture in the Souss Massa Academy, research on culture integration in EFL contexts and teachers' teaching practices in Morocco and other northern African countries remains very limited, if not lacking. Consequently, there remains a significant gap in our understanding of how culture is integrated into EFL classrooms across various regions in the country. This study aims to address this gap by exploring EFL teachers' perceptions and cultural teaching practices within the Béni Mellal-Khenifra Academy. To this end, the study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent is culture important in EFL classrooms?
2. How do EFL teachers perceive the teaching of culture?
3. To what extent do EFL teacher integrate culture-teaching activities into their practices?

4. METHOD

A quantitative method is adopted to answer research questions, specifically through a survey design. The survey design, as conceptualized by Creswell and Creswell (2023), provides a

structured approach to quantitatively describing a population's opinions, trends, and attitudes or testing the relationship among variables. Survey designs are advantageous due to their cost-effectiveness and ease of administration, allowing researchers to collect and analyze data from a large sample efficiently. This design is particularly suited for this study, where the primary goal is to statistically describe the extent to which culture is important in Moroccan EFL classrooms and the activities used to integrate it.

4.1. Participants

The study's sample includes 60 EFL public school teachers from the Béni Mellal-Khenifra Academy of Education in Morocco. The sample of the study consists of 36 high school teachers and 24 middle school teachers. Among these participants, 11 are female (18.3%) and 49 are male (81.7%) teachers. Regarding teaching experience, 35 teachers (58.3%) have less than 5 years of experience, 18 teachers (30%) have between 5 and 10 years, 3 teachers (5%) have between 11 to 20 years, and 4 teachers (6.7%) have over 20 years of experience.

4.2. Instrument

The questionnaire items used in this research study were adapted from Sercu et al. (2005) to collect data on EFL teachers' perceptions and teaching activities related to the integration of culture in EFL classrooms. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale, with items on teachers' perceptions ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," and items on teaching activities ranging from "never" to "always." It is structured into three sections aligned with the study's objectives: the first section gathers participants' personal information, the second section examines teachers' perceptions of cultural teaching, and the third section focuses on teachers' practices related to teaching culture in the classroom.

4.3. Sampling

A non-probability snowball sampling method was employed (Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2018). In this sampling technique, the researcher identifies a small number of participants with the same characteristics he is interested in who in turn help identify others for inclusion in the study. While Morocco consists of 12 Academies of Education, one specific Academy, Béni Mellal-Khenifra, was chosen as the primary focus. The sample primarily included teachers working within this region, distributed across its various directorates. To collect data, a questionnaire was initially distributed to a few teachers in different directorates, who subsequently shared it in WhatsApp groups with colleagues in their respective directorates. This approach allowed for a quick and efficient administration of the questionnaire among teachers in the region. While this method may not yield a sample fully representative of all teachers across Morocco, it provides relevant insights within the selected region.

4.4. Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed via various WhatsApp groups for EFL teachers to collect responses. It aimed to collect quantitative data aligned with the study's research objectives and questions. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26). Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarize and interpret the numerical findings.

5. RESULTS

5.1. The place of culture in EFL Classrooms

The first question of the study explores the role of culture in English language learning based

EFL Teachers' Culture Teaching Perspectives and Practices

on the perceptions of teachers in the Béni Mellal-Khenifra Academy of Education. Therefore, EFL teachers were asked whether they believe culture is essential in language teaching and whether it can be effectively taught in the classroom. These perspectives are critical, as they can significantly influence teaching practices. The results are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The Place of Culture in EFL Classrooms and Its Teachability

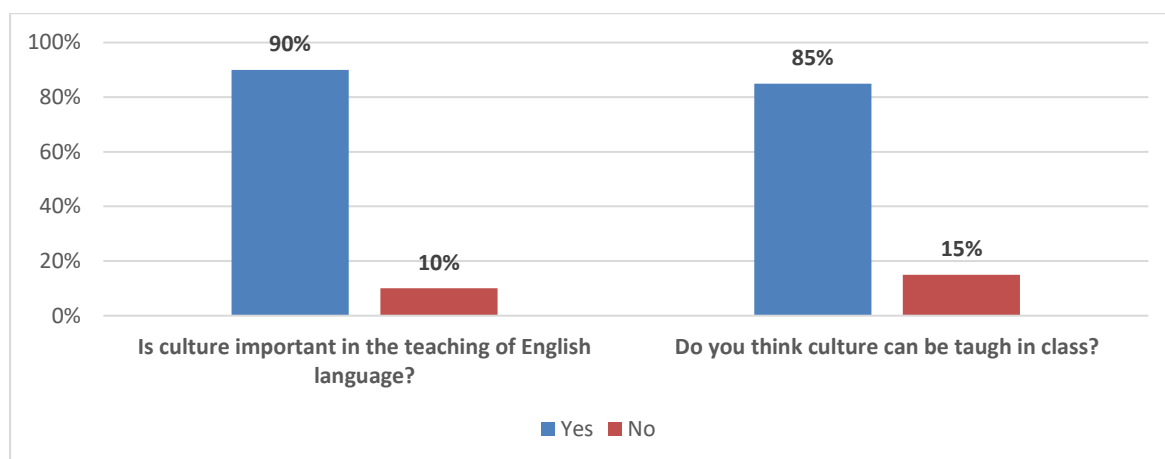


Figure 1 indicates that 90% of respondents consider culture important in English language teaching, while only 10% perceive it as unimportant. This underscores the widespread recognition of culture's role in language teaching among the majority of teachers. Additionally, 85% of teachers believe that culture can be effectively taught in the classroom, while 15% express doubts about its teachability. However, there is a slight discrepancy between the percentage of teachers who view culture as important (90%) and those who believe it can be effectively taught in language classes (85%).

5.2. EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Culture Teaching

Teachers' perceptions of the various ways in which culture holds significance in language teaching are examined. To capture their views, participants rated eleven statements adapted from Sercu et al. (2005) on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 5= "strongly agree" to 1= "strongly disagree". The mean scores and standard deviations offers insights into the level of agreement among the participants. Table 1 presents the order of the eleven statements with the mean score and standard deviation for each statement.

Table 1

Teachers' Opinions Regarding the Teaching of Culture

	Mean	Std. D
1 Foreign language teaching should enhance students' understanding of their own cultural identity.	4.33	0.75
2 In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching a foreign language.	4.13	0.85
3 Intercultural education is best undertaken across various subjects and disciplines.	4.10	0.57

4	In international contacts, misunderstandings arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences.	4.03	0.68
5	I want to promote the acquisition of intercultural skills through my teaching.	4.00	0.68
6	The more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are.	3.97	0.84
7	A foreign language teacher should present a positive image of the foreign culture.	3.45	0.94
8	Before you can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language.	2.83	1.15
9	Intercultural skills cannot be acquired at school.	2.37	.92
10	Intercultural education does not affect students' attitudes.	2.00	0.75

Note: Mean scores range from 1 to 5: 1 = strongly disagree; 1.01–2.00= disagree; 2.01–3.00 = somewhat agree; 3.01–4.00 = agree; 4.01–5.00 = strongly agree.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the teaching of culture, with the mean scores (M) and standard deviations (SD) being presented. The survey responses highlight the prominence of culture appreciation in foreign language classes. The statement "Foreign language teaching should enhance students' understanding of their own cultural identity" received a high mean score of $M = 4.33$ with a standard deviation of $SD = 0.75$, indicating strong agreement and relatively consistent views among respondents. Moreover, the idea that "In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching a foreign language" was also well supported, with a mean score of $M = 4.13$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 0.85$, reflecting general agreement but slightly more variability in responses.

Participants agreed that "Intercultural education is best undertaken across various subjects and disciplines", as shown by a mean score of $M = 4.10$ and a lower standard deviation of $SD = 0.57$, suggesting a high agreement and less variability in the teachers' responses. The statement "In international contacts, misunderstandings arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences" received a mean score of $M = 4.03$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 0.68$, which highlights the central role of both linguistic and intercultural competence in communication. In line with this, the desire to "promote the acquisition of intercultural skills through teaching" was also affirmed by ELF teachers, with a mean score of $M = 4.00$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 0.68$, indicating a strong interest in fostering intercultural skills among students.

The survey results indicate that students' knowledge of a foreign culture is positively associated with their level of tolerance. For instance, the statement that "The more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are" received a mean score of $M = 3.97$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 0.84$, which suggests a relatively stronger agreement among teachers on the role of culture teaching in promoting tolerance. In addition, teachers expressed

EFL Teachers' Culture Teaching Perspectives and Practices

the belief that “A foreign language teacher should present a positive image of the foreign culture”, as represented by the mean score of $M = 3.45$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 0.94$. This also reveals a more general agreement, though with slight discrepancies in responses, on the issue of teachers' roles in presenting a positive image of the target culture.

The survey also explored more controversial issues, such as the relationship between language proficiency and intercultural competence. The statement, "Before you can teach culture or address the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students must possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language," received a mean score of $M = 2.83$ with a standard deviation of $SD = 1.15$. This suggests that respondents tended to slightly disagree with this viewpoint, though there was considerable variability in their opinions.

Some cultural teaching perceptions received less support and showed more variability among teachers. For example, the idea that "Intercultural skills cannot be acquired at school" had a mean score of $M = 2.37$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 0.92$, indicating a tendency to disagree, though with some variation in responses. Finally, the statement receiving the lowest level of agreement was that "Intercultural education does not affect students' attitudes" with a mean score of $M = 2.00$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 0.75$, suggesting strong disagreement with this idea, with relatively consistent responses indicating that intercultural education is indeed viewed as influential on students' attitudes. This result shows that teachers strongly believe intercultural education has a significant impact on students' perspectives. Overall, these findings reveal that EFL teachers are aware of and value the integration of culture in language classes.

5.3. Activities to Teach Culture

The study participants were also requested to indicate the frequency with which they engage in thirteen possible cultural teaching activities adapted from Sercu et al. (2005), ranging from "never" to "always." To capture their views, participants rated these thirteen cultural teaching practices on a five-point Likert scale, with 5 = "always" and 1 = "never." The mean scores and standard deviations offer insights into the central tendency and variability of the data. Table 2 presents the thirteen cultural practices in order, along with the mean scores and standard deviations, indicating the average response and variability across participants for each statement.

Table 2

Frequencies of Teachers' Practices Related to Teaching Culture

		Mean	Std. D
1	I use dialogues to practice cultural nuances.	3.37	1.16
2	I ask my students to compare an aspect of their own culture with that aspect of the foreign culture.	3.18	1.18
3	I demonstrate cultural experiences using role-plays, demonstrations, the Internet, videos, PPTs....	3.17	1.01

4	I provide my students with opportunities to reflect on cultural topics related to their lives and their worldview.	3.12	1.16
5	I use authentic materials (e.g., documents, artifacts, books, newspapers, films, music, and photographs) to present foreign culture.	3.12	0.95
6	I engage students in role-play situations in which people from different cultures meet.	3.08	1.12
7	I have my students write about cultural topics.	2.85	1.02
8	I have students discuss topics and issues regarding foreign culture.	2.80	1.14
9	I ask my students to explain the cultural significance behind the cultural phenomenon or practice presented in the text (written, spoken, visual).	2.63	1.16
10	I give my students classroom or school-based research projects where students gather information about cultural topics.	2.55	1.18
11	I use personal accounts or cultural stories.	2.32	1.09
12	I invite students to perform songs, dances, sports, and games from foreign cultures. (Cultural Simulations)	2.30	1.29
13	I bring objects originating from foreign cultures to my classroom.	1.70	0.90

Note: Mean scores range from 1 to 5: 1 = never; 2.00= rarely; 3.00 = sometimes; 4.00 = often; and 5.00 = always

Table 2 presents teachers' opinions on various culture-teaching activities, with mean scores and standard deviations highlighting the significance of each practice. The results indicate that certain practices are used more frequently, with mean scores ranging from 3.08 to 3.37, suggesting a tendency toward common classroom implementation. Specifically, activities such as cultural dialogues have the highest mean score ($M = 3.37$; $SD = 1.16$), which indicates that teachers frequently use dialogues to address cultural nuances. The relatively high standard deviation suggests moderate variability in responses, indicating that while some teachers use this method regularly, others may not.

The activity of comparing one's own culture with foreign cultures, with a mean of ($M = 3.18$; $SD = 1.18$), suggests that English teachers moderately encourage students to compare their own culture with foreign cultures. The standard deviation is relatively similar to that of the first item, indicating variability in how frequently this practice is employed among teachers.

Demonstrating cultural experiences ($M = 3.17$; $SD = 1.01$) is also moderately used. The lower standard deviation suggests that most teachers' responses are consistent in the application

of this practice. Reflection on cultural topics and the use of authentic materials both have similar mean scores ($M = 3.12$) but differ in standard deviation ($SD = 1.16$ for reflection on cultural topics and $SD = 0.95$ for authentic materials). Both practices are moderately used; however, the higher standard deviation for reflection on cultural topics indicates greater variability in how frequently this practice is employed, while the lower standard deviation for using authentic materials suggests a more uniform approach among teachers.

In contrast, some practices are less valued by teachers, with mean scores ranging from 2.00 to 3.00. These include writing about cultural topics ($M = 2.85$; $SD = 1.02$), cultural discussions ($M = 2.80$; $SD = 1.14$), cultural analysis ($M = 2.63$; $SD = 1.16$), and cultural research projects ($M = 2.55$; $SD = 1.29$). The higher standard deviation for research projects indicates significant variation in their use, suggesting that while some teachers assign these projects regularly, others do so rarely.

Finally, practices such as personal accounts or cultural stories ($M = 2.32$; $SD = 1.09$), performing foreign cultural songs, dances, sports, and games ($M = 2.30$; $SD = 1.29$), and bringing objects from foreign cultures into the classroom ($M = 1.70$; $SD = 0.90$) are rarely implemented. The high standard deviation for cultural performances reflects substantial variability, which indicates that while some teachers occasionally incorporate these activities, many others use them infrequently or not at all.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The quantitative results of the study provide significant evidence on the role of culture in EFL classrooms within the Béni Mellal-Khenifra Academy of Education. It examined the extent to which EFL teachers perceive culture as important in language learning and its teachability in classrooms. Furthermore, it investigated their opinions on culture, intercultural education and the activities used to teach culture.

6.1. The Place of Culture in EFL Instruction

The findings of the study reveal that the vast majority of EFL teachers in the Béni Mellal Khenifra Academy are aware of the pivotal role of culture in language instruction. This result is consistent with previous research on teachers' cognizance of the significance of culture in foreign language teaching (Akharraz & Tamer, 2021; Hermessi, 2017; Rohmani & Andriyanti, 2022). The results of the study also indicate that the majority of teachers believe that culture can be effectively taught in the classroom, which indicates their tendency to integrate culture into EFL classrooms. This perspective aligns with Buttjes and Byram (1991), Byram and Morgan (1994), and Kramsch's (1993) perception that culture learning should happen alongside language learning. Therefore, we can deduce that culture teaching is inseparable from language learning. However, there is a small discrepancy between the percentage of teachers who view culture as important and those who believe it can be effectively taught. This slight difference seems to suggest that while the majority of teachers (90 %) recognize the importance of culture in language teaching, a slightly lesser number of teachers (85 %) may feel hesitant or face some challenges concerning the implementation of culture teaching in classes. This discrepancy might be due to the challenges teachers face in integrating culture into Moroccan classrooms, as Akharraz and Tamer (2021) found out.

6.2. EFL Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Teaching of Culture

The results regarding teachers' perceptions of culture indicate a strong belief among teachers that culture promotes students' appreciation of their identity and that teaching culture is as important as teaching the language itself. These findings align with Krasner (1999), who argues that language teaching should not only focus on language study but also on the culture of the target language. They are also consistent with Agar (1994), Damen (1987), Hinkel (1999), Kuo and Lai (2006), Purba (2011), and Zaid's (2013) emphasis on the interconnected relationship between language and culture. While linguistic errors are significant in communication and require attention by teachers, errors that arise from a lack of cultural knowledge are equally important. This supports Bennett's argument that not teaching culture results in the creation of "fluent fools."

The results also further underscore the importance of intercultural education. Teachers believed that it significantly influences students' attitudes and fosters tolerance, with the majority agreeing that intercultural skills can be effectively taught in EFL classrooms. These results align with existing literature that advocates for the development of students' intercultural communicative competence (Berkane, 2025; Byram, 1997; Crozet, Liddicoat, & Bianco, 1999; Sabilah et al., 2025; Sercu et al., 2005; Yusri & Andriyanti, 2025). Furthermore, the results indicate that EFL teachers agree that culture should be integrated across various subjects and disciplines, which is consistent with Byram's (1997) idea that intercultural communicative competence should not be confined to foreign language teaching.

The study identifies variability in teachers' opinions regarding the prerequisites for teaching culture, specifically the need for a high level of language proficiency before cultural learning can occur. This perspective aligns with Kramsch's (1993) argument that culture is integrated in language learning from the very first lesson and, hence, is not something additional. As regards the teachers' attitudes towards the target culture and whether they should present it in a "positive way", the teachers' perceptions are mixed. This ambivalent perspective suggests conflicting views on how the target culture representation should be approached. The dilemma is that although presenting a positive image of the target culture may help create a positive environment for learners, it risks idealizing the target culture at the expense of local cultures. This ambivalent perspective towards the target culture is consistent with Hermessi (2017) and Adaskou et al.'s (1990) findings. They argued that teachers in Tunisia and Morocco were careful about presenting target culture elements that are incompatible with local values, as these could lead to cultural discontent.

6.3. EFL Teachers' Activities to Teach Culture

The findings of this study indicate that EFL teachers use various activities to teach culture with varied degrees of frequency of implementation. For instance, cultural activities such as cultural comparisons, dialogues, demonstrations of cultural experiences, cultural reflections, and the use of authentic materials and role-play are predominant in many EFL classrooms. This result is consistent with Kuo and Lai's (2006) argument for the integration of role-play and culturally relevant materials in language classes to enhance cultural teaching. Rohmani and Andriyanti (2022) further confirm the usefulness of authentic material, highlighting that junior high school English teachers effectively use a variety of authentic resources, such as films, magazines,

social media, and content from the Internet, including YouTube, to enrich their cultural teaching. Similarly, Sabilah et al. (2025) supported the value of using teaching techniques such as text analysis, role-play, discussion as well as cultural reflection, and digital media technology integration in enhancing students' intercultural communicative competence. Although cultural comparisons are common among EFL teachers, they may run the risk of creating discontent among students, as Adaskou et al. (1990) argued. This sense of discontentment experienced by EFL learners exposed to cultural comparison requires a careful and critical approach to such activities.

The findings also reveal that other activities such as research projects, cultural discussions, and personal narratives and writing on cultural topics are less frequently practiced in the classroom. Moreover, cultural activities that engage students in foreign cultural practices, such as dancing, singing, and cultural games, are rarely integrated into the EFL classes. This may very well be due to the sensitivity of such cultural activities that could be viewed as culturally inappropriate. In line with this, Hermessi (2017) found out that some teachers actively filter out cultural elements that they consider to be incompatible with learners' local values or that could bring untoward effects. This reflects the dilemma between the desire to expose students to diverse cultural experiences and the teachers' concern to preserve and respect local cultural values and norms. In addition, there is a scarcity of activities that involve the discussion of foreign cultural artifacts and the use of social media as new cultural learning experiences. The challenges teachers face in accessing suitable cultural materials might be due to the lack of resources or opportunities to use such cultural artifacts, especially within English foreign language learning context characterized with less intercultural encounters.

6.4. Pedagogical implications

Based on the results of this study, several pedagogical implications emerge for enhancing the integration of culture in English foreign language classrooms. First, EFL teachers need to be cognizant of the prominence of culture in language teaching. There is a need for a principled approach to integrate other cultures beyond the target language culture in order to foster critical cross-cultural communicative competence (C5). Moreover, teachers need to be encouraged to use various cultural activities, such as dialogues, role-plays, cultural reflections, cultural discussion, and authentic materials supplemented with the use ICT and internet to facilitate culture integration in their language teaching. Teacher education programs need to systematically cultivate positive perceptions of intercultural education among pre-service teachers. Furthermore, teacher education and professional development programs need to underline the importance of a balanced approach to cultural representation and discussion in order to avoid idealization of the target culture and preserve local cultures.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study investigates Moroccan EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding cultural instruction within the Béni Mellal-Khenifra Academy of Education. A five-point-Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data from 60 EFL teachers. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze and interpret the study's quantitative data. The results of the study reveal a strong consciousness of the centrality of culture in language instruction among EFL teachers, as they seem to recognize its importance in underlining students' cultural

identities and promoting intercultural competence. Yet, a minor disagreement among teachers' recognition of the importance of linguistic competence as a prerequisite for culture learning and their confidence in teaching it in class represents challenges that require further exploration. Common activities for the integration of culture in language classes include activities such as dialogues, demonstrations of cultural experiences, cultural comparisons, cultural reflections, the use of authentic materials, and role-play. In contrast, more engaging activities such as cultural discussions, research projects, and writing and personal narratives are less frequently used. On the other hand, other skill-demanding activities, such as singing, dancing, or cultural games, are rarely integrated into EFL classrooms. This may very well be due to teachers' concerns that these practices are at odds with learners' local values, which reflect teachers' sensitivity to cultural differences. Therefore, both pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development programs should prioritize building teachers' confidence in integrating culture into their instruction. Given this study's results, future research should address both challenges in integrating culture into language classes and tools for assessing students' intercultural competence.

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AUTHOR'S BIO

Hassan ZAID is an associate professor and researcher at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in Béni Mellal, Morocco. He holds a Doctorate in Applied Linguistics from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in Rabat (2013) and an M.A. in Applied Linguistics and the Teaching of EFL from the School of Education in Rabat (2006). His research interests span applied linguistics, Amazigh language and culture in education, individual differences, educational technology, and critical pedagogy.