

CULTURE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS: EMIRATI STUDENTS'  
AND UAE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

A THESIS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

Presented to the faculty of the American University of Sharjah  
College of Arts and Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

by  
KAFAYAT OLUWAFUNMILAYO TIJANI  
B.A. 2004

Sharjah, UAE

May 2011

© 2011

KAFAYAT OLUWAFUNMILAYO TIJANI

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

We approve the thesis of Kafayat Oluwafunmilayo Tijani

Date of signature

---

Dr. Peter Crompton  
Assistant Professor  
Thesis Advisor

---

Dr. Ahmad Al-Issa  
Associate Professor  
Graduate Committee

---

Dr Nagmanah Ali  
Assistant Professor  
Graduate Committee

---

Dr. Pia Anderson  
Program Director, MA TESOL

---

Dr. Mark Rush  
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

---

Dr. Gautam Sen  
Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies

# CULTURE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS: EMARATI STUDENTS' AND UAE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

Kafayat Oluwafunmilayo Tijani, Candidate for the Master of Arts Degree  
American University of Sharjah, 2011

## ABSTRACT

Many studies have shown that teaching and learning about culture is beneficial for learning a second language. It helps in building up the four language skill, such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, and cultural awareness, and in developing positive attitudes and motivation to learn the language. However, there has been no consensus on the issues of what, whose, when, and how culture should be taught in EFL classrooms. As a result, there remain many unanswered questions regarding teaching of culture, in particular American/British culture, in this part of the world. This thesis is an attempt to shed light on what government secondary school students and teachers in the UAE think about learning and teaching of culture, in terms of its benefits to second language learners, and also the difficulties teachers encounter when trying to teach culture in their classrooms.

To investigate such perceptions and attitudes, surveys and interviews were used to gather data. The main participants of the study included 11(8 female and 3 male) English teachers and 108 (87 female and 21 male) students from four government secondary schools in the UAE. The findings of this study indicate that, most of the teachers surveyed and interviewed were in favor of teaching culture in their classrooms, and were aware of its enormous benefits. Results also showed that the majority of the secondary-level students surveyed and interviewed found pleasure in the learning of culture, and thought learning about culture was motivating and useful.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
FIGURES	vii
TABLES	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ix
DEDICATION	x
Chapter	
1. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY	1
The Purpose of the Study	2
Research Questions	3
The Context of the Study	4
Overview of the Chapters and Appendixes	5
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Background	6
Definition of Culture	6
Why should Culture be Taught?	7
Communicative Competence	7
To Avoid Misunderstanding/Misinterpretation	8
Cognitive and Personal Development	9
Motivation	9
Whose Culture should be Taught?	10
Culture of Native English Speakers	11
International Cultures	12
Do Students need to Embrace L2 Culture?	13
What Aspects of Culture should be Taught?	14
Non-verbal Communication	14
How should Culture be Taught?	16
When should Culture be Taught?	18
How do Students Perceive Learning Culture	19
Conclusion	21
3. METHODOLOGY	23
The Participants	24
Teachers	24
Students	25

Instruments	25
Students' and Teachers' Surveys	25
Students' and Teachers' Interviews	27
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	30
Analysis of Data	30
Perceptions towards English as a Global or International Language	32
Discussion	32
Whether Teachers Teach Culture and Whose Culture They Teach	32
Discussion	34
How Teachers Incorporate Cultural Information into their Teaching	34
Students' Perceptions of the Materials used in Teaching Culture	34
Teachers' Perceptions towards the Materials used in Teaching Culture	37
Discussion	39
Why Students were Learning English and Who they Hope to Communicate with in Future	39
Teachers' Purpose in Teaching English Language	42
Discussion	43
Whose Culture do Students want to Learn	44
The Culture of Native English Speakers	44
The Culture of other non-native English Speakers	45
The Students' Native Culture	45
Discussion	46
What Specific Aspects of Culture would the Students Like to Learn and Why	46
Discussion	48
Why Culture should be Taught and Learnt	48
Teachers' Responses	52
Discussion	54
Challenges of Teaching Culture	54
Discussion	56
Interference of L2 Culture with Students' Own Culture	56
Discussion	58
When and How Culture is Best Taught	58
Discussion	60
5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	61
Summary of Findings	61
Implications of the Study	66
Implications for Teachers	66
Implications for the Ministry of Education	67
Limitations of the Study and Directions for Further Research	69
Final Thoughts	71

REFERENCES	72
APPENDICES	77
A1. Students' Questionnaire	77
A3. Teachers' Questionnaire	84
B1. Students' Responses to Closed Questions	89
B2. Students' View about Culture in English Language Classrooms	92
B3. Students' Interview Questions	95
B4. Teachers' Responses to Closed Statements	96
B5. Teachers' View about Culture in English Language Classrooms	98
B6. Teachers' Interview Questions	100
VITA	102

## FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Students' Perceptions of English as a Global Language	31
2. Students' Perceptions of Teachers Teaching about Cultures	32
3. Students' Perceptions towards Learning the English Language	41
4. Students' Perceptions towards Learning the English Language	42
5. Students' Perceptions of their interests in Learning NES Culture	50
6. Students' Perceptions of Interference of Learning NES Culture	57



## TABLES

Table	Page
1. Teachers' and Students' Demographics	25
2. Students' Perceptions of the Materials used in Teaching Culture	35
3. Students' Perceptions of the Materials used in Teaching Culture	36
4. Students' Perceptions of Aspects of Culture they want to Learn	47
5. Students' Perceptions of why Culture should be Taught and Learnt in English Language Classrooms	49
6. Students' Perceptions of why Culture should be Taught and Learnt in English Language Classrooms	51

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Peter Crompton, for his encouragement and insightful feedback. I could not have made it without his guidance, support and patience. I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Ahmad Al-Issa and Dr. Nagmanah Ali, for their time and valuable comments to this thesis. Special thanks to Ms. Aida Abou Eissa, Mr. Mohannad Al-Jayousi, and Mr. Najib Ali for their assistance with the data collection. I offer my appreciation to all secondary school teachers and students who gave their time to participate in this study. I would also like to thank my friends for their support throughout this journey. My sincere thanks are also extended to my MA TESOL professors and classmates who were caring and supportive in the process of writing this thesis.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my wonderful mother, Hafsah Morakinyo, and to my father, Morenikeji Akanbi, for his constant prayers. It is also dedicated to my ever loving husband and children, for their love, care, and for all the happiness they have added to my life. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

## CHAPTER 1

### OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Since culture and language are intimately interrelated, cultural awareness plays a crucial role in foreign language learning and teaching. Due to cultural differences, the same word or phrase may carry various connotations in different languages and cultures. Lack of such a cultural awareness can easily result in regrettable misunderstanding in cross-cultural communication. For example, a well-intentioned inquiry by English as foreign language/second language learners may be misconstrued by native English speakers as an attempt to invade their privacy; a seemingly serious word may cause native English speakers to laugh while the second language speakers still don't know where the humor lies. In the teaching of foreign languages, especially English, teachers attach great importance to the development of students' four basic language skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teaching syllabi often share such narrowly formal priorities, focusing on students' test-taking skills and neglecting their communicative capability. As a grave consequence, students often find it hard to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-life encounters. In most cases, students' communicative frustration can be attributed at least partly to their inadequate knowledge of the culture of their interlocutors.

In the current era, English as a global language (EGL) is increasingly recognized as the most dominantly used language in the world; it is the language of air traffic control, international business, academic conferences, science, technology, diplomacy, education, to name a few (Graddol, 1996; Tsuda, 2008). In the non-Anglophone world, English language learning and acquiring are consequently seen as a fundamental tool to achieve a professional career (Guilherme, 2007). At the same time, the English language brings about an increasing amount of intercultural communication and interactions in a global context (Hatos, 2006). It is beyond a doubt that English has become the most powerful international lingua franca or global language (Crystal, 2003), the language of globalization and the greatest economic and political power (Tsuda, 2008).

English language teaching has been closely linked to the native English-speaking countries; the fact that English has become an international language offers a serious challenge to this approach. Due to the multi-faceted role of English on the international stage, some traditional views regarding the English language now face questions of relevance (Kachru, 1992). For instance, the view that English is learned only as a tool to understand American or British cultural values in order to function within these societies is clearly obsolete. Yet, the avoidance or prohibition of culture in English as a foreign/second language is questioned by many researchers and teachers. On one end of the continuum are those who recognize the importance of culture, especially native English-speaking culture in L2 classrooms, and on the other end are those who support its prohibition. Even if L2 culture is prohibited in L2 classrooms, some teachers might sometimes teach it which leads to discrepancies in their teaching approach. The lack of an approach that unifies and deals with the teaching of culture in English language classroom is leaving teachers confused about whose, what, and which culture may be useful for teaching and learning. Consequently, it is crucial to address the issue of teaching and learning about culture in L2 classrooms in order to avoid confusion in teaching approaches. In the UAE, English language teachers are confused about what cultural content and whose culture to teach. They lack a unified approach that provides them with answers to the questions of how, when, and why to teach culture in English language classrooms.

Within this context, this research commences with an attempt to find out teachers' and students' perceptions towards the teaching and learning about culture in English language classrooms, and the practices teachers follow when teaching culture in English classrooms. In addition, this research aims at finding out to what extent teachers' attitudes match their current teaching practices, and whether or not teachers and students perceive teaching/learning about culture in English as foreign language classrooms in a similar way.

Because the main aim of second language teaching is to develop students' ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in various situations, I think the teaching of culture should facilitate this by developing intercultural communication and understanding. Therefore, it is the purpose of this research to raise students' and

teachers' awareness towards their own perceptions of teaching/learning about culture in general and L2 culture in particular in English language classrooms, and its impact on the students' learning process and academic outcomes. The results of this research will help teachers create a favorable and comfortable teaching and learning environment. As a result, this study would like to point out, in light of the existing literature in this area, the importance of teachers being aware of when, why, and how culture teaching should be integrated in English language classrooms.

This study might suggest to teachers that careful integration of culture along with other second language learning skills can be achieved through many activities that would facilitate students' learning. From personal experience, I believe culture teaching/learning serves a number of functions, including enlisting and maintaining students' interests in the second language tasks as well as developing strategies and approaches to make a difficult task more manageable. Hence, my research study will be of interest and significance for both teachers and students. It will provide several pedagogical implications and applications to teaching and teacher training practices in the UAE. My research findings might help teachers become better informed about their teaching practices, which may, in turn, help students become more successful learners of English. Moreover, the results of this research may suggest to teachers, students, parents, and educational authorities in the UAE the relevance of teaching culture in English classrooms when teachers incorporate it in a proper manner in their lesson plans. Finally, this study will reveal some essential data about the problems some teachers and students may encounter in trying to teach/learn culture in this particular setting. Such evidence may suggest ways to help teachers and students on how to overcome such likely barriers, thus, making teaching/learning English language alongside culture easier.

My research sets out to explore the teaching and learning of culture in English language (L2) classrooms. In particular, it intends to address the following questions:

1. Do the UAE English teachers teach culture in their classrooms?
2. If they do, whose culture do they teach?
3. How do the UAE English teachers incorporate cultural information into their teaching?

4. Who do the Emirati students hope to communicate with in English?
5. What are the Emirati students going to use their English for in the future?
6. Whose cultures do Emirati students want to learn about in their English language classrooms?
7. What specific aspects of culture would the students like to learn and why?

### The Context of the Study

The UAE government provides free education for both Emirati boys and girls from the primary to the secondary level through government schools. In general, all the government schools are single-sex schools. Although the medium of instruction is Arabic, there is a strong emphasis on teaching English at all levels, particularly at the secondary level in order to equip students with the necessary skills and prepare them for higher education. In the UAE, the primary stage, which is known as the first cycle, includes grades 1 to 5; and the preparatory stage, which is called the second cycle, includes grades 6 to 9. The third stage which is the secondary stage includes three grades 10, 11, and 12. However, grades 11 and 12 are always divided into two main sections: Arts and Science. The focus in the arts section is generally on literary subjects; whereas, the main focus in the science section is on scientific subjects. However, in both sections, students study the same English curriculum. In government schools, students learn English as a second language from grade one. That is, by the time they finish their high school, they would have studied English for 12 years. Secondary level students study English on a daily basis, with each lesson lasting for fifty minutes.

An English teacher in a UAE government secondary school teaches three classes with an average number of 20 to 30 students in each class and a total of eighteen hours of teaching per week. Teachers teach a mandated curriculum using the textbook, *On Location* (2009). The book has been adapted especially for the UAE Ministry of Education by McGraw Hill. It consists of a student book and a practice book in addition to the teacher's manual and the assessment booklet.

## Overview of the Chapters and Appendixes

Chapter One presents the introduction to the study, its significance as well as the research questions. Moreover, it discusses the context of the research in the UAE government secondary schools. Chapter Two consists of a review of the literature related to the study. Chapter Three includes a full description of the methodology and procedures which were followed in this study. It provides detailed information about the participants and their attributes, such as their number, nationality, and learning and teaching experience. Then, it describes the instruments and the procedures followed in collecting and analyzing data. In Chapter Four, a detailed description of the data analysis and the findings of the study are presented. The findings are presented using figures and tables. The results are presented according to the research questions. Three main sections are also added to gain more insights, and they are: when and how culture is best taught, challenges of teaching culture, and why should culture be taught and learnt. Finally, Chapter Five, the conclusion, contains the summary of the findings of the study. It also discusses the implications for teachers and the UAE Ministry of Education in addition to the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

Eight main appendixes are also included. Appendix A1 is the students' survey. Appendix A2 includes the teachers' survey. Appendix B1 presents the students' response to closed ended statements, B2 is the students' survey result, and B3 is the students' interview questions. Appendix B4 consists of teachers' responses to closed ended statement, B5 is the teachers' survey results, and B6 is the teachers' interview questions.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Background

The purpose of this section is to review the literature that highlights the teaching and learning of culture in L2 classrooms. It begins with a definition of culture, followed by a discussion of the theory that underlies it, and the principles that characterize it. It reviews different studies related to the impact of teaching culture in improving language skills. It also sheds light on the studies and research papers that discuss common perceptions about whose culture should be taught, how it should be taught, and when it should be taught in L2 classrooms. Finally, literature which deals with students' perception of culture learning is also surveyed.

#### Definition of Culture

Linguists have defined culture in many ways because it is multifaceted and theorists bring their own viewpoints to their definitions. Fleet (2006) for example describes culture as what a specific community accepts concerning its members' patterns of behavior, and as participating in a discourse by members who share a common social space and history, and common thoughts. She also adds that culture is "a system of symbols, meanings, and norms passed from one generation to the next, which differentiates groups of people united by certain characteristics such as origin, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic class, or political views" (p. 6). Simply put, the entire way of life of a given people is culture (Fleet, 2006; Kuo & Lai, 2006; Lafayette, 1975). According to Peck (1998), culture is all the accepted and patterned ways of behavior of a given people. It is that facet of human life learned by people as a result of belonging to some particular group; it is that part of learned behavior shared with others.

For the purpose of this study, I take culture to mean "the way of life of a people, the social constructs that evolve within a group, the ways of thinking, feeling, believing, and behaving that [is] imparted to members of a group in the socialization process" (Hinkel, 1999, p. 3). In other words, the culture of a group is the name for beliefs held by the group and behavior patterns that are acceptable in the group.

### Why should Culture be taught?

The lack of language input is said to be one of the major factors that explain the unsuccessful learning of a second/foreign language. Unlike in L1 learning, the amount of input in L2, especially in EFL contexts, is often severely limited, and in some places it even lacks adequate quality. In such cases, teaching about culture becomes valuable sources that can provide a direct and genuine exposure to L2. There are different views from scholars when it comes to reasons culture should be taught in second language classrooms. The following sections present some of the scholars' evidence for the need to teach culture in second language classrooms.

#### Communicative Competence

The aim of language is to communicate meaning. While developing language abilities, the main goal is to communicate or interact with others. A number of second language theorists hold the view that culture and communication are inseparable. Kuo and Lai (2006) believe that L2 learning includes a number of different dimensions such as “grammatical competence, communicative competence, language proficiency, and cultural understanding” (p. 6). According to them, learning a second language is not just about giving speeches, about syntactic structures, or learning new vocabulary, but should fit in cultural components. Brown (2007) makes a distinction between linguistic competence and communicative competence: the first is knowledge about language forms, and the second is knowledge that enables an individual to communicate functionally and interactively. The main goal of communicative competence is to provide students with meaningful interactions in authentic or real life situations with native or native-like speakers of the target language (Craig, 2001; Fleet, 2006). Schulz (2007) has emphasized the fact that language and culture are inextricably interrelated to each other. According to her, ethnographers of communication have confirmed that many speech events have their own culture-specific formations and customs. She gives examples of culture-specific formations and customs, such as in shops, banks, government agencies, restaurants, phone interactions, and classroom interactions, and for many speech acts—apologies, compliments, and expressing disagreement. She points out that researchers in the

language socialization tradition believe that language and culture are not separable, but are acquired together, with each giving support for the development of the other. Similarly, Fleet (2006) considers that culture cannot be taught without language, and that language cannot be taught without culture. Kuo and Lai (2006) believe that language and culture are intertwined, and one affects the other. According to Lessard-Clouston (1997), “culture is the foundation of communication” (Language Teaching section, para. 4), and without culture, we cannot understand the lives and motivations of other communities, and feel their concerns and interests.

#### To Avoid Misunderstanding/Misinterpretation

Some researchers believe there is need to teach culture in English as second or foreign language classrooms to avoid misunderstanding/misinterpretation of a second language when communicating. For example, Moran (2001) emphasizes that there are many possible outcomes for culture learning and teaching such as cultural understanding, cultural awareness, cultural adaptation, motivation, integration, communicative competence, and language proficiency. Furthermore, Moran believes that communicating successfully is not an easy task, even when people share the same native language. When human beings from different cultures and languages interact, they run an even greater risk of misinterpreting one another’s meaning. Supporting Moran’s views about communicating appropriately, Rings (2006) considers that knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation is not enough to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunications. Heusinkveld (1997) also notes that just words are not enough for communication; words take value and meaning only in the context of culture. In a similar view, Liao (2000) agrees that the knowledge of linguistic system alone is not enough for effective communication. To communicate effectively, a speaker must not only know how to produce any and all grammatical utterances of a language, but also how to use them appropriately. The learners must know what to say, with whom, when, and where. Besides, Turkan and Celik (2007) suggest that learners should acquire knowledge about how to use the language in order to function successfully in socio-cultural contexts. So, it is important for the learners to be involved in communicative acts in the reality of the target culture.

Consequently, learners can understand the cultural references and views that native speakers of a particular target culture possess. Turkan and Celik emphasize that native and non-native speakers use the same language, but communicate on different cultural wavelengths, uninformed about each other's cultural views and values. They describe this situation as a classic setup for miscommunication. Jong-Li (2006) suggests that the cultural component of EFL, if taught and learned adequately, will be beneficial for aspirant learners in terms of language skills, cultural awareness, and attitudes.

### Cognitive and Personal Development

Many scholars think that it is necessary to teach culture in English language classrooms for students' cognitive and personal development. Aguilar (2007) notes, "Foreign language learning is not only for obtaining speaking skills but also for acquisition of values, attitudes and beliefs." Due to its very nature, foreign language learning gives students opportunities to get in touch with real life experience in the language and be aware of other cultures and students can choose what they think is the best for them. Byon (2007) states that "learning culture is a process" (p. 2) through which learners are able to recognize that there are different cultural perspectives, and they will learn to accept the differences, understand to appreciate different cultural perspectives, and integrate the target cultural attitudes positively into their own life. Byon (2007) also states that culture may be represented by traditional clothes, language beliefs, history, and social life, which are parts of life that make a group of people different from others. Culture also is related to the ways people do things in a given society, such as building, arts and tools, cooking, communicating, and even how people think about abstract ideas. Culture is a view of the world. It establishes a context of cognitive and affective behavior for each individual.

### Motivation

Also, some scholars have argued that learning culture motivates students to learn languages. According to Saville-Troike (2006), motivation is defined as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal or need of learning a second language. According to her, integrative motivation is based on the learners' positive attitudes and feelings towards the target language use and the desire to integrate into the target

language community. If a learner likes the people that speak the target language, admires the culture and wishes to become familiar with the L2-speaking society, he/she will be highly motivated and will be proficient. Fleet (2006) also draws attention to why students learn different cultures. She believes that teaching the target culture while teaching the target language stimulates the curiosity of students and acts as a motivator.

### Whose Culture should be Taught?

The issue of whose culture to teach in a second language classroom according to Rochman (2007) is difficult to answer because it is hard to confine English language to one of its native settings and to present that setting in a stereotypical manner. That's why it is difficult for English language learners to handle different target cultures of English speaking countries. Meanwhile, Moran emphasizes that conflicts can arise when one culture strongly contrasts with others in a sensitive area such as religion. Identities of learners get more complex when they enter other cultures and learn about other cultures. The degree to which people do or do not integrate these new ways of thinking, acting, and interacting affects their cultural identity.

Rochman investigated students' opinions in an Indonesian university on which culture should be learned. She found out that some students thought that learning a foreign language has to be separated from learning culture. This is because some Indonesian students think that several elements of English culture have some inconsistency with the local values. This shows that cross-cultural matters may become a cause of potential conflict in foreign language teaching. She gives an example of the word "pub" for Indonesian students. According to her, this word is "normally used in the mind of a native-speaker of English as a place for socializing." On the other hand, Indonesian students can think that "pub is a bad place where people get drunk" (p.50). She considers that lack of "cultural competence"—beliefs, attitudes, views, etc.—can cause this kind of problem. Besides, we are reminded of the fact that English language is the most studied language all over the world, whereby the language has gained a lingua franca status (Alptekin, 2002; Smith, 1976).

Alptekin (2002), favoring an intercultural communicative competence rather than a native-like competence, asserts that since English is used by much of the world for instrumental reasons such as professional contacts, academic studies, and commercial pursuits, the conventions of the British politeness or American informality proves irrelevant.

Ariffin (2006) in her literature review on “Culture in EFL teaching: Issues and solutions” concludes that it is best to teach EFL students both students’ own culture and target-language culture. She considers this especially “for EFL students who plan to either travel or study in the target language country because the use of both cultures help to provide a broader view of the differences between the students’ culture and the target-language culture. “With students understanding the differences, their transitions, both in academics as well as daily life, would not be as difficult since they have already been exposed to the target-language culture” (p. 78).

#### Culture of Native English Speakers

A research study conducted by Timmis (2002) shows that teachers and learners think that L2 culture should be taught, but also that other cultures need to be addressed accordingly. Also, Heusinkveld (1997) explains that acquiring the culture of a group means being able to function within the group without making serious mistakes. In a word, a learner is able to engage with the viewpoint of a person from that culture and understands the actions of others and of oneself in terms of that culture. Turkan and Celik (2007) point out that information about the target language culture has been deliberately avoided in some foreign language textbooks and classrooms over the years in order to prevent students being exposed to foreign cultures. This view is supported by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). They give an example of a textbook used in Saudi Arabia, *English for Saudi Arabia*, in which almost every setting is situated in the source culture. Cortazzi and Jin comment, “When the textbook characters greet one another, talk about professions, make Arabian coffee, or talk about going on a pilgrimage to Mecca, they are predominantly Saudi Arabians performing culturally-familiar activities in their country with their own citizens in English” (p. 205). Through the use of such books, students are persuaded to become

more aware of their cultural identity. But it becomes difficult for them to be able to learn about target culture, Turkan and Celik affirm “unless teachers and students reflect on the nature of culture, and actually contrast or compare the cultural aspects likely to be held in common between the native and target cultures” (p. 21).

### International Cultures

McKay (2002) in her chapter “Culture in teaching English as an international language” believes culture should be included in language teaching. She asserts that culture is rooted in the language itself “particularly in the semantics of language and that cultural content is motivating in language learning” (p. 100). She goes further by saying that the use of English is no longer associated with the culture of native English countries and one of the primary purposes of English as international language is to enable speakers to share their thoughts and cultures. McKay answers the question of which culture to include in teaching material. She specifies that cultures to be taught should include three: the source culture (materials that draw on the learners’ own cultural content), the target culture (materials that use the culture of a native country where English is spoken as first language), and an international culture (materials that use a great variety of cultures in English and non English speaking countries around the world). According to her this is because “there are possible advantages to including each kind, depending on how the materials are approached” (p. 100). Furthermore, she stresses first that cultural materials should be taught in such a way that students are persuaded to reflect on their own culture in comparison to others to establish “a sphere of interculturality.” Secondly, the differences that exist within all cultures should be highlighted. And lastly, cultural topics should be critically examined so that students consider what assumptions are present in the text and in what other ways the topic could be discussed.

McKay (2003) contends that culture influences language teaching in two ways: linguistically and pedagogically. Linguistically, it affects the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language. Pedagogically, it influences the choice of the language materials because cultural content of the language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology are to be taken into consideration

while deciding upon the language materials. For example, while some textbooks provide examples from the target culture, some others use source culture materials—whereas they should according to her provide all three kinds.

People learn a second language to communicate in written and, or spoken forms using the target language as Heusinkveld (1997) believes. He states that no one can deny that one of the reasons why people learn a second language is to communicate with native speakers of the target language. “In today’s global society,” as Ketchum (2006), explains “foreign language learning has become increasingly more important” (p. 22), and second language learning is known for its value for effective international communication and intercultural understanding. In other words, learning a second language is becoming very important because people interact all over the world on a daily basis due to globalization. She considers that in all forms of international communication such as speech, e-mail, formal documents, literary texts, and so forth misunderstanding are unavoidable if there is not enough knowledge about culture because in different cultural contexts meanings of words vary. Moreover, Fill (2007) states that communication between people is becoming very frequent because of globalization, and many native cultures are getting involved in globalized communication.

#### Do Students need to Embrace L2 Culture?

According to some scholars students do not have to accept L2 culture, but they need to be aware of it and choose what they think is best for them. Moran (2001) argues that culture learning experience is mostly personal. Learners need to recognize and manage the emotional highs and lows involved in the culture learning process. According to him, learners should choose to what extent they engage in, accept, explore, or become part of the culture. It should be kept in mind that verbal language is just one of many means of communication that people use in social situations. Learners should understand how to achieve a desired and intended function through careful collection of words, structure, intonation, nonverbal signals, and enough awareness of the context of a particular discourse. Bada (2000) reminds us that awareness of cultural values and societal characteristics does not necessarily invite the



learner to conform to such values, since they are there to “refine the self so that it can take a more universal and less egoistic form” (p.100). Turkan and Celik (2007) add that learning other cultures:

is not the denial of one’s own culture or one’s absorbing and accepting a foreign culture as ideal. On the contrary, this awareness serves as a safeguard against potential negative attitudes students may encounter when they learn about a new set of norms at odds with the ones of their own, and helps language learners to recognize and appreciate the differences between the two cultures for the benefit of successfully combining form and meaning in language learning (p. 22).

### What Aspects of Culture should be Taught?

#### Non-verbal Communication

Moran (2001) states that culture is viewed as a communication tool, and that people of a culture use language to communicate verbally and non-verbally including “body movement, eye contact, time, space, smells, touching, and the use of the social situation” (p. 4). He says that these features can be understood under the concept of communicative competence as knowing how to communicate properly in a specific language and culture. Besides, Moran views culture in terms of intercultural communication, that is, the capacity and ability to deal with other cultures, communicate successfully, make good relationships, and perform tasks with different people’s culture. Kuo and Lai (2006) describe language as a system of signals such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols which encode and decode information. Fleet (2006) pays attention to non-verbal components of language learning. Brown (2007) defines non-verbal features—gestures, eye contact, and physical distance/proximity—all as very complex components of language for L2 learners to acquire successfully. Fleet believes that non-verbal components affect the success of “the intercultural communication process” (p. 17). According to her, lack of knowledge about the non-verbal messages mostly causes misunderstanding. Learning the gestures and facial expressions which are culturally acceptable in the target

language helps develop the authenticity of the language practice and can make the language elements more interesting and meaningful to learners. When learners interact with other cultures, and learn non-verbal elements of that culture, this helps improve their language stores and language skills. As a result, when we communicate non-verbal gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, touching, and physical distance are especially important.

An important issue in describing verbal and non-verbal components is using different styles that we use in any language. Brown (2007) says that styles depend on subject matter, audience, occasion, shared experience, and purpose of communication. When you speak informally with a friend, you use a different style than that which you use in a job interview with a prospective employer. Brown also gives an example that some English learners in the USA experience some difficulty in determining appropriate formality and informality distinctions. The students are often surprised by the level of informality expressed by their American professors. Therefore, Brown highlights that L2 learners must obtain stylistic adaptability to be able to encode and decode the discourse in different cultures properly. For these reasons, non-verbal styles are important interwoven additional features that L2 learners must challenge in inter-cultural communication when compared with verbal components.

Turkan and Celik (2007) believe language teachers should adhere to clear goals and successful instructional strategies to put their cultural awareness into practice to establish an intercultural understanding in the classroom. They put forward a number of goals for language teachers to set while teaching culture, which serves as a reference list in the process of selecting, collecting and compiling cultural materials. According to them, teachers should first invoke interest and curiosity about the target culture. Secondly, they should ensure that their students recognize the fact that social factors like age, gender, social class, and ethnicity influence how people use the language. Thirdly, teachers should seek to present to their students the case that language use changes according to whether the particular situation entails an ordinary routine for people of the target culture or is an unusual and unexpected situation (i.e., emergency). Hence, students should be able to make sense of why people of the target culture choose to behave in certain ways in certain situations, and

ultimately, acquire the skills to know the proper thing to say, at the appropriate time and place, and to the right people. However, they advise that “students should avoid oversimplifications by carefully analyzing and assessing generalizations about the target culture through utilizing a wide range of available sources, such as books and the media, authentic materials from the target culture, and personal experiences, if applicable” (p. 22).

Serrano (2002), deals with the following areas in foreign language teaching: negotiating what culture to teach, what aspects of this culture to focus upon, how much to teach of each aspect, the importance and relevance of web and internet sources in teaching culture, autonomous learning, and culture exposure. She explains that it may seem an easy and obvious task for some to decide on what to teach with regards to the culture element in a foreign language course. However, she points out that “not even in mono-lingual countries should [teaching of culture] be taken lightly” (p. 121). She affirms, “It is [teachers’] responsibility, ethically and morally” (p. 143), to select reading material that will allow the students to develop a critical understanding of the world around them. She also believes a careful analysis of the country and the backgrounds of the students who are to learn the foreign language are essential in deciding what elements to include as aspects of culture in a foreign language program.

#### How should Culture be Taught?

Cullen and Sato (2000) and Thanasoulas (2001) explain some practical techniques to describe the many aspects of culture that we need to teach students. Some parameters can be used to realize the above mentioned practical techniques. One of the parameters is information sources that give students a comprehensive picture of the target culture from many angles. According to this parameter, teachers need to present the different kinds of information to students. Possible sources of information can include videos, CDs, TV, the internet, songs, newspapers, fieldwork, interviews, guest speakers, souvenirs, and photographs. Another parameter is choosing some activity types. The first activity recommended by Cullen and Sato is making quizzes which test materials that have been previously taught. Students can

pick true or false questions or choose the odd one out. The second activity type is reformulation. When students have studied an activity or listened to a story, reformulation may be used to allow them to check what they have learnt and to reinforce them by asking the students to re-tell the story. The third one is noticing. As students watch a video or are engaged in some other materials, teachers can ask them to notice particular features which are different from their own culture. The fourth one is students' research, which is one of the most powerful tools because it combines their interests with the subject they are learning. After the first class, teachers can ask the students to search the internet or the library and find information on any aspect of the target culture that interests them. In the following class, students explain to the class what they have learnt and answer any questions about it.

Turkan and Celik (2007) list some ways teachers can incorporate culture into language classrooms and supplement their textbooks with cultural elements relevant to their contexts. Some of the strategies the authors suggest are the utilization of movies, lectures from native speakers of the target culture, audio-taped interviews with native speakers, video-taped observations of the target language community, and authentic readings and realia. To set an example, the authors share a sample unit plan to teach about three American holidays they believe are popular, such as celebrating festivals, like thanks giving, Christmas, and New Year as a simple and effective way to start approaching and teaching culture in language classrooms. However, they did not give a modified activity to suit any EFL context. They only advise that potential activities and strategies are endless, and that each teacher should assess their own context to evaluate the effectiveness of any prospective activity, and should modify any activity or material at hand to fit their students' needs better.

Rochman (2007) pays attention to how to design activities for teaching culture. According to her, it is vital to conduct cooperation between course designers' and learners' interests and views to stimulate them to improve their cultural competence. She believes that the purpose of teaching and learning activities and their usefulness in L2 contexts are significant. It is important to devote enough time in school curricula and give some training to teachers about how to cope with sensitive

cultural issues. If not, as Rochman points out, teaching culture becomes a too much of a challenge for foreign language teachers.

Similarly, Dahan (2005) believes EFL teachers are now involved in teaching English as an international language. Also, English no longer belongs to any one nation or culture, according to her “it is reasonable to imagine that how the language is taught should not be linked to a particular culturally influenced methodology; rather the language should be taught in a manner consistent with local cultural expectations” (p. 28). She believes EFL teachers could teach native English speaking culture without using native English cultural methods, although providing no specific examples of how this could be done.

### When should Culture be Taught?

There are conflicting views among the scholars on the appropriate age/learning stage to teach culture in second language classrooms. Fleet (2006) emphasizes that teaching culture should happen at an early age. She suggests that culture teaching “should take place in the second language program from the first day of class” (p. 12). Indeed, she highlights the idea that culture can be taught at the beginning of a language curriculum even if it has to be taught in L1 as a start. To achieve this process, she recommends a “three-stage approach” where the primary stage of culture teaching occurs at the beginner level (p. 12). At the first level, learners are only introduced to cultural facts and are just getting acquainted with the target culture. From here, learners progress through the second stage which is suitable for students who are at the intermediate level of language capability. At this stage, students start to compare their own cultures with that of the target culture and “attempts at understanding, empathy, appreciation and acceptance of the other are still in their embryo stage” (p. 12). Finally, Fleet makes it clear that “culture should be taught when we have students to teach” (p. 5). That is, culture has to be taught from day one of language teaching and must continue. She adds, if students are too young to master the language skills, culture may be taught in the mother tongue with which students are familiar. She gives the message of language theorists that teaching of culture needs to take place regardless of language skills of learners.

Rochman considers knowledge of the target culture as an essential part of foreign language learning. She believes that training students, especially the advanced level students to understand culturally-determined meanings is especially helpful. So, they can cope with authentic materials of target culture. Besides, she states that if content of materials and cultural input are interesting, students become more receptive to understanding cultural issues.

### How do Students Perceive Learning Culture?

Some of the students' perceptions about teaching of culture in English language classrooms as written in the literature are reviewed and they have different opinions towards it. Rochman investigated students' opinions in an Indonesian university on which cultural aspects should be learned. As was noted earlier, she found that some students thought that learning a foreign language has to be separated from learning culture. Because some of the students think that several elements of English culture have some inconsistency with the local values. This shows that cross-cultural matters may become a potential conflict in foreign language teaching. She considers that lack of "cultural competence"—beliefs, attitudes, views, etc.—can cause this kind of problem.

In another study conducted by Genc and Bada (2005) with the participation of students of the ELT Department of Cukurova University in Turkey, the researchers tried to find out what students thought about the effects of culture in their English language learning. As a result of the study, a significant similarity between the students' views and the theoretical benefits of learning culture as argued by some experts in the field was observed. The research found that studying culture raised cultural awareness in those students concerning both native and target societies. The study illustrated how the arguments of language teaching research experts like Byram (1997), Crystal (1997), Kramsch (2001), Lado (1957), Thanasoulas (2001), and Thomson (2003) in favor of incorporating culture in language learning and teaching are justified by sound evidence provided by the participants in their study. The participants in their study believe incorporating culture with English language classes aim at improving one's understanding of the language and the people who speak it.

They point out that “studying English culture is not an arbitrary but a necessary activity” (p. 80). Some of the literature they reviewed concluded that “culture has a humanizing and a motivating effect on the language learner and the learning process. They help learners observe similarities and differences among various cultural groups” (p. 75). Genc and Bada concluded that incorporating language and culture “is significantly beneficial in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness [and] changing attitudes towards native and target societies” (p. 81).

A small-scale study was conducted by Jong-Li (2006) to understand what EFL learners think about the effect of inclusion of the cultural component in an English language class they attended in the summer semester of the 2005-2006 academic year at Ching Yun University in Taiwan. These students were asked to assess the cultural aspects reflected in the above courses, in the learning materials such as textbooks and CDs. Most of the participants clearly expressed positive views. They thought that culture in language courses helped them become aware of the target language. Results regarding the content of culture learning indicated that all of the learners felt that it was important to include aspects of the target culture and world culture in language learning. The findings showed the learners’ attitudes towards the target culture had changed, as they expressed their views strongly towards the positive end of the scale. Jong-Li believes that in learning, attitudes play a vital role for the transformation of a learner’s outlook towards life and work. Also it is necessary to change learners’ attitudes toward their own culture and world culture in a positive direction before they begin their professional lives. Regarding skill improvement, all of the learners expressed views that all of their English skills had improved. Most of the learners mentioned that their listening skill had significantly improved. Speaking, reading and writing skills were also improved respectively. Some learners in the study believed that culture learning could help them to enhance their communicative competence. Students were aware that cultural competence could enhance their pragmatic or linguistic competence. This they thought not only would help them to become efficient listeners and speakers but also become skilled readers and writers.

Recently in the UAE, Sadek (2007) conducted a study on “Arabs’ Students Attitudes toward Western Culture and Motivation to Learn English Language.” She

found, “The Arab students in her study were opened to receiving Western culture that would enhance their learning of English, and at the same time not endanger their own Arabic identity” (p. 57). The findings showed that students were motivated to learn English language for instrumental and not for integrative reasons. Instrumental motivation according to Hudson (2000) characterizes the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a second language. Instrumental motivation underlies the goal to gain some social or economic reward through L2 achievement. Integrative motivation as asserted by Crookes & Schmidt (1991) means the learner's positive attitudes towards the target language group and the desire to integrate into the target language community. In another research carried out in the same context by Dahan (2005), the majority of the Arab students who participated in her study stated that they used English to communicate mainly with non-native speakers of English. The results also indicated the negative attitudes of students towards studying native-English speaking cultures. However, the students differentiated between the culture learnt in the classrooms and pop culture, “such as movies and music” which they found “interesting and motivating” (p. 71).

### Conclusion

The literature above provides explanations about the teaching of culture in English as a second/foreign language classroom. Particularly, many scholars show how culture could be integrated into English language textbooks and lessons. The above literature also presents arguments that are for and against the teaching/learning of culture in L2 classrooms. It provides reasons why the teaching/learning about culture especially the L2 culture should be banned in L2 classrooms. Some individuals think that learning a foreign language has to be separated from learning the culture of the foreign language. They believe some elements of cross-cultural matters may have some inconsistency with the local values, and become a potential conflict in foreign language teaching. On the other hand, some literature also provides justifications for culture teaching/learning in L2 classrooms. The literature also advocates that teachers should teach culture in L2 classroom in order to facilitate the L2 learning process of their students and help them master it. However, the literature



also emphasizes that students have the right to learn and at the same time choose what culture they want to adapt, as forcing a particular culture on the students in the classroom may distract them from valuable L2 input, as shown, for example, by the Indonesian students described earlier.

Some of the above literature focuses on the activities in which culture can be effectively employed in L2 classrooms, and what the contexts are in which these applications occur. However, practical advice about when, why, and how to teach or not to teach L2 culture in L2 classrooms, especially in conservative, non-pluralistic societies such as the UAE would be helpful for teachers. Since the teaching of culture is a controversial issue in second language teaching, especially in some conservative Muslim contexts, as we have seen, such as Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, the present study seeks to extend the line of research of Dahan's (2005) and Sadek's (2006) studies by examining Emirati high school students' and their English teachers' attitudes and beliefs about teaching/learning of culture in English language classrooms. The study will contribute to the literature on students' and teachers' perceptions on the teaching/learning of culture in English language classrooms in the UAE and second/foreign language context. Moreover, the findings of this research will provide useful information for those responsible for English language instruction in UAE schools about the types of cultural instruction students and teachers find acceptable and motivating.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this study was to investigate perception and attitudes towards the teaching/learning of culture in high schools at UAE's government schools. The study aimed to look at what government secondary school teachers in UAE thought about the learning/teaching of culture, in particular the cultures of native English speakers most familiar in the UAE, British and North American people, in English language education, in terms of its benefits to students, how it is incorporated, and also the difficulties that teachers might have encountered when trying to integrate it in their classrooms. Through the teachers and the targeted learners themselves, the study attempted to explore what grade 12 government school students thought and felt about culture, especially, the US/UK culture. Furthermore, it intended to identify students' and teachers' perceptions regarding this issue in four government secondary schools one from Sharjah emirate and three from Fujairah emirate in the UAE. Thus, the study aimed to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. Do English teachers in the UAE teach culture in their classrooms?
2. If they do, whose culture do they teach?
3. How do UAE English teachers incorporate cultural information into their teaching?
4. Who do the Emirati students hope to communicate with in English?
5. What are the Emirati students going to use their English for in the future?
6. Whose cultures do Emirati students want to learn about in their English language classroom?
7. What specific aspects of culture would the students like to learn and why?

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data-collection methods were employed: surveys for students and teachers to gather background data and explore opinions, and semi-structured interviews for students and teachers to gain further insights into their perceptions and attitudes toward culture in English language classrooms. To avoid any ambiguity or misunderstanding regarding language comprehension, all the statements, items, and

questions in the students' survey were translated into Arabic to enable the students understand the statements easily. However, the interviews were conducted for students in English. Despite the fact that I had someone who could interpret from Arabic language to English and vice-versa, the students demonstrated their understanding of the English language and they tried to ask for clarification if a question was not understood and I rephrased the question or just repeated it for them. The collected data from the surveys (Appendixes B1, B2, B4, and B5) were descriptively analyzed and graphed in order to find out the frequencies and percentages for each response of the structured statements, and whether or not there were any similarities or differences in the way the teachers and students in this study perceived the teaching and learning of culture in their L2 classrooms. The results of the frequencies and percentages are presented in quantitative tables and charts in order to clearly present a comparison between the responses of the two groups: teachers and students.

In addition, the attitudes of students and teachers, obtained from the open ended questions and interviews, toward culture in English language classrooms were also considered as qualitative data and were used as a comparison tool in order to check the differences and similarities between the way teachers and students perceived the teaching and learning of culture in L2 classrooms. The following sections provide background information of the participants, and procedures used to collect the data.

### The Participants

The participants of this study were composed of two groups: English language teachers and government secondary school students. What follows is a description of each group.

#### Teachers

The teachers' group in this study consisted of experienced secondary level teachers who teach English to grade 12 students in four different government secondary in 2 all-male and 2 all-female schools in Sharjah and Fujairah. This group

included 11 teachers composed of eight females and three males (Table 1). All teachers were non-native speakers of English mostly from different Arab countries and non Arab country, with teaching experience ranging from 3 to 35 years:

- 2 Egyptians
- 3 Emiratis
- 1 Jordanian
- 1 Pakistani
- 2 Palestinians
- 2 Tunisians

Table 1. Teachers' and Students' Demographics

Schools		No. of participating schools	No. of participating teachers and students		
			TSs	MSs	FSs
1	Girls School	2	8		87
2	Boys School	2	3	21	
<i>Total</i>		4	11	21	87

TSs: Teachers, MSs: Male students, FSs: Female Students

## Students

All the government secondary schools students who participated in the study were UAE nationals. The students were all from Grade 12: their ages ranged from 16 to 18 years old. All students' experience in learning English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) varied between 12 and 14 years. This group included a total of 108 students, 21 males and 87 females (Table 1). The disparity in the number of participating students was due to the fact that only one teacher in the all-boys school allowed his class to be surveyed.

## Instruments

### Students' and Teachers' Surveys

In order to shed light on teachers' beliefs and attitudes as well as their practices and students' perceptions concerning teaching and learning about culture in

UAE English classrooms, a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments was utilized. The surveys, as shown in Appendices A1 and A3, were designed in two versions: one for teachers and one for students. Six teachers completed a questionnaire composed of two sections (see Appendix A3). Section one asked for background information about the teachers such as nationality, gender, and teaching experience. It also asked four closed ended questions. Section two was divided into two parts and consisted of fourteen close ended statements aimed at eliciting information about teachers' attitudes and practices. For the first 14 statements, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement using a 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly agree; agree; neutral; disagree; and strongly disagree). The second part of section two included nine open-ended questions to give teachers the chance to freely express their opinions about the topic and make their own suggestions.

Exploring the students' perceptions towards teaching and learning about culture was achieved through the use of a bilingual students' questionnaire. The students' questionnaires also contained two sections with section two consisting of two parts (Appendix A1). Statements, items, and questions were offered in two languages; English and Arabic. Section one requested general information about the students, such as nationality, gender, age, and their year of English language learning experience. Four closed ended questions asked about the aspects of culture that students wanted to learn, the materials their teachers used in teaching culture, what students hoped to use English language for in the future, and whom they would communicate with in the language they were. Section two included 14 close-ended statements in order to investigate students' perceptions towards this topic. Participating students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement on the 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly agree; agree; neutral; disagree; and strongly disagree). The second part of section two included six open-ended questions to give students the chance to express their opinions and make their own suggestions about the topic.

Surveys were used as a method of data collection since they were considered by Hopkins (2002) as a "quick and simple way of obtaining broad and rich

information” (p. 117). Hopkins also states that collecting data through surveys provides quantitative data, “direct comparison of groups and individuals, and feedback on attitudes”

(p. 118). However, Hopkins further adds that surveys lack essential depth. For this, students’ and teachers’ interviews were conducted to verify in depth their perceptions and attitudes.

### Students’ and Teachers’ Interviews

The students and teachers who participated in the surveys decided to opt out of the interviews for some reasons given by the teachers. The teachers explained that, they did not have enough time to grant the interview due to teaching, paper work, and meetings they had to attend. None of the interviewed students or teachers had done the surveys. Seven students consisting of four boys from an all-male and three girls from an all-female government secondary were interviewed. Five teachers including 3 female teachers from the girls’ school and two teachers from the boys’ were interviewed instead (Appendixes B3 and B6). The seven interviewed students were presumably chosen randomly by their class English teacher because I instructed the teachers to pick any students from their classes and not to make their choice on the basis of students' academic standing or proficiency level. The students were all from grade 12 and were aged between 16 and 18. The interviews took the form of focus-group interviews, where the researcher sat with three and four students of each group and two and three of each group of teachers in a relaxed, stress-free environment. The 10-20 minute interviews were administered in the schools' premises, either in the staff room, or the library. The interviews were carried out in order to identify students’ and teachers’ perceptions towards learning and teaching about culture and if they think it is appropriate teach/learn culture in English classrooms or not. It was used to find out whether teachers teach culture or not and the types of culture being taught and learnt. Furthermore, it aimed at finding out more clearly the problematic areas that teachers face when teaching culture in their classrooms. Through the interviews, the types of materials which were provided by the ministry and the kinds the teachers used were also explored as was the question of whether teachers receive any training as to how

culture should be integrated in English classrooms. Furthermore, the interviews were aimed at finding out more clearly the best time students and teachers thought culture should be introduced in English classrooms. In general, the teachers' and the students' interviews served as consolidating and complementary qualitative data to the survey data.

The data obtained from the results of both students' and teachers' interviews were used as a comparison tool in order to check the differences and similarities between the way teachers and students perceive the teaching of culture in English language classrooms. The students' and teachers' interviews were considered essential instruments because they supported the surveys and helped in clarifying and justifying many issues that arose from the classroom surveys. Interviews, as explained by Hopkins (2002), "are often very productive sources of information for a particular researcher who wants to verify observations he or she has previously made" (p. 109).

Before the study began, students were familiarized with the procedure and parents were informed that their childrens' responses would be used only as confidential data for this thesis research. The participating students were told that they have the right to refuse to be in the study at all, and to stop participating at any time after the study commenced. Students were asked to give the consent form to their parents in order to get permission to participate in this survey (Appendix C1). Prior to the interviews, the Directorate of Scientific Research in the Ministry of Education in UAE was informed about the whole procedure of carrying out the interviews, copies of the letter written to the school was presented to the Ministry (Appendix C2) and official approval was obtained. This official approval was then presented to the principals of the selected government secondary schools.

### Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted using both questionnaires in two secondary schools. The participants in the pilot study were six (four males and two females) English teachers and twenty UAE male and female students from grade 12. Those who participated were excluded from the main sample in this research. The aim of piloting both questionnaires was to find out more about the clarity of the statements

and if any modifications were necessary. In addition, the pilot study provided information about the actual time needed to complete the questionnaire. Although the pilot study indicated that both questionnaires were clear enough and positive feedback were received from both teachers and students, slight changes were made to the students' and teachers' questionnaires adding two more questions each to closed ended statement and open ended question in Appendix A1 Part two in Section two.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of the study. The study results are based on the responses of 11 English language teachers, working at four different government secondary schools in the UAE. Eight of the teachers were from two all-girls and three of them from two all-boys government schools. Six teachers (5 females and 1 male) responded to the survey, and five (3 females and 2 males) out of the 11 teachers were only interviewed. The data analysis also employed the responses of 108 secondary-level students in four different government schools (2 all-female and 2 all-boys). 101 of them answered the survey, 84 of them were girls from one all-female government secondary school, and 17 from all-male government secondary school. Three girls from another all-girl and four boys from the second all-boys government secondary schools who did not partake in the survey were interviewed. The significant findings are discussed below. Collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Data from the open-ended questions and interviews was used to support the quantitative data to gain more insights into students' and teachers' responses.

#### Analysis of Data

##### Perceptions towards English as a Global or International Language

The results of the participants' perceptions of the importance of the English as a global or international language showed that the participants seemed to be aware of the role of the language in today's communication in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. As can be seen in figure 1 below, 97% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that English language is very important in today's global communication. 2% of them had a neutral opinion; this same percentage also strongly disagreed.

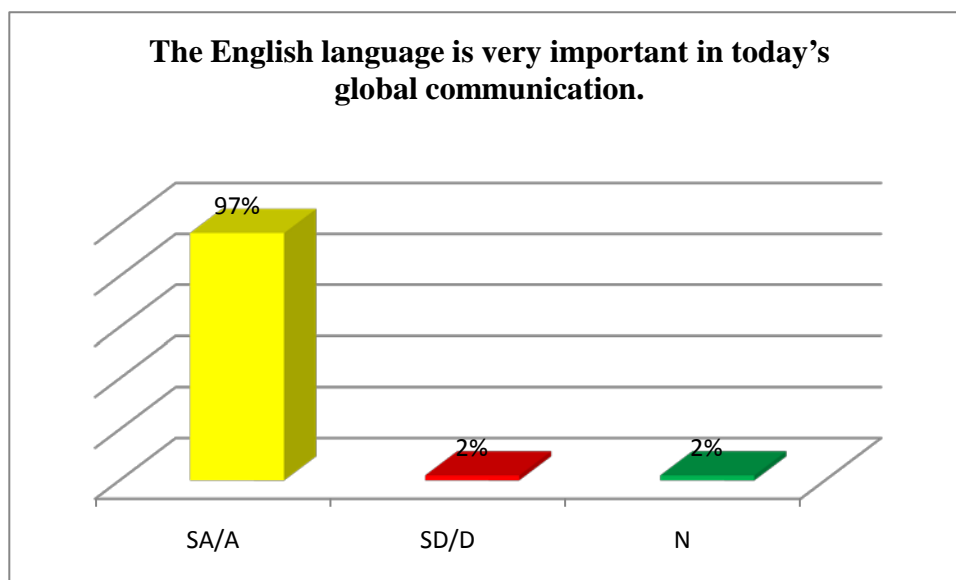


Figure 1: Students' Perceptions of English as a Global Language

In response to an interview question that prompted them to explain why they think the English language is essential in global communication, one student said, "Without English, you are a walking dead. English is the only language that cut across all barriers, on the internet, on the TV, and face to face communication with native and non native English speakers." Another student added, "We are learning English language because it would make communication easier for us in any part of the world we go to."

All teachers (6) who answered the survey also responded positively to the TL1 (Appendix B4) that was intended to investigate their beliefs and attitudes towards English as a global language. When answering the item, all of the teachers (6) strongly agreed that the English language is very important in today's global communication.

In addition, teachers were asked at the interview TI13 (Appendix B6) whether they thought the English language is essential in global communication. All teachers indicated that the English language is crucial in every aspect of life today. One teacher said, "No matter what you do, you need English because we meet people from different parts of the world. For example, you (referring to me) are speaking to us this morning; if we don't speak English how do we interact with you? I believe for now

English is the general language world over.” Another teacher simply added, “It is the world’s lingua franca until another language emerges.”

## Discussion

The general attitudes of students and teachers showed they believe that English is a global language and it is essential in today’s global communication. Both students and teachers showed their awareness of the role of the language in today’s communication in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The participants believe without English, it would be difficult to communicate comfortably with native English speakers and competent non native speakers of English.

### Whether Teachers Teach Culture and Whose Culture They Teach

As illustrated in Figure 2, the first research question “Do English teachers in the UAE teach culture in their classrooms?” which sought to discover whether teachers teach culture in their English language classrooms was addressed in survey items SL4 and TL4 (Appendixes B2 and B5). 95% of the students strongly agreed that their teachers taught culture in English classrooms and 6% had a neutral opinion.

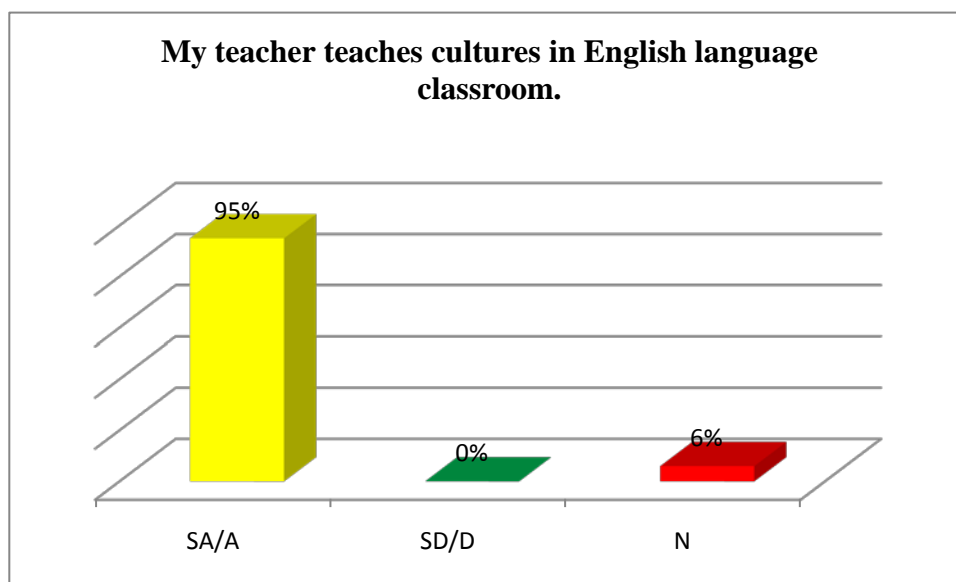


Figure 2: Students’ Perception of Teachers’ Teaching about Culture

Teachers' perceptions towards whether they teach culture in English language classrooms are shown in responses to TL4. All the teachers believed culture is an essential part of English language teaching and has to be dealt with accordingly. All the (6) teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they teach cultures in English language classroom.

Moreover, in their responses to the interview questions TI5 (Appendix B6), teachers expressed positive attitudes towards teaching about culture in their EFL classrooms. Many of them pointed out that they sometime teach culture as a tool for teaching English in their classrooms. One teacher said, "In my experience as an ESL/EFL teacher culture is very vital and helpful in second language program." One interviewee pointed out, "It's really enjoying when you teach culture as most of the students are eager to know more, during this moment you would be able to get across what you really want to teach the students." Another interviewee said, "I enjoy it very much myself and students make silly giggles."

The second research question, "If they do, whose culture do they teach?" was addressed in survey item SO15 and TO15 (Appendixes A3 and A1). Among 65 students who answered SO15, "whose culture do you think you are learning in your English language classroom?" seven of them simply wrote "I don't know," 3 students stated "various cultures," seven stated, "different cultures," ten of the students said, "English and others." The remaining students, 38 wrote, "Arab, Emirati, and English." In the interview, all the students reported that they are learning Emirati and English cultures in their English language classrooms. One student actually said, "This is an English language classroom and I think English culture should be taught. I am an Emirati, I know about my culture why won't they teach me about the culture of the language I am learning?" Another student reported, "Emirati culture is taught most of the time, we need to learn about native English speaking culture to be able to use the language as it should be used."

For teachers the question was "Whose culture do you think you are currently teaching in your English language classroom?" Five teachers who answered the question were actually at cross-roads (in doubt). For example, one teacher stated, "I'm not certain. But, I think the cultures as contained in the textbook are different."

However, I supplement my teaching with materials mostly from the internet and sometimes newspapers, when I see that the topic I have to teach deals with English culture.” Another teacher wrote, “As for your question it is not the Emirati culture for sure. The textbook that we are using is commercial one that is designed to be taught in any country. However, the writer added a few adjustments so it would seem to be close to the Emirati culture. He added Arabic names and very few lessons mentioning something about the UAE. The text generally is academic, teaching different genres about specific topics. I think none of the lessons taught any specific culture.”

However, all the five teachers who answered TI6 (Appendix B6) said they teach Emirati culture most of the time, but they sometime teach other cultures, in most cases American or British culture. One teacher said, “We are guided by the textbook, we teach whatever comes next, it could be Emirati or English culture.”

## Discussion

The descriptive analysis of both students’ and teachers’ responses implied that the majority of them believed that culture is being taught. But the identity of the culture(s) being taught seemed to be vague; most students and teachers believed many cultures comprising US/UK cultures and Emirati culture are being taught. Most teachers believed they were teaching Emirati culture most of the times while a minority of them thought the culture being taught were some variety of Emirated versions of US/UK cultures. The question of whose culture is taught was seen by the teachers as being dictated by the textbook. The teachers however appeared to be more doubtful about the validity of the culture being taught than the students.

### How Teachers Incorporate Cultural Information into Their Teaching

The third research question was answered through SL and TL11-14 of students’ and teachers’ survey items (Appendixes B2 and B5) and SC8 and TC7 respectively (Appendixes B1 and B4). The questions attempted to find out whether teachers used different materials when teaching culture in English classrooms.

### Students’ Perceptions of the Materials used in Teaching Culture

Table 2 below illustrates the students' responses to survey items SL11 to 14 (Appendix B2). SL11 shows that the majority (65%) of the students agreed that their teachers used different materials that address different cultures when teaching in English classrooms, whereas 15% disagreed and 21% had a neutral opinion. Nearly 30% of the students agreed with SL12 suggesting that their teachers used texts in English classes that included the native cultures of the UAE only, 47% strongly disagreed and 25% had neutral opinion. 20% agreed their teachers used texts in English classes that included the native cultures of English speaking countries only (SL13), the majority 53% strongly disagreed, and 28% were neutral about the statement. Concerning SL14, 61% of the students concurred that their teachers used texts in English classes that included a combination of the native cultures of English speaking countries, the UAE, and Arabs, 11% disagreed, and 29% had a neutral opinion.

Table 2: Students' Perceptions of the Materials used in Teaching Culture

No.	Statement	SA/A	SD/D	N
11.	My teacher uses materials that address different cultures.	65%	15%	21%
12.	My English teacher uses texts in English classes that include the native cultures of the UAE only.	29%	47%	25%
13.	My teacher uses texts in English classes that include the native cultures of English speaking countries only.	20%	53%	28%
14.	My teacher uses texts in English classes that include a combination of the native cultures of English speaking countries, the UAE, and Arabs.	61%	11%	29%

In addition, survey items SO17 and SI21 (Appendix A1 and B3) asked the students what cultural points they thought should be included in the textbook. Almost all students indicated that US/UK cultures should be included in the textbook as they believed it helps them learn and use the language fluently. About 90 of the students who responded to this question in writing and all the interviewed (7) students mostly wrote or said daily life activities and daily condition, verbal conversation, social

interaction, and what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in the native English countries, topic about travel and culture, ethics of speaking and gesture, fashion and food, body language. For example, one student wrote, “Dos and don’ts in those countries so we don’t feel awkward when we interact with these people.” Another student stated, “The ethics of speaking, body language, and gesture.” One interviewee said, “Daily life activities and living conditions because these are everyday situations which are used at home and school.” Another one said “Travel and tourism in case we go on holiday.”

Table 3 illustrates the students’ answers to survey item SC8 (Appendix B1), where students were asked to choose the materials their teachers used in teaching culture. Textbooks had the highest entries (75), video was second with 72 entries, while audio and internet shared the same number of entries 55 each. Cultural study textbooks 21, literature 11, newspaper and music also had the same number of entries 10 each. Finally, realia had the lowest number of entries, 9.

Table 3: Students’ Perceptions towards the Materials used in Teaching Culture

CHOICES	FREQUENCY
a) Textbooks	75
b) Video	72
c) Audio	55
d) Internet	55
e) Cultural studies textbooks	21
f) Literature	11
g) Music	10
h) Newspaper	10
i) Realia	9
j) Not sure	5

When students were asked in interview item SI16 (Appendix B3) what materials their teacher used in teaching culture in English classrooms. The students

listed OHP, internet, newspapers, and video among the materials teachers sometimes use.

#### Teachers' Perceptions towards the Materials used in Teaching Culture

Teachers' opinion of the materials used in teaching culture was found through TL11-14 (Appendix B5). The first question TL11 dealt with finding out whether teachers used materials that address different cultures when teaching in English classrooms. Findings indicated that two-thirds of the teachers (4) agreed that they used different materials that address different cultures to teach their students, one disagreed and the same number had a neutral opinion as shown in table 3 below. For TL12, one of the respondents strongly agreed to using texts in English classes that included the cultures of the UAE only in English classrooms while a greater number (5) strongly disagreed. One teacher strongly agreed to using texts in English classes that include the native cultures of English speaking countries only while the majority (4) strongly disagreed (TL13). Lastly, 5 of the teachers strongly agreed or agreed they used texts in English classes that included a combination of the native cultures of English speaking countries, the UAE, and Arab (TL14).

Survey item TO18 and interview question TI19 (Appendixes A3 and B6) asked teachers about the cultural topic they think should be included in textbooks. Four of the teachers answered the question in writing while 5 of them were interviewed. All teachers generally believed that daily life activities, living condition, values, beliefs and attitudes, and social convention are important aspects of any language teaching. One teacher mentioned, "More real life situations [like] these would help them learn the language in a proper way and bridge the cultural shock in case students travel to native English countries." Another teacher stated, "All the [culture] that is needed to make students understand the lesson." Another said, "Daily life activities and living conditions as these help with everyday language at home, school, play, and shopping." However, one teacher did not write an answer to the question.

In their responses to the TC7 (Appendix B4), textbooks had the highest number of entries with 6 teachers, followed by the internet which had 5 entries.



Meanwhile, newspapers, cultural textbooks, video, audio, and realia came third with 3 entries. Literature was the last with 2 entries. When responding to interview question TI20 (Appendix B6) that asked what materials were been provided by the ministry of education for the teaching of the English language, all the teachers reported they use the textbook as the number one teaching tool. These teachers said the classrooms are equipped with overhead projectors, computers, and internet facilities which teachers could use at their own discretion. One interviewee said, “Teachers can supplement their teaching materials with whatever they think would enhance the students’ learning.” Another teacher stated, “I sometime use other materials like, realia, video, audio, and newspapers.”

Teachers were asked in survey item TO17 (Appendix A3) and at the interview TI22 (Appendix B6) how successful they think the materials they use in teaching culture are. They all reported that the materials they employ in teaching culture are very successful with emphasis on video, realia, and the internet. One teacher said, “When different materials are used in teaching, the teaching and learning become interesting and students are more excited to learn.” Another one said, “They are useful and can help learn about the culture of English people.” One teacher said, “They facilitate learning.” One teacher wrote, “They are very helpful and successful!” Another one put in writing, “Each of these materials has its own merits depending on the focal point we are working on.”

In addition, they were asked in TI1 (Appendix B6) if they receive any training during the course of their education or while on the job on how culture especially L2 culture should be taught to ESL/EFL learners. The teachers all said there has been no special training as to how culture should be taught. Teachers use their initiatives and experiences on the job to teach, however, they said they sometimes receive a little amount of training from veteran teachers; they also come across techniques of how culture should be taught in pedagogical literature, and at times when they go to conferences or workshops. One teacher who had just completed his MA from a British university in Dubai said, “I came to know lots of methods in teaching English and culture when studying for my MA. I shared some of the ideas with colleagues and we all see a number of them are working well for the students.”

## Discussion

The results of student' and teachers' survey revealed that teachers depended more on the textbooks for teaching of culture compared to other available materials. The data revealed that interviewed teachers sometime used the textbooks and other materials as appropriate. Students and teachers believed the textbook being provided is too boring, does not cater for teaching of culture and that the native English speaking cultural content of the textbook was not enough. They recommended that cultural aspects like daily life activity, living conditions, and social activities should be included to ease the learning and understanding of the language.

Moreover, both students and teachers thought that the use of videos, the internet, and audio tapes is sometimes useful to facilitate comprehension and convey meaning that is hard to convey through the textbooks or by explanations. However, only three teachers out of six surveyed reported they use video and audio materials to teach while the majority of students believed video is very useful and more than half thought audio is also helpful in learning the L2 culture.

### Why Students were Learning English and Who they Hope to Use English with in the Future

This section answers research questions 4 and 5. The fourth question concerned who the Emirati students hoped to communicate with in English in the future. The answer to the question was found through survey item SC10 (Appendix B1). The majority of the students, (85) of them thought they were going to use the language with native speakers of English, 12 said they were going to use it with non-native speakers of English, and 7 students thought they were not sure who they were going to be using the English language with in the future. This was supported by survey item TC9 (Appendix 6). All the teachers (6) answered the question, 3 of them were of the opinion that students would be using the English language with the native speakers of English, and 2 of the teachers believed the students would be using the language with non-native speakers of English. Lastly, one teacher decided against the options presented and wrote, "Anyone it is required for."

The students' answers to interview item SI14 (Appendix B3) that sought to find out who they would use the English with in the future corroborated the teachers' perceptions. The students reported that they would be using it with native and non native speakers of English. One student said, "I would be using English with anyone that does not speak my language as I want to become a doctor and I plan to travel far and wide and I don't speak any other language apart from Arabic and English." A second student said, "The English language is the vehicle with which you go around the world now, even in Arab world, one must be able to use it as at when needed."

Moreover, the teachers' responses to TI14 (Appendix B6) supported the last teacher's view above. All the interviewee believed the English language is needed for anyone that does not speak Arabic. The teachers reported that students would be using the language with native English speakers since some of the students believed they would be studying or holidaying in America and Europe in general. Also, the teachers said students would be using English with non native English speakers. One teacher simply added, "Students would use English language as appropriate."

The fifth research question was what the Emirati students were going to use their English for in the future. The reply to this inquiry was established in the survey items SC9 and TC8 (Appendixes B1 and B4). In their responses to the question, 42 of the students believed they would be using the language for academic purpose, 40 of them reported they would use it for business purpose, 50 of the students planned to live in English speaking countries, while seven of these students however, were not sure of what they planned to use the English language for in the future. In their responses to an interview question SI21 (Appendix B3) that was used to clarify students' views on this point; it was found that they believed that the English language is important in anything they do as job and wherever they may go.

The teachers' responses to TC8 (Appendix B4) showed that 5 of them thought the students would be using the language for academic purposes. 2 of the teachers chose for business purposes, and there were no entry for options C (To live in English speaking countries) and D (Not sure). However, one teacher who decided against all options wrote in the survey, "English is important in all aspects of life now." In response to an interview question TI23 that sought to clarify teachers' opinions on the

same point; it was found that they believed the English language is significant in any part of the world and whatever one chose to do as a job.

In addition to the above, figure 3 below shows students' responses to survey item SL2 (Appendix B2) which dealt with finding out whether students were learning the English language for survival and routine transaction only, 19% of the students agreed, 51% strongly disagreed, and 30% had a neutral opinion.

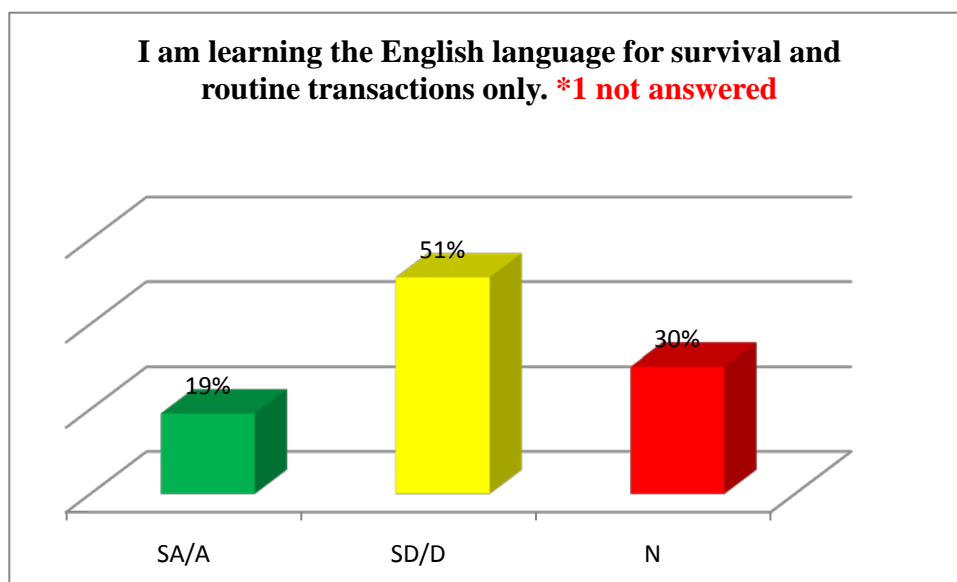


Figure 3: Students' Perceptions towards Learning the English Language

When students were asked at the interview whether they were learning the English language just to be able to interact, all of them rejected this assumption. For example, a student said, "Like I mentioned earlier I want to be a medical doctor not only in my country, but anywhere in the world. I should be able to speak fluently to my patients and about my profession in my first as well as my second language." Another student replied, "I'm learning this language to function in any circumstances that require English language."

As illustrated in fig 4 below. SL5 asked whether students were learning the English language for cultural awareness and understanding. 83% of them strongly agreed or agreed they were learning the English language for cultural awareness and understanding. 14% of the students had a neutral opinion while 4% disagreed.

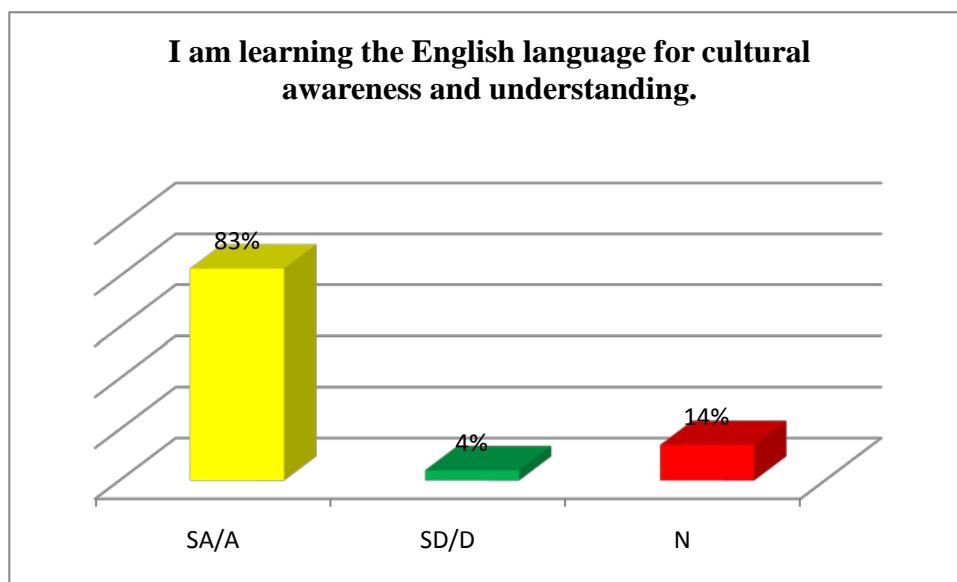


Figure 4: Students' Perceptions towards Learning the English Language

Moreover, in their responses to SI20 (Appendix B3), students expressed positive attitudes towards learning the English language for cultural awareness and understanding. Many of them indicated that they enjoy learning about the culture when their teachers teach it in their classrooms. One interviewed student said, "It's really cool." Another interviewee said, "I enjoy learning about their culture very much because it makes me aware of the English people and their countries." One more student remarked, "I believe as a second language learner, culture is very important and useful to be able to choose what you want for yourself."

#### Teachers' Purpose in Teaching English Language

Survey items TL2 and 5 (Appendixes B5) were used to find out some of the reasons teachers were teaching their students the English language. Teachers' responses to TL2 showed that two-thirds (4) of them disagreed with this statement while only one of the teachers agreed to teach the English language for survival and routine transactions only. The interview results corroborated the teachers' survey; all the teachers (5) stated that they were teaching the students to be competent users of the English language not just to be able to interact. One interviewee said, "When students are competent in the language, I believe they can function in every aspect the

language is needed.” Another teacher mentioned, “Whatever subject you teach, should be taught appropriately. English language should be taught with all its contents, culture inclusive.”

In TL5, five of the teachers also responded positively and agreed to the idea that they taught the students the English language for cultural awareness and understanding. Furthermore, in their responses to interview question TI22, teachers stated that they were teaching English language for cultural awareness and understanding. All the teachers said that they enjoy teaching L2 culture because most of the students are interested in learning it, because students learn new words and new things about the native English people anytime the English culture is taught. One teacher said, "It's really fun." Another one pointed out, "I like teaching about English culture because it makes students [become] aware of some facts about the language and the people and students come up with lots of questions.” One teacher pointed to the fact that, “When you teach culture of a language to a foreign or second language students, you help prepare them for the future.”

## Discussion

To summarize, a greater number of students believed they would be using the language for academic purposes and for living in English speaking countries, while a greater number of teachers thought students would be using the language for academic purposes only. Generally, the majority of students and teachers believed that the English language is being learnt and taught for cultural awareness and understanding. They thought students become more aware of the language and the people that use it and also help to prepare the students for the future, in case students travel to native English speaking countries. Although, the students and teachers seemed to share similar perceptions of who the students are going to use the English language with and what they are going to use it for in the future, there were discrepancies in their opinions. While students had 40 entries for option B (For academic purpose), only two entries were recorded for teachers. For option C (To live in English speaking countries), 50 entries were recorded for students and no single entry was recorded for teachers; i.e., no teacher thought that students were planning to

use their English to live in English speaking countries. For survey items SC10 and TC9 (Appendixes B1 and B4), the majority (85%) of students believed they would be using the language with native speakers of English. Only half (3) of the teachers thought students would be using the English language with native English speakers.

### Whose Culture do Students Want to Learn

#### The Cultures of Native English Speakers

The sixth research question “Whose cultures do Emirati students want to learn about in their English language classroom?” was found in this section through students’ and teachers’ responses to the surveys. 70 of the students who answered SO18 (Appendix A1), “Which other cultures would you like to learn about in your English classroom?” indicated they were interested in learning about US/UK cultures. For example, one student mentioned, “I would like to learn about British cultures.” Another student added, “Interpersonal relation as practiced in the English speaking world.” A third student wrote, “Daily life activities and social interaction of the English people.” The results pointed out a positive attitude towards native English speaking culture when students were responding to the interview question, “Would you like to learn about other cultures in the English language classroom?” One student said, “I want to learn about American culture, because I want to travel there. I don’t want to learn about Emirati culture, it is my culture and I learn about it everyday.” Another student added, “I want to learn about English culture because I want to study in an institution like AUS [American University of Sharjah] or America and Britain.”

As for the teachers, 5 of them answered TO19 (Appendix A3), “Which other cultures would your students like to learn about in English classroom?” Three teachers mentioned L2 culture. One teacher for example wrote, “Any western culture.” A second teacher stated, “Mostly, western cultures.” The third teacher mentioned, “Daily life activities and living conditions, values, beliefs, and attitudes, and social conventions of native English speaking people.” A fourth teacher added, “[Students] feel interested if I explain how cultural norms differ. One student told me

he would like to know more about Japanese culture, as he was planning to continue his studies there.” However, one of the teachers wrote, “Nothing. Students are usually not interested learning about other cultures except theirs.”

Interview results showed teachers were of the opinion that most students were interested in learning about culture especially the culture of the native English speakers. When they responded to TI15 (Appendix B6), “Do you think students would like to learn about other cultures in the English language classroom?” One teacher said, “Students are mostly happy when you teach them about American or British culture. I could remember when I showed them the traditional English breakfast on the internet; the students were so happy and wanted to learn more.” Another teacher mentioned, “Students want to learn about the western cultures in general. For example, when I teach them about British/American culture, they asked if it is the same with German, Spanish, and French.” However, one teacher believed, “Students were not interested about any culture but were only interested in knowing about the latest mobile phones and cars.”

#### The cultures of other non-native English speakers

Additionally, 10 of the students would like to learn about other cultures, as stated in some of the responses to SO18 (Appendix A1), “Which other cultures would you like to learn about in your English classroom?” These students mentioned “Asian, Spanish, Japanese, French, German, and Greek cultures.” One of these students wrote, “I would like to know how the Japanese culture operates.” Another student wrote, “Spanish culture is of interest to me and I would like to see the differences between this culture, English, and mine.” A third student stated, “Cultures of Muslim countries e.g. Malaysian.”

#### The Students’ Native Culture

Students’ responses to SO18 (Appendix A1) “Which other cultures would you like to learn about in your English classrooms?” revealed that a few of them also held a positive attitude towards learning L1 culture in English language classrooms. For example, 10 students wanted their teachers to teach them about their local cultural topics, UAE traditions, and Arabic culture of socializing, discipline and relationship



building. Some of the students' opinions, taken from the questions above which were in favor of L1 culture teaching and learning are quoted below:

I don't discourage learning about cultures of native English speakers in English language classrooms. But, to be fair to us we should be taught about our traditions in the UAE so we can speak fluently about our heritage in front of the foreigners.

It would be nice if the teacher could teach something about the culture of our religion while teaching English. I think this would make us good students and concentrate during most of the lesson.

One of the students preferred the learning of Arab culture in English language classrooms but said, "It depends on the teacher's method, if she teaches Arab cultures, we would learn them, if she does otherwise, we would have to follow her, she is our teacher."

#### Discussion

The data shows that the majority of students and teachers considered that there is need to learn and teach L2 culture in English classrooms. Yet, a minority of the students thought their native culture should be taught while learning English. A few students also believed other cultures like Japanese, Malaysian, and Spanish should be encouraged in English classroom. In addition, one teacher believed students were not interested in learning about any culture.

#### What Specific Aspects of Culture the Students Would Like to Learn and Why

Table 4 illustrates students' responses to SC7 (Appendix B1) "What aspects of culture do you think you want to learn?" showed that option A (daily life activities and living conditions) had the highest entries (44), option C (social conventions) came second with 42 entries, option E, (verbal communication means) was third with 32 entries, option F (non-verbal language) was fourth with 29 entries, option D (values, beliefs, and attitudes) came fifth with 21 entries and option B (traditions) was sixth with 14 entries.

Table 4: Students' Perceptions of Aspects of Culture they want to Learn

CHOICES	FREQUENCY
a) daily life activities and living conditions (e.g., at home, school, during festivals, etc)	44
b) social conventions (good manners, dressing, and meeting people)	42
c) verbal communication means (greetings, apologizing, expressing gratitude, embarrassment, etc)	32
d) non-verbal language (body language and facial expressions)	29
e) values, beliefs, and attitudes (what they are proud of, worry about, and found funny)	21
f) traditions	14

In addition, students were asked in SO19, “What aspects of culture if any do you want your teacher to spend time on and why?” of 80 students who answered this question, some of them (30) mentioned skills like writing, reading, speaking, grammar and vocabulary. One student wrote, “Any English culture that can help improve our knowledge and ability to use the language, writing in particular.” 35 of these students’ answers varied from customs and traditions, daily life activities, facial expressions, attitudes and values, religion, history, and literature. One student stated, “How to understand gestures and facial expression so we do not have to wait for other to speak out [before we understand them].” A second student wrote, “Customs and traditions of the English speaking people and their attitudes towards other people.” A third student said, “Customs and traditions, because through these we will be able to learn about the culture.”

Teachers’ responses to TC6 (Appendix B4), “What aspects of culture do you think your students want to learn?” six entries were entered for the first choice, five entries were recorded for C and D each, three entries were for options E and F each,

and finally four entries were recorded for option B. Teachers were asked in TO21 (Appendix A3), “What aspects of culture teaching if any do you want to spend time on and why?” all of the teachers (6) responded. They wrote various answers like, daily-life activities, feelings and turn-taking, social conventions, verbal communications, customs and traditions and one teacher simply wrote “Varied.”

## Discussion

Data analysis of students and teachers indicated that the majority of students wanted to learn and teachers would like to teach certain aspects of culture like daily life activities and living conditions, social conventions, and verbal communication means. Students believed these aspects are important since everyday languages, such as words use for shopping and socializing are involved in their usage. They thought these aspects would help to develop their language learning skills, for example, reading, speaking, grammar, and writing. A few students also said non verbal language is very essential in second language learning. They thought this would help them in understanding others without speaking out.

### Why Culture Should be Taught and Learnt

This research went further to know reasons culture should be taught and learnt in English language classrooms. Students’ and teachers’ perspectives are analyzed below.

When it came to the participants' perceptions of the benefits of culture for second language learning, results showed that the participants seemed to be aware of the role of culture in developing students' reading, vocabulary, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Table 5 illustrates the students’ responses to survey item SL3 (Appendix B2). A greater percentage of the students (74%) agreed or strongly agreed that culture is very important in English language teaching and learning while only 9% disagreed and 18% had a neutral opinion.

Table 5: Students' Perceptions of why Culture should be Taught and Learnt in English Language Classrooms

No.	Statement	SA/A	SD/D	N
3.	Culture is very important in English language teaching and learning.	74%	9%	18%

In response to SI11 (Appendix B3) that prompted them to explain how L2 culture is useful for learning English, one student said, "It's facilitating and motivating. It enhances my vocabulary, writing, reading, and grammatical knowledge." Another student said, "Learning about native English speaking culture allows the opportunity of knowing more about the people while learning about the language." One student said, "It makes speaking, reading, and writing in English easier. It also makes going to their countries easier as I know some of what to expect when I get there."

Teachers' responses to TL3 (Appendix B5) showed teachers' views on the importance of culture in English language teaching. It indicated that all the teachers (6) strongly agreed that culture is extremely significant to English language teaching and learning. When teachers were explaining how L2 culture is useful for learning English, one teacher said, "It makes easy the English language learning for the students. Learning about L2 culture gives some information about native English speakers which students might not be able to learn in a typical English language classroom." Another said, "It increases the students' knowledge of vocab." A third teacher said, "Also they read and self-learn when video and internet are involved. The native speaking culture also encourages them to do other or extra reading apart from the textbook that we use."

As illustrated in Figure 5, SL6 (Appendix B2) sought to find out whether students were interested in learning the culture of the native speakers of English in English classrooms. 67% of the students strongly agreed and thought that they were interested in learning the culture. 17% disagreed and 17% had a neutral opinion.

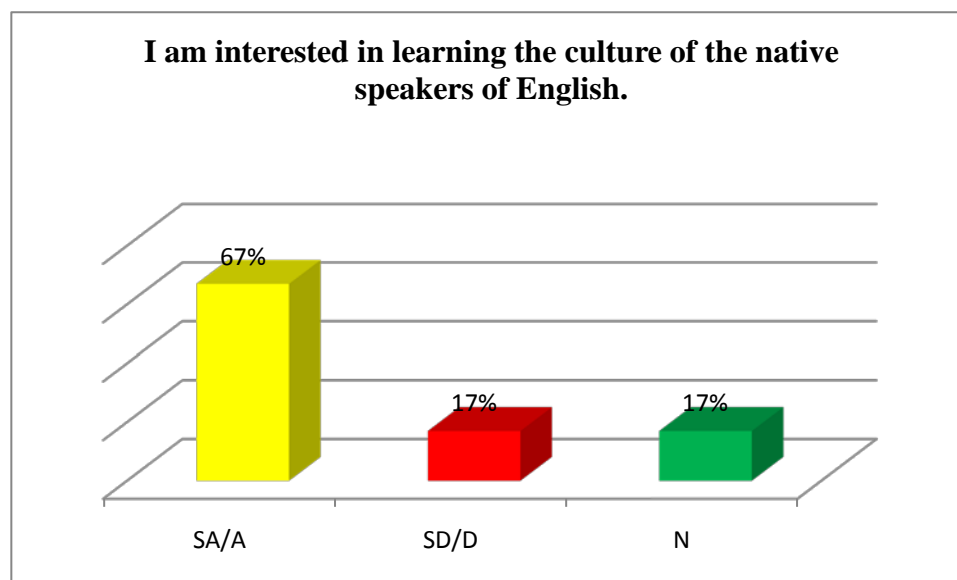


Figure 5: Students' Perception of their Interests in Learning NES culture

At the interview, SI18 (Appendix B3) asked students to clarify their interests in learning about the culture of the native English speakers. All 7 students maintained that they like learning about the culture of the English people whenever their teachers teach them. One student said she likes it when the teacher shows them a movie on the video or internet "because first, it's fun, and it makes us learn about things we did not know." They also said that they would like to learn more about culture of the native English speakers. For example, one student said that she would like to learn about the English culture at least four days a week.

Table 6 is used to illustrate survey items SL7 to 9 (Appendix B2); a few of the students (22%) agreed or strongly agreed to SL7 which suggested they were interested in learning English language only. Results also showed that more than half, over 50% strongly disagreed they were paying attention to learning the language only. More than 70% of students strongly agreed or agreed to SL8 which suggested that learning about the culture of native speakers of English helped students learn the language. 85 students gave response to SO16, "Do you think learning about the cultures of English speaking countries has helped your English language fluency? If yes, how? If no, explain." One student stated, "Yes, learning about culture of English speaking countries which were taught sometime has made simple the understanding

of the language to a large extent.” A second student wrote, “Yes it did, learning about these countries cultures helped a lot because when the teacher teach a few of them I got to learn new words and know about the native English peoples’ heritage. In addition I have a rich background about different views of these countries.” The third student said, “Yes, because understanding of the culture will make me comprehend what I learn.” However, **10** students said “No” in response to this same question and only two of those explained the reasons to their answers. One of the students wrote, “No because some of their cultures are against our religion.” A second simply stated, “No, I prefer to learn other languages through my native Arabic language.”

Table 6: Students’ Perceptions of why Culture should be Taught and Learnt in English Language Classrooms

No.	Statement	SA/A	SD/D	N	Z
7.	I am interested in learning English language only.	22%	57%	21%	1
8.	Learning about the culture of native speakers of English helps me learn the language.	73%	9%	19%	0
9.	Learning about the culture of native speakers of English motivates me to learn more English.	81%	10%	10%	0

Z: unanswered question

SL9 suggested to students, “Learning about the culture of native speakers of English motivates me to learn more English.” The majority, 81% of the students agreed that learning about the culture of native speakers of English motivated them to learn more English. They thought they were encouraged to learn the culture of native English speakers with emphasis on building vocabulary skills; all students repeated the idea that they learn the meaning and spelling of some difficult words found when they learn culture. One student, for example said in response to an interview question which asked if students are motivated to learn English language through the culture,

"We learn the strange words, the teacher highlights the spelling, and we tell her the meaning of those words by checking the dictionary. I want to learn more English culture as it increases my word list." Another student responded, "When new words are learnt I try to use them with my friends and family and I'm eager to learn more." Another interviewed student pointed out, "Yes, because knowing about their civilization and achievement entice me to learn about their language which has been used for invention in all aspects like science and arts." One more student stated, "Learning about traditions and customs and how to relate with the native English speakers have motivated me in improving and enhancing my English language proficiency."

#### Teachers' responses

As can be seen, survey items TL6 to 9 (Appendix B5) indicated teachers' responses to why culture should be learnt and taught in English language classrooms. Four teachers agreed that their students were interested in learning the culture of the native speakers of English; one of the teachers had a neutral opinion, while one left the answer blank. TL7 suggested to teachers that their students were interested in learning the English language only. Opinions were divided as 2 teachers strongly agreed and 2 also strongly disagreed that students were interested in learning about English language only." During the interviews teachers shed more light on the issue of whether or not their students had any interest in learning about the culture of the native English speakers through TI24. Four out of the five teachers who were interviewed reported that most students have an interest in learning about culture of English speaking countries. They believed most students were excited and enjoyed learning about the US/UK. One teacher said, "My students enjoy it when it comes to finding new words and knowing their meanings, and I also do. They like it very much. They're happy when they know they are going to learn something about the English culture." Another teacher said, "They like English; they love to learn English culture when you show video or a clip from the internet. They like it more than the [textbook]."

Some teachers even reported how eager the students are when it comes to learning about fashion (for girls) and (sports like football, rally and horse riding for boys). One teacher said, "They [students] enjoy it so much, when they read or hear about a typical native English teenager's life at school, or about a homeless one, and they ask me series of questions" Another teacher said, "Students are interested because they are eager to know whys and hows when they read about an incident in the newspaper or listen to an audio cassette." One more teacher said, "They love to improve their English language learning through culture. Many students told me on several occasion they hate their textbook. They insist that the textbook has to be changed, it is too boring."

Five of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed to TL8, "Learning about the culture of native speakers of English helps my students learn English." Furthermore, some reasons were given when answering TO16 (Appendix A3), "Do you think learning about the cultures of English speaking countries has helped your students learn English language? If yes, how? If no, explain." Four teachers answered in affirmative to this question, for example, one teacher wrote, "Yes, learning about the cultures of English speaking countries help a lot to learn the language itself, because culture with all its aspects is the context where the language happens and knowing the context makes the learning process more real." Another teacher stated, "Of course [yes], student can understand things like idiomatic expressions, connotations better when they associate them with the English culture."

TL9 was concerned with whether culture of native speakers of English motivated students to learn the language. Four of the respondents were of the opinion that learning about the culture of native speakers of English motivated students to learn more English. In response to an interview question, "Do you think the students are motivated to learn English language by learning the English culture?" all teachers thought the students were inspired to learn the language through L2; they said students learn new words, develop their comprehension skills, and learn about the native English speakers and about the countries. One teacher said, "Students are motivated when they learn new words through other medium, and it breaks the routine as you don't have to use the boring textbook. It enriches the students' vocab,



also they self-learn when video and internet are involved. The native speaking culture also persuades them to do extra reading apart from the textbook that we use." Another teacher said, "The culture enriches the students with vocabulary. It develops their speaking, writing, because they're going to present what they learn in the video, internet or extra reading; they're going to do a follow-up activity. I'm going to ask them some questions about what they have learnt so it develops their comprehension [skills]."

## Discussion

Analysis of students' and teachers' responses indicated that both group of participants were conscious of the benefits of culture in English language learning. Results showed that the majority of both students and teachers appeared to know the roles of culture in expanding students' writing, reading, listening, vocabulary, speaking, and grammar skills. Students and teachers believed culture should be taught and learnt because it facilitates language learning and motivates students to read other books apart from the textbook. A greater number of students and teachers indicated that learning about L2 helps, motivates, and increases students' English language fluency. However, a minority number of students thought L2 culture should not be taught or learnt because it is against the students' religion.

## Challenges of Teaching Culture

However, the data revealed a number of challenges that hinder teachers from teaching culture as often as the majority of students wish. The survey of teachers included an open-ended question about the problems that the teachers might have encountered when trying to teach some aspects of L2 culture in their classrooms. As indicated in their responses to TO20 (Appendix A3) which asked them to explain which areas of culture they find most difficult to teach and the reasons for this. Most teachers (5) responded to this question in writing. Three of them wrote, "Values, attitudes, and religion." Another teacher wrote, "Tradition because they differ from one country to another." One teacher however, thought "Nothing was difficult (in teaching of culture)."

In addition to teachers' responses above, the results of TI25 (Appendix B6) also revealed that teachers associated lack of time, material preparation, and management issues with teaching about these aspects of culture. At the interview, lack of time is the major problem all (5) teachers mentioned they have encountered when trying to teach L2 culture. They attributed the cause of this problem to several factors such as the following: planning for the teaching, the limited time of the English period, teachers' routine paper work, and other administrative responsibilities. For example, one teacher said, "Actually, culture is so useful, enjoyable for students. All what I wish is, to reduce little bit of all the stuffs that ministry always recommended us to do which makes our teaching the victim. I mean, we can do it easily if we are just teachers."

Another important challenge, which four teachers emphasized, is that materials preparation takes time and effort, especially since they have very busy schedules. To teach culture, teachers are supposed to find and employ multi-level activities, while at the same time such activities should cover a variety of language skills. A few teachers complained that materials preparation costs them money, in addition to time and effort. One teacher said, "The preparation of the materials cost me a lot both money and time...and I have to prepare different activities, five or six different activities for the teaching besides the textbook. When realia is involved I pay for it as seeing these materials on video or the internet is not the same as seeing the real thing." Another teacher said, "It's kind of difficult to find the suitable activity for the students to do, and then it's a little bit difficult to find a good activity for the EFL student because it has to be culturally suitable." One more teacher said, "There is no time to prepare various activities for different levels of students... for different skills—you have to prepare activities for the vocabulary, writing, reading, and grammar, no enough time. For us to be able to teach culture as it should be, we are in need of already made materials or activities from the ministry or school management."

Also, there are some management difficulties associated with the teaching of L2 culture in English classrooms. These were highlighted by four teachers. For example, one teacher said, "They [students] stay still but some students don't want to

learn about others' culture, tradition, or religion except theirs. Sometimes when group activities are involved, a few of them want to sit with their friends and chat away, so it's sometimes tiring to teach [culture]." Another teacher said, "I have difficulties just changing their groups. And some unwilling students become so noisy." And, what compounds the problem of classroom management is of course the number of students. For example, one teacher said, "Even if you're the best teacher ever, you cannot manage a class with 30 or 32 students. It's true you're giving them activities, some of them are enjoying it, they're working on it, but still you have to manage other things."

## Discussion

Findings of this study revealed that most teachers have positive attitudes towards the teaching of culture and were relatively aware of its immense benefits. Yet, teachers felt that there are a number of problems associated with the teaching of certain aspects and culture in general. They related the cause of these problems to a number of factors such as time spend on planning for the teaching, the limited time of the English period, teachers' routine paper work, and other administrative responsibilities.

### Interference of L2 Culture with Students' Own Culture

The results in fig 6 show that most students believed that English culture would not interfere with their own culture. As shown in students' responses to SL10 (Appendix B2), 57% of them disagreed and thought learning about the culture of native speakers of English would not interfere with their' own culture, 29% of the students had a neutral opinion and 15% agreed.

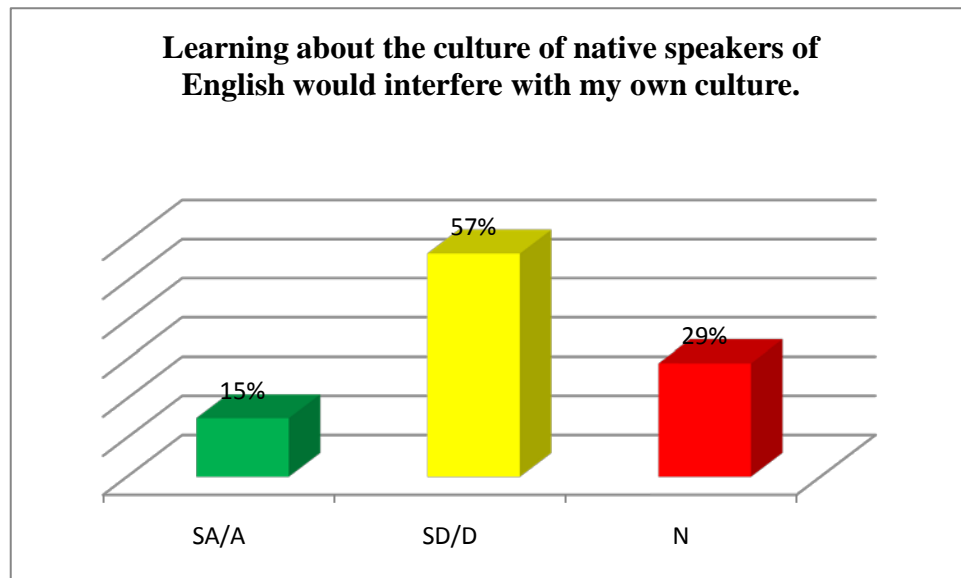


Figure 6: Students' Perception of Interference of Learning NES Culture

According to students' responses to interview questions SI12 (Appendix B3) that prompted them to explain whether learning about L2 culture would interfere with students' own culture, all the interviewees (7) maintained that learning about L2 culture would not in any way interfere with students' culture and that it would rather widen their horizon and increase their knowledge. For example, one student said:

When students learn about native English culture, we are expected to choose what is best for us and not the other way round. It is the teachers' duty to teach what they think would be beneficial to their students and it is the students' responsibility to pick what they think would help them improve what they are learning.

Another student insisted, "Learning about English culture is to help broaden my views and acquaint me with the language better." One more stated, "I think learning about English culture enhances other aspects of the language like vocab, grammar, speaking, and writing."

As can be seen, three teachers disagreed with survey item TL10 that English culture would interfere with students' own culture. Only one teacher believed that learning about the culture of native speakers of English would interfere with the students' own culture. Teachers' responses to interview questions TI12 (Appendix

B6) indicated that all interviewed teachers (5) had similar views to the students. They all believed teaching/learning about native English speaking culture would not hamper students' own culture, but would rather boost their knowledge. Also all teachers insisted that it depends on how teachers present the culture to the students, how the students perceive it, and teachers' experience. For example, one teacher said:

When teachers teach any aspect of culture, I believe they should be careful in presenting it in this part of the world in order not to cause conflicts. Because teaching of culture is suppose to enhance students' understanding of the language they are learning and not to persuade them to give up their own culture.

Another teacher said, "Learning of native English speaking culture would not hamper students' culture but make them better users of the language." One more teacher added, "By learning English culture, students are only being more aware of the people and the language they are learning about."

## Discussion

The data suggest that a greater number of both students and teachers had similar views when it came to L2 culture's interference with students' own culture. They both believed that learning about the L2 culture would not get in the way of students' own culture. In general, students and teachers thought that learning about native English speaking culture in English classrooms would only expand students' point of views and add to their understanding of the language, the countries, and the people that use the language. In addition, teachers stated that teachers' presentations, experience, and how students perceive the culture being taught would help a lot in the teaching and learning about native English speaking culture in English language classrooms in the UAE.

### When and How Culture is Best Taught/Learnt

In the qualitative responses to survey items SO20 and TO22, students and teachers expressed their supports towards using video, the internet, audio, and literature as practical tools for teaching L2 culture in EFL classrooms. Some of the

interviewed students also added students' research, guest speakers, and excursions to native English countries as useful tools. About 90 of the students who answered the survey SO20 (Appendix A1) and those interviewed SI16 (Appendix B3) maintained that they like to learn through video, internet, and the extra reading the teachers sometimes recommend. Five out of seven interviewed students also said students' research, guest speakers, and excursions to native English countries would help a lot learning the language and culture. One student for example wrote, "Learning through the internet or video help improve my learning, I listen and see what is going on at the same time." One interviewee said, "Visiting the native English speaking countries and having them as guest speakers would give students firsthand information about the language and the culture." Another student said, "Students' research would help us find information on our own and add to what the teacher teach us." Another student said, "Interacting with native English speakers I believe would help us to know how they react naturally to what people say and do around them."

Many of the teachers and students indicated that they enjoy video and the internet when they are used in their classrooms. One interviewed teacher said, "Video is very useful because students can listen and see what is happening at the same time." Another interviewee said, "I ask students to take note of what they see or hear on the internet or video, I make lots of questions out of it and sometimes it becomes a heated competition between students. The most important part is they enjoy it very much and benefit from it." One teacher wrote, "When students see video clips, they sometimes connect what they see with their own lives or culture." One more teacher wrote, "From experience reading different literature books of English speaking people is very important and useful for students."

When students were asked at the interview SI17 (Appendix B3), "When do you think is the best time to teach culture in English as a foreign language classroom?" the seven students interviewed had different views. One student for example said, "Kindergarten, because students can explore different aspects of culture innocently." Another student said, "Any level for as long as the cultural items are appropriate." One more student said from grade 9 as students would be able to think on their own and choose what they think is good for them."

Teachers also had different views, like their students, when the same question was posed to them at the interview TI17 (Appendix B6) and survey item TO23 (Appendix A3), “When do you think is the best time to teach culture in English as a foreign language classroom?” most of the teachers were not sure and were divided over the issue of when to start teaching culture. Out of 10 teachers who answered this question, three believed teaching about L2 culture to students from the kindergarten is appropriate because students are curious to know more, four of them who had taught at primary school level before thought primary school age is the best, and the last three considered high school level because they thought students could handle any cultural shock and consider the differences on their own. One teacher for instance wrote, “Gradually starting from the early stages of teaching the language.” One interviewee said, “Primary school age because they are still young and I believe they would have no problem receiving cultural information.” Another teacher wrote, “Not really sure, but students need to be old enough to compare and contrast their own culture with the other cultures. From my experience with Arab students, I think the secondary stage (aged 15 to 17) would be suitable.”

## Discussion

The data suggests that students and teachers were unanimous on the best way culture should be incorporated in English language classrooms in the UAE. Both students and teachers believed video, the internet, audio, and literature are some of the best ways culture could be taught and understood in English classroom. Those students interviewed also added students’ research, guest speakers, and excursions to native English countries as valuable tools. When it came to the question of the best time to teach culture in English language classrooms, students and teachers had different views. The groups were also not unanimous in their perception of when culture should be introduced to students.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter discusses conclusions about students' and teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of culture in English as foreign language classrooms in the UAE. First, a brief summary of the study's findings is provided. Then, based on the discussion of the results, implications for English teachers and the Ministry of Education are discussed. Finally, limitations of this study are pointed out and directions for further research are suggested.

#### Summary of Findings

The main purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and attitudes of students and teachers at UAE's government secondary schools towards the teaching and learning of culture in English language classrooms. Interpreting the results of the study, it is clear that, most of the teachers (6) surveyed and (5) interviewed were in favor of teaching culture in their classrooms, and were aware of its immense benefits. Results also showed that the 101 secondary-level students surveyed and 7 interviewed found great importance in teaching/learning of culture, and thought they were learning a lot from it. Nevertheless, the identity of the culture(s) being taught/learned seemed to be unclear; most students and teachers believed many cultures, US/UK cultures and Emirati culture are being taught. Most teachers believed they were teaching Emirati culture most of the time while a minority of them thought the culture being taught was an Emiratised version of L2 cultures. The question of whose culture is taught was seen by the teachers as being dictated by the textbook. The teachers seemed to be more doubtful about the validity of the culture being taught than the students.

With regard to students' and teachers' perceptions of the benefits of culture for second language learners, the findings indicated that teachers were unanimous and a greater number of students strongly agreed that culture is particularly significant to English language teaching and learning. Also, both students and teachers in this study believed that the native English speaking culture is useful for learners and makes teaching/learning English language a pleasant experience for both teachers and students. These results have brought to light the positive views of many students and



teachers towards the teaching/learning about culture in general and L2 culture in particular in English language classrooms in the UAE. These findings are consistent with Onalan (2005), who states a “positive attitude appeared to be a kind of contribution to better teaching and learning of English” (pp. 230-231).

In addition, results showed that the students and teachers were aware of the role of L2 culture in developing students' reading, writing, speaking, grammar, listening skills, especially learning new vocabulary and raising students' cultural awareness of the culture and people of the language as parts of benefits from the L2 culture. These results are in line with Genc and Bada (2005) who concluded that incorporating language and culture “is significantly beneficial in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness [and] changing attitudes towards native and target societies” (p. 81). This is also supported by another study conducted by Jong-Li (2006): the students in his study thought that culture in language course helps them become aware of the target language. As asserted by Moran (2001) intercultural communication is the capacity and ability to deal with other cultures, communicate successfully, make good relationships, and perform tasks with different people's culture.

Despite the fact that students and teachers believed the textbooks provided are boring and do not provide enough for teaching culture in general and for students to learn English as a foreign language in particular, the results revealed that the majority of teachers depended more on the textbooks for teaching of culture than any other available materials. Both students and teachers advised that cultural aspects like daily life activity, living conditions, and social activities should be included to ease the learning and understanding of the language. Students and teachers believed alternating the textbook with other teaching materials especially video, internet, literature, and realia is very helpful in learning and teaching of L2 culture. Both students and teachers thought that substituting the textbook with these materials is useful to facilitate comprehension and convey meaning that is hard to convey through the textbooks or by explanations. In addition, students recommended students' research, native English guest speakers, and excursions to native English countries as being useful in learning the English language and culture. The findings here agreed

with Cullen and Sato (2000) and Thanasoulas (2001) who explained some practical techniques to describe the many aspects of culture that teachers need to teach students.

Generally, students and teachers believed that the English language is being learnt and taught for cultural awareness and understanding. They thought that through culture teaching students become more aware of the language and the people that use it and also that it helps to prepare the students for the future, in case students travel to native English speaking countries. This echoes the views of Lessard-Clouston (1997) that “culture is the foundation of communication” (Language Teaching section, para. 4), and that without culture, we cannot understand the lives and motivations of other communities, and feel their concerns and interests. It also matches the views of Ariffin (2006), who recommends that EFL students who will later become ESL students learn the culture of the target-language’s native speakers in order to prevent culture shock, and to create awareness. Furthermore, findings revealed that the students and teachers were very much interested in communicative competence in English language. Results also showed that students were interested in learning the non-verbal communicative skills through culture of native English speakers. These results corroborated with Moran (2001) who insisted people of a culture use language to communicate verbally and non-verbally including “body movement, eye contact, time, space, smells, touching, and the use of the social situation” (p. 4). He says that these features can be understood under the concept of communicative competence which is knowing how to communicate properly in a specific language and culture.

It was found that students and teachers believed the English language is significant in any part of the world and any profession. However, there were discrepancies in their opinions about the purpose of learning English. A large number of students believed they would be using the language for studying and for living in English speaking countries, while equal large number of teachers thought students would be using the language for academic purposes. 40% of students but no teachers included listed academic purposes as an objective. 50% of students planned to use their English to live in English speaking countries, but no teachers included this as an objective.

Turning to students' and teachers' attitudes towards whose culture students want to learn in English language classrooms, the general attitudes of students and teachers were that English is a global language and it is very necessary in today's global communication. The results showed that majority of students and teachers were open to learning and teaching about the culture of native English speakers in their English language classrooms. They think of L2 culture as something important, motivating, fun, interesting, and exciting. Moreover, the students and teachers believed that learning/teaching of L2 culture motivated the students to learn more English. Both groups of participants believed students read and comprehend more about the language and the native speakers of English when the culture of native speakers is taught. The results here corroborated Saville-Troike (2006) who stated, if a learner admires the culture and wishes to become familiar with the L2-speaking society, he/she will be highly motivated and will be proficient in the language.

Additionally, a minority of the students would like to learn about other cultures such as Asian, Spanish, Japanese, French, German, Greek cultures and those of Muslim countries like Malaysia. These students thought these cultures are of interest and would like to see the differences between these cultures, English, and theirs. Students' responses also revealed that a few of them held a positive attitude towards learning L1 culture in English language classrooms. These students wanted their teachers to teach them about local cultural topics, UAE traditions, and socializing, discipline and relationship building in Arabic culture. The findings here corroborate Timmis (2002) who shows that teachers and learners think that English speaking culture should be taught, but also that other cultures need to be addressed accordingly. Also, McKay (2003) specifies that cultures to be taught should include three: the source culture (materials that draw on the learners' own cultural content), the target culture (materials that use the culture of a native country where English is spoken as first language), and an international culture (materials that use a great variety of cultures in English and non English speaking countries around the world).

With regard to students' and teachers' general attitude towards the specific aspects of culture students would like to learn and teachers would like to teach, most students and teachers thought that learning and teaching of cultural aspects like daily

life activities and living conditions, social conventions, and verbal communication means is useful for ng learners and makes learning a second language an enjoyable experience for both teachers and students. Both students and teachers believed these aspects are important since everyday languages are involved in their usage. They thought these aspects would help to develop students' language learning skills, for example, reading, speaking, grammar, and writing.

The study also aimed to investigate the areas of L2 culture teachers found problematic to teach in UAE's government secondary schools. Results showed that some teachers had difficulties in teaching some aspects of L2 culture such as values, attitudes, tradition and religion. In addition, the results also revealed that teachers blamed lack of time, material preparation, and management issues for difficulties in teaching about these aspects of culture. As we have seen, most of these logistic challenges are not typical to the teaching/learning of culture problems that were discussed earlier in the literature review. Yet, in UAE's government secondary schools, it seems that such challenges are seriously affecting how often L2 culture is incorporated, and how it is being taught. Consequently, this puts the teaching/learning of native English speaking culture and the amount of benefit the students are gaining into question.

However, instead of looking at these challenges as hurdles preventing the teaching/learning of L2 culture in English language classroom, we can look at them as teaching variables that need careful consideration. Ultimately, whether or not the problems are overcome is a matter of priorities. Teachers and educational planners first have to become convinced of the enormous boost such aspects of L2 (US/UK) culture can give to their students' command and understanding of the language, and understanding of the culture, religion, people and the societies in order to feel it worthwhile committing the resources required. Jong-Li (2006) insists it is necessary to change learners' attitudes toward their own culture and world culture in a positive direction before they begin their professional lives. Highlighting those challenges by considering teachers' points of view is the first step towards finding solutions that will ease the integration of these aspects of L2 culture in secondary schools in UAE and contribute to its success as a tool for learning a second language. Some suggestions

are offered in the next section for teachers and the Ministry of education to help promote the teaching/learning of culture in general and native English speaking culture in particular, and to facilitate overcoming some of the challenges related to it.

### Implications of the Study

#### Implications for Teachers

Teachers' positive attitudes towards the teaching of L2 culture and other cultures and their awareness of such benefits should drive them to play an active role in overcoming the challenges associated with the teaching of some of these aspects, instead of waiting for some upward ready-made solutions. As preparing for and incorporating culture in English classrooms is time-consuming, teachers should strive to plan their time well by organizing their priorities and learning some time management techniques. Teachers can also cooperate with their colleagues in designing and collecting materials and activities for the teaching of L2 culture. They can come up with a national scholastic bank for the activities used in the teaching about L2 culture in English classroom and make it available online for ease of access. Moreover, teachers should try to use more authentic and real cultural materials that are not against the culture of their students to teach L2 culture in English language classrooms; as Turkan and Celik (2007) put it, teachers can incorporate culture into language classrooms and supplement their textbooks with cultural elements relevant to their contexts. Rochman (2007) points out that training students to understand culturally-determined meanings is especially helpful for students, so that they can cope with authentic materials. Additionally, she states that if content of materials and cultural input are interesting, students become more receptive to understanding cultural issues.

In addition, teachers need to base their teaching on their students' needs in order to create a favorable student-centered environment in which students would benefit from English language learning. Furthermore, teacher-to-teacher support is indeed very important. Experienced teachers should help novice teachers with regard to incorporation of native L2 culture in their teaching, training them on how to

integrate culture and how to better manage time and control the classroom. It is also recommended that teachers should seek to develop their professional tools through further study, conferences, and workshops in order to make the maximum use of all the available materials for teaching L2 culture. Reading more about the teaching of culture, especially about incorporating of native English speaking culture, and learning new techniques for teaching it to second language learners might be a good start for teachers, especially for those few shying away from its teaching.

#### Implications for the Ministry of Education

The benefits of teaching culture, especially L2 (US/UK) culture in English as foreign language classrooms argued for in the literature, and the findings obtained and revealed from this study, encourage the judicious teaching of L2 culture in English language classrooms. Part of considering the careful teaching of L2 culture in the English language classroom is an advantage to teachers, since they will not only be able to teach students the language, but they will also be able to meet students' intellectual needs as well. Policy makers, administrators, and authorities in charge of curriculum design have to recognize the usefulness of teaching cultures in English language classrooms in order to encourage their teaching. Given the apparently low opinion of the cultural content provided in the textbook and yet considerable reliance on the textbook the Ministry should survey the students' needs and teachers' views before approving a particular textbook for use in classrooms. Textbook or course material selection should include realistic aims for students' achievement: as Rochman (2007) says failure to select textbook/materials that meet students' requirements can result in a waste of effort to teach language and culture. The textbook should also be informed by latest thinking on the role of English as a *lingua franca* in the globalized world (as in teacher education, discussed further below).

Another thing that the Ministry should take into consideration is the large number of students in each class. The number of students certainly matters when trying to teach culture in second language classrooms because it affects class management, the time needed to do the classroom activities, and the quality of instruction. If, for certain financial and strategic restraints, the Ministry cannot lessen

the number of students per class, then what could be done is training teachers on how to manage large classes.

Teacher training programs play a crucial role in alerting teachers when to properly incorporate the teaching of culture in their English language classrooms. Yet, through the process of data collection and analyzing the interviews' results, I found that not all of the English teachers at UAE's government secondary schools had received proper training on how to teach about culture in the classroom. Some teachers had the opportunity to attend several workshops and conferences on their own, while others had attended a few. Also, no workshops are organized by the Ministry on this topic, and teachers were only trained by other teachers who attended conferences or had acquired more professional skills through master programs, while others did not get training at all. For the teaching of cultures and especially L2 culture to be properly incorporated in government secondary schools, the Ministry should ensure that all secondary-level English teachers get adequate training on the teaching of both students' culture and other cultures. Ariffin (2006) concludes "that it is best to use both home and [foreign] language culture because the use of both cultures helps to provide a broader view of the differences between students' culture and the [foreign] language culture" (p. 78). Moreover, through teacher training programs, a few of the teachers who do not want to teach other cultures may change their perceptions and hesitation towards it, and confidently integrate its teaching. It has been found that it is important to devote enough space in school curricula and give some training to teachers about how to cope with sensitive cultural issues. If not, as Rochman points out, teaching culture will be an unwelcome burden for foreign language teachers.

Language teacher training and education in the UAE needs to take account of the de-centering of the native speaker from current thinking about World Englishes and language policy, as described in the work of scholars such as Kachru (1996). Ling, Wang, Akamatsu, and Riazi (2000) "insist a parallel decentering of the production of pedagogical knowledge in [English language teaching] needs to happen" (p. 312), where teachers do not see English learners as non-native speakers, but "as owners of the language and treat them as English speakers, writers, and users"

(p. 312). The ministry can ease some of the teachers' and students' anxieties about teaching of culture by organizing workshops to train teachers on the fact that English language is seen according to Ling, Wang, Akamatsu, and Riazi "as a resource for glocalized communication where the global and local divide dissolves in the situated appropriation of a global means by local social actors for local purposes" (p. 312). Teachers can in turn help their students to recognize that English can be used to function as world citizens in a globalized world. Whether or not students choose to adopt aspects of different cultures is up to them but learning about culture and how it works, including their own culture, empowers them to make such choices. Also, culture teaching can take advantage of the fact that Emirati students can encounter many other cultures via English among the large expatriate population living and working in the UAE.

#### Limitations of the Study and Directions for Further Research

The study encompassed government high schools in two different emirates in UAE, and included responses of both experienced and novice English teachers, as well as the responses of secondary-level students in their twelfth grade. However, the generalization of findings to all UAE's secondary-level school teachers is still limited because it might not represent the opinions and attitudes of all teachers who experienced the teaching of culture in the English classrooms. The number of teachers whose responses were counted was only 11, and most (8) of the teachers were females. In addition, the number of teacher participants who are teaching in all-boys secondary schools was less than the number of participating teachers working at all-girls secondary schools. The study might have yielded different results if there were an equal number of both genders. Moreover, although the number of male teachers working at secondary-level schools is not significant in comparison to the number of female teachers, it would be interesting to see whether they have different attitudes and opinions from their female colleagues.

However, the responses of the 11 English teachers who participated in this study provided insights into teachers' attitudes towards the teaching about culture, especially L2 culture and its benefits to EFL students in English language classrooms



in the UAE government secondary schools. In order to obtain more comprehensive understanding of teachers' attitudes and perceptions about teaching of culture and L2 culture in the English classroom, larger scale studies that would include more female and male teacher participants from different government secondary schools in UAE are needed.

Similarly, the number of students who participated in the study does not allow for generalization of results. There was inadequate sample of participating students especially the male students (21 out of 108), because most of the all-boys school teachers would not allow their students or themselves to be surveyed. The study would yield more interesting results if more male students were included, and the overall number of student participants was larger. It could have allowed for a comparison between male and female students' attitudes towards the learning of culture in English language classrooms.

Another limitation of the study was the data collection, classroom observations could have provided an opportunity to gain clearer ideas and help to draw conclusions about teachers' actual practices about teaching of culture in English classrooms. Future research should aim at doing these. Additionally, this study took into consideration the perceptions of teachers and students in government secondary schools only. It would be interesting if private schools could be considered as well. This would lead to a comparison between the perceptions of teachers and students in private and public schools towards the teaching of culture in English language classrooms. Along with considering private and public schools, it would also be useful to examine the consequences of other variables on teachers' and students' perceptions such as background, gender, age, level of proficiency, experience, and motivations. It would be also be effective to conduct an experiment comparing two groups of students in different classrooms. For example, in the experiment all variables may be kept constant, except that in one of the classrooms teaching of culture is integrated while in the other it is not. Then, the students' perceptions towards teaching about culture in English language classrooms would be examined along with their learning development. It is hoped that future research will address these variables and aspects.

### Final Thoughts

In conclusion, the findings of this research would suggest that positive attitudes toward the teaching/learning of culture in the second language classroom and awareness of its benefits are not enough to ensure its success. Actual success depends on taking students' needs and teachers' views into account when making the decision of what textbook to use in teaching/learning of culture in ESL classrooms. Teachers and researchers should shift their focus to how the integration of culture in language teaching in this part of the world could be made more effective. Purposeful integration of culture, NES cultures and other non-native English speaking cultures, and meeting students' language would help to make the teaching/learning of language an exciting and effective experience. Unless the Ministry of Education and secondary-level school teachers take all of these factors into consideration and exert their efforts to promote the teaching/learning of cultures and overcome the challenges associated with it, the goal of equipping the students to use the English language globally is not likely to be achieved.

## References

- Aguilar, M. J. C. (2007). Dealing with intercultural communicative competence in the foreign language classroom In E. A. Soler & M. P. S. Jorda (Eds.), *Intercultural language use and language learning* (pp. 59-78). Dordrecht: The Netherlands: Springer.
- Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards intercultural communicative competence. *ELT Journal*, 56(1), 57-64. Retrieved July 3, 2009, from the ProQuest database.
- Ariffin, S. (2006). Culture in EFL teaching: Issues and solutions. *HPU TESL Working Paper Series 4(1)*, 75-78. Retrieved July 6, 2009, from [web1.hpu.edu/images/.../TESL.../10Ariffin\\_Culture\\_a16631.pdf](http://web1.hpu.edu/images/.../TESL.../10Ariffin_Culture_a16631.pdf)
- Bada, E. (2000). Culture in ELT. *Cukurova University Journal of Social Sciences* (6), 100-110.
- Brown, H.D. (2006). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Byon, A. S. (2007). The use of culture portfolio project in a Korean culture classroom: Evaluating stereotypes and enhancing cross-cultural awareness. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 20(1), 1-19. Retrieved July 3, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Byram, M. (1991). Teaching culture and language: Towards an integrated model. In D., Buttjes, & M. S. Byram, (Eds.), *Mediating languages and cultures: Towards an intercultural theory of foreign language education* (pp. 17-32). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Chastain, K. (1988). *Developing second language skills: Theory and practice*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Janovich Publishers.
- Common European framework of references for languages: Learning, teaching, and assessment. (2001). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. (1999). Cultural mirrors: Materials and methods in the EFL classroom In Hinkel, E. (Ed.), *Culture in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 196-219). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Cullen, B., & Sato, K. (2000). Practical techniques for teaching culture in the EFL classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 6(12). Retrieved June 15, 2009, from the <http://iteslj.org/>
- Craig, D. V. (2001). Building a “working” theory of second language acquisition: For classrooms and ESL teachers. Retrieved July 6, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Crookes, G., & Schmidt R. W. (1991). Motivation: Hudson, G. (2000). *Essential introductory linguistics*. Blackwell Publishers. Reopening the research agenda. *Language Learning*, 41(4), 469-512.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dahan, L. S. (2005). The role of culture in teaching English as an international language in the Arabian Gulf: A case study. Unpublished MA thesis, American University of Sharjah, UAE.
- Fenner, A. B. (2000). Cultural awareness. In D. Newby (Ed.), *Approach to materials design in European textbooks: Implementing principles of authenticity, learner autonomy, cultural awareness* (pp. 142-152). Graz: European Centre for Modern Languages.
- Fill, A. (2007). Language contact, culture and ecology. In M. Hellinger & A. Pauwels (Eds.), *Handbook of language and communication: Diversity and Change* (pp. 177- 207). Berlin: Hubert & Co. Gottingen.
- Fleet, M. (2006). The role of culture in second or foreign language teaching: Moving beyond the classroom experience. Retrieved June 28, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Genc, B., & Bada, E. (2005). Culture in language teaching and learning. *The Reading Matrix*, 5(1). Retrieved June 15, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Graddol, D. (1996). *Global English, global culture?* In S. Goodman & D. Graddol (Eds.), *Redesigning English: New texts, new identities* (pp. 181-217). London: The Open University, Routledge.
- Guilherme, M. (2007). English as a global language and education for cosmopolitan citizenship. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 7, 72-90.

- Hatos, A. (2006). Globalisation, interculturality and culture teaching: International students' cultural learning needs in Australia. [*Electronic version*]. *Prospect*, 21, 47-69.
- Heusinkveld, P. R. (Ed.). (1997). *Pathways to culture*. Yarmount, ME: International Press, Inc.
- Hudson, G. (2000). *Essential introductory linguistics*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Kachru, B. B., (1996), World Englishes: Agony and ecstasy. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*. 30(2), (pp.135-155). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Kachru, B. (1992). Teaching world Englishes. In B. Kachru (Ed.), *The other tongue: English across cultures* (2nd ed.) (pp. 355-365). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Ketchum, E. M. (2006). The cultural baggage of second language reading: An approach to understanding the practices and perspectives of a nonnative product. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39(1), 22-42. Retrieved July 8, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kuo, M., & Lai, C. (2006). Linguistics across cultures: The impact of culture on second language learning. *Journal of Foreign Language Instruction*, 1(1). Retrieved July 8, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Lafayette, R. C. (Ed.). (1975). *The culture revolution in the foreign language teaching*. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Lessard-Clouston, M., & Gakuin, K. (1997). Towards an understanding of culture in L2/FL education. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 3(7). Retrieved June 11, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Liao, X. Q. (2000). Communicative language teaching innovation in China: Difficulties and solutions. Retrieved June 26, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Ling, A., Wang, W., Akamatsu, N., and Riazi, A. M. (2002). Appropriating English, expanding identities and re-revisioning the field from TESOL to teaching English for globalised communication (TEGCOM). *Journal of Language , Identity, and Education*, 1(4), 295-316.

- McKay, S. L. (2003). The Cultural Basis of Teaching English as an International Language. Retrieved December 3, 2010, from <http://www.tesol.org/pubs/articles>
- Moran, R. P. (2001). *Teaching culture: Perspectives in practice*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- National Standard in Foreign Language Education Project (1999). *Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century*. Yonkers, New York.
- Onalan, O. (2005). EFL teachers' perceptions of the place of culture in ELT: A survey study at four universities in Ankara/Turkey. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 1(2), 215-235. Retrieved June 11, 2009, from the ProQuest database.
- Paige, R. M., Jorstad, H. L., Siaya, L., Klein, F., & Colby, J. (2003). Culture learning in language education: A review of the literature. In D. L. Lange & R. M. Paige (Eds.), *culture as the core: Perspectives on culture in second language learning* (pp. 173-236). Greenwich CT: Information Age Publishing.
- Peck, D. (1998). *Teaching Culture: Beyond Language*. Yale: New Haven Teachers Institute.
- Rings, L. (2006). The oral interview and cross-cultural understanding in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39(1), 43-53. Retrieved June 18, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Rochman, S. (2007). Researching language aspects' preferences of English department students when learning culture. Retrieved June, 9, 2009, from <http://www.petra.ac.id/~puslit/journals/dir.php?DepartmentID=ING>
- Sadek, I. G. (2006). Arab students' attitudes towards English culture and motivation to learn English. Unpublished MA thesis, American University of Sharjah, UAE.
- Saville-Troike, M. (2006). *Introducing second language acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Seelye, H. N. (1993). *Teaching culture: Strategies for intercultural communication* (3rd. ed.). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

- Serrano, N. (2002). Teaching culture in foreign language programmes at third level education. *Centro Virtual Cervantes*, 1(25), 121-145. Retrieved June 18, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Schulz, R. A. (2007). The challenge of assessing cultural understanding in the context of foreign language instruction. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40(1), 9-26. Retrieved June 18, 2009, from the ERIC database.
- Smith, L. (1976). English as an international auxiliary language. *RELC Journal*, 7(2), 38-43.
- Timmis, I. (2002) Native-speaker norms and International English: a classroom view. *ELT Journal* 56(3), 240-249.
- Thanasoulas, D. (2001). The importance of teaching culture in the foreign language classroom. *Racial Pedagogy*, 3(3), 1-24. Retrieved June 20, 2009, from [http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue3\\_3/7-thanasoulas.html](http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue3_3/7-thanasoulas.html)
- Tsuda, Y. (2008). English hegemony and English divide. *China Media Research*, 4(1), 47-55. Retrieved January 18, 2010, from the ERIC database.
- Turkan, S., & Celik, S. (2007). Integrating culture into EFL texts and classrooms: Suggested lesson plans. *Novitas-ROYAL: Research on Youth and Language*, 1(1), 18-33. Retrieved June 18, 2009, from <http://www.novitasroyal.org/turkan.html>

## Appendix A1

### الاستبيان الطلابي Students' Questionnaire

#### Culture in English Language Classrooms: Emirati Students' and UAE Teachers' Perceptions

“Culture is the way of life of a people, the social constructs that evolve within a group, the ways of thinking, feeling, believing, and behaving that [is] imparted to members of a group in the socialization process” (Hinkel, 1999, p. 3).

The objective of this questionnaire is to examine students' perceptions toward the teaching of culture in English language classrooms in the United Arab Emirates.

Please note that information provided will be anonymous and used only for analysis as part of my thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in TESOL. I very much appreciate your time in filling out this survey.

تعليم الثقافة في الفصول الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية: ما هي مواقف الطلبة الإماراتيين والمدرسين في دولة الإمارات؟

"الثقافة هي طريقة الحياة بين شعب، والمفاهيم الاجتماعية التي تتطور بين مجموعة من الناس، وهي أيضاً طريقة التفكير والشعور والإعتقاد والسلوك التي يتتقف بها أفراد مجموعة أثناء تهيئهم لبيئة جماعية" (هنكيل، 1999، صفحة 3).

إنَّ الغرض في هذا الاستبيان هو إمعان النظر إلى آراء الطلبة والطالبات في قضية تعليم الثقافة في الحجرات الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. فعلماً لكم بأنَّ كل المعلومات التي سوف تُفيدونني إياها في إطار هذا الاستبيان سَتُعتبر أمراً سريّاً للغاية (ولأجل ذلك لا نرجو منكم ذكر أسامكم) بما أنني سأنتفع بها فقط لإكمال رسالة أكاديمية لنيل شهادة الماجستير في طرق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية للناطقين بغيرها. أرجو من حضراتكم التكرم بإملاء كل فراغ في هذا الاستطلاع. شكراً لكم جزيلاً.

The survey is divided into two sections. Please tick the appropriate boxes for you.

ينقسم الاستطلاع إلى قسمين. أرجو منكم أن تختاروا الأجوبة المناسبة لحالاتكم.

#### **القسم الأول Section One**

1. Gender الجنس: ☐ Male ذكر ☐ Female أنثى Nationality الجنسية :

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Age العمر : \_\_\_\_\_



3. Number of years you have been studying English in school:

عدد السنوات التي كنت تدرس فيها اللغة الإنجليزية في مدوسة \_\_\_\_\_

4. Your grade أي صف أنت فيه: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you ever travelled to any of the native English speaking country?

هل سافرت إلى إحدى الدول الناطقة بالإنجليزية كلغة الأم من قبل؟

☐ Yes نعم

☐ No لا

6. Other languages you speak fluently ما هي اللغات الأخرى التي تجيدها : \_\_\_\_\_

7. What aspects of culture do you think you want to learn?

ما هي مظاهر الثقافة التي تظن أنك تريد تعلمها؟

a) daily life activities and living conditions (e.g., at home, school, during festivals, etc)

أعمال الحياة اليومية والأحوال المعيشية (مثلاً في البيت، في المدرسة، في الحفلات، وما أشبه ذلك)

b) traditions التقاليد

c) social conventions (good manners, dressing, and meeting people)

العادات والأعراف (السلوكيات، اللباس، واستقبال الناس واللقاء مع الآخرين)

d) values, beliefs, and attitudes (what they are proud of, worry about, and found funny)

القيم، والإعتقادات، والطباع (ما يفتخر به الناس، أو يقلقون عنه، أو يجدونه مضحكاً)

e) verbal communication means (greetings, apologizing, expressing gratitude, embarrassment, etc)

وسائل المكالمة الشفوية (التحيات، طريقة تعبير الإعتذار والشكر والارتباك، وما أشبه ذلك)

f) non-verbal language (body language and facial expressions)

التعابير اللاكلامية (لغة الجسد، والتعابير الوجهية)

8. What materials does your teacher use in teaching culture? Choose as many as you know.

أي من الآتية يستخدمه المعلم لتدريسك الثقافة؟ أختَر كل ما تعرف.

- a) Textbooks كتب مقررة
- b) Newspaper جريدة
- c) Cultural studies textbooks كتب مقررة خاصة لتعليم الدراسات الثقافية
- d) Literature الأدب
- e) Video الفيديو
- f) Audio الأدوات السمعية
- g) Music موسيقى
- h) Internet الإنترنت
- i) Realia المواد الحقيقية
- j) Not sure غير متأكد

9. What do you plan to use English for in the future?

كيف تعتزم أن تستخدم معرفتك للغة الإنجليزية في المستقبل؟

- a) For academic purpose للغرض التعليمي
- b) For business purpose للغرض التجاري/العملي
- c) To live in English speaking countries لتيسير العيش في الدول الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية
- d) Not sure غير متأكد

10. Who do you plan to use your English with in the future?

مع من تعتزم أن تستخدم معرفتك للغة الإنجليزية في المستقبل؟

- a) Native speakers of English الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية
- b) Non native speakers of English الناطقين بغير اللغة الإنجليزية
- c) Not sure غير متأكد

## Section Two: Part Two

Please check the answers that best apply to you. There are no right or wrong answers.

من فضلك، اختر الأجوبة الأكثر مناسبة لحالاتك. تنبيه: ليست هناك أجوبة صحيحة أو خطأ.

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; N=Neutral; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

Statement	SA موافق تماما	A موافق	N مُحايد	D غير موافق	SD غير موافق تماما
1. The English language is very important in today's global communication. اللغة الإنجليزية مهمة جدا بخصوص الاتصال العالمي اليوم					
2. I am learning the English language for survival and routine transactions only. أتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية لتيسير العيش والإجراءات الروتينية فقط.					
3. Culture is very important in English language teaching and learning. الثقافة شيء مهم جدا في تعليم وتدرّس اللغة الإنجليزية					
4. My teacher teaches culture in English language classroom. يدرس أستاذي الثقافة في حصة اللغة الإنجليزية					
5. I am learning the English language for cultural awareness and understanding. أتعلم الإنجليزية للفهم والتوعية الثقافية					
6. I am interested in learning the culture of the native speakers of English. أرغب في تعلم ثقافة الشعوب الناطقين بالإنجليزية					

7. I am interested in learning English language only. أرغب في تعلّم اللغة الإنجليزية فقط.					
8. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English helps me learn the language. تعلّم ثقافة الشعوب الناطقين بالإنجليزية يساعدي في تعلّم تلك اللغة.					
9. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English motivates me to learn more English. تعلّم ثقافة الشعوب الناطقين بالإنجليزية يشجّعني في تعلّم تلك اللغة وممارستها أكثر.					
10. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English would interfere with my own culture. تعلّم ثقافة الشعوب الناطقين بالإنجليزية يشكل تعارضاً كبيراً في الممارسة والتمسك بثقافتي أنا.					
11. My English teacher uses materials that address different cultures. يستخدم معلمي للغة الإنجليزية المواد (الكتب والوسائل) التدريسية التي تناقش ثقافات مختلفة.					
12. My English teacher uses texts in English classes that include the native cultures of the UAE only. في الحصص الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية يستخدم معلمي النصوص التي تحتوي على ثقافات المحلية لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة فقط.					
13. My teacher uses texts in English classes that include the native cultures of English speaking countries only. في الحصص الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية يستخدم معلمي النصوص التي تحتوي على الثقافات المحلية للدول الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية فقط.					

<p>14. My teacher uses texts in English classes that include a combination of the native cultures of English speaking countries, the UAE, and Arabs.</p> <p>في الحصص الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية يستخدم معلمي النصوص التي تحتوي على أشكال مزدوجة من ثقافات الدول الناطقة بالإنجليزية ودولة الإمارات والدول العربية أجمع.</p>					
---	--	--	--	--	--

## **Section Two: Part Two**

15. Whose culture do you think you are currently learning in your English classroom?  
برأيك، من صاحب الثقافة التي تتعلمها حالياً في حصة اللغة الإنجليزية؟

.....

.....

.....

.....

16. Do you think learning about the cultures of English speaking countries has helped your English language fluency? If yes, how? If no, explain.

هل تعتقد أن تعلم ثقافات الشعوب الناطقين بالإنجليزية قد ساهم بشكلٍ ما في تيسير إتقانك لتلك اللغة؟  
إن كان الجواب، نعم، بيّن كيف؟ وإن كان الجواب، لا، وضّح.

.....

.....

.....

.....

17. What cultural topics or points do you think should be included in textbooks?

في رأيك، ما هي المواضيع أو النقاط المتعلقة بأمور ثقافية يجب أن تتضمنها الكتب المقررة؟

.....

.....

.....

.....

18. Which other cultures would you like to learn about in your English classroom?

ما هي الثقافات الأخرى التي ترغب في تعلّمها في حصّة اللغة الإنجليزية؟

.....

.....

.....

.....

19. What aspects of culture if any do you want your teacher to spend time on and why?

ما هي مظاهر/أشكال الثقافة، إن وجدت، التي تريد مُعلّمك أن تتركز عليها أكثر أثناء الدرس، ولماذا؟

.....

.....

.....

.....

20. How do you think culture is best taught/learnt?

برأيك، ما هو أفضل الطريقة لتعليم أو تعلّم الثقافة؟

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please indicate if you would like to be interviewed after answering these questions by writing your contact phone number and e-mail. The interview would only take between 15-20 minutes.

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A3

### Teachers' Questionnaire

#### Culture in English Language Classrooms: Emirati Students' and UAE Teachers' Perceptions

“Culture is the way of life of a people, the social constructs that evolve within a group, the ways of thinking, feeling, believing, and behaving that [is] imparted to members of a group in the socialization process (Hinkel, 1999, p. 3).

The objective of this questionnaire is to examine teachers' perceptions toward the teaching of culture in English language classrooms in the United Arab Emirates.

Please note that information provided will be anonymous and used only for analysis as part of my thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in TESOL. I very much appreciate your time in filling out this survey.

#### Teacher's Information

The survey is divided into two sections. Please tick the appropriate boxes for you.

#### **Section One: Part One**

1. Gender: ☐Male ☐Female Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of years as an EFL/ESL teacher: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of years teaching in UAE: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Other language(s) spoken: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Academic degree(s)/qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Section One: Part Two**

6. What aspects of culture do you think your students want to learn?
  - a) daily life activities and living conditions (e.g. at home, school, at festivals, etc)
  - b) traditions
  - c) social conventions (good manners, dressing, and meeting people)
  - d) values, beliefs, and attitudes of the language users (what they are proud of, worry about, and found funny)
  - e) verbal communication means (greetings, apologizing, expressing gratitude, embarrassment, etc)
  - f) non-verbal language (body language and facial expressions)

7. What materials do you use in teaching culture?
- a) Textbooks
  - b) Newspaper
  - c) Cultural studies textbooks
  - d) Literature
  - e) Video
  - f) Audio
  - g) Music
  - h) Internet
  - i) Realia
  - j) Not sure
8. What do you think your students plan to use English for in the future?
- a) For academic purpose
  - b) For business purpose
  - c) To live in English speaking countries
  - d) Not sure
9. Who do you think your students plan to use their English with in the future?
- a) Native speakers of English
  - b) Non native speakers of English
  - c) Not sure



**Section Two: Part One**

**Please check the answers that best apply to you. There are no right or wrong answers.**

**SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; N =Neutral; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
1. The English language is very important in today's global communication.					
2. I teach my students the English language for survival and routine transactions only.					
3. Culture is very important in English language teaching and learning.					
4. I teach cultures in English language classroom.					
5. I teach my students the English language for cultural awareness and understanding.					
6. My students are interested in learning the culture of the native speakers of English.					
7. My students are interested in learning about English language only.					
8. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English helps my students learn the language.					
9. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English motivates my students to learn more English.					
10. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English would interfere with my students' own culture.					
11. I use materials that address different culture.					
12. I use texts in English classes that include the native cultures of the UAE only.					
13. I use texts in English classes that include the native cultures of English speaking countries only.					
14. I use texts in English classes that include a combination of the native cultures of English speaking countries, the UAE, and Arabs.					

**Section Two: Part Two**

15. Whose culture do you think you are currently teaching in your English classroom?

.....

.....

.....

.....

16. Do you think learning about the cultures of English speaking countries has helped your students learn English language? If yes, how? If no explain.

.....

.....

.....

.....

17. How successful are the materials you use in teaching culture?

.....

.....

.....

.....

18. What cultural topics or points do you think should be included in textbooks?

.....

.....

.....

.....

19. Which other cultures would your students like to learn about in English classroom?

.....

.....

.....

.....

20. Which areas of culture do you find most difficult to teach and why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

21. What aspects of culture teaching if any do you want to spend time on and why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

22. How do you think culture is best taught/learnt?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

23. When do you think is the best time to teach culture in English as a foreign  
language classroom?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Please indicate if you would like to be interviewed after answering these questions by  
writing your contact phone number and e-mail. The interview would only take  
between 15-20 minutes.

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B1

### Students' Responses to Closed Questions

#### 7. What aspects of culture do you think you want to learn?

ما هي مظاهر الثقافة التي تظن أنك تريد تعلمها؟

CHOICES	FREQUENCY
a) daily life activities and living conditions (e.g., at home, school, during festivals, etc) أعمال الحياة اليومية والأحوال المعيشية (مثلاً في البيت، في المدرسة، في الحفلات، وما أشبه ذلك)	44
b) traditions التقاليد	14
c) social conventions (good manners, dressing, and meeting people) العادات والأعراف (السلوكيات، اللباس، واستقبال الناس واللقاء مع الآخرين)	42
d) values, beliefs, and attitudes (what they are proud of, worry about, and found funny) القيم، والإعتقادات، والطباع (ما يفتخر به الناس، أو يقلقون عنه، أو يجدونه مضحكاً)	21
e) verbal communication means (greetings, apologizing, expressing gratitude, embarrassment, etc) وسائل المكالمة الشفوية (التحيات، طريقة تعبير الإعتذار والشكر والارتباك، وما أشبه ذلك)	32
f) non-verbal language (body language and facial expressions) التعابير اللاكلامية (لغة الجسد، والتعابير الوجهية)	29

8. What materials does your teacher use in teaching culture? Choose as many as you know. أي من الآتية يستخدمه المعلم لتدريسك الثقافة؟ أختَر كل ما تعرف. know.

CHOICES	FREQUENCY
a) Textbooks كتب مقررة	75
b) Video الفيديو	72
c) Audio الأدوات السمعية	55
d) Internet الإنترنت	55
e) Cultural studies textbooks كتب مقررة خاصة لتعليم الدراسات الثقافية	21
f) Literature الأدب	11
g) Music موسيقى	10
h) Newspaper جريدة	10
i) Realia المواد الحقيقية	9
j) Not sure غير متأكد	5

9. What do you plan to use English for in the future?

كيف تعتزم أن تستخدم معرفتك للغة الإنجليزية في المستقبل؟

CHOICES	FREQUENCY
a) For academic purpose للغرض التعليمي	42
b) For business purpose للغرض التجاري/العملي	40
c) To live in English speaking countries لتيسير العيش في الدول الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية	50
d) Not sure غير متأكد	8

10. Who do you plan to use your English with in the future?

مع من تعتزم أن تستخدم معرفتك للغة الإنجليزية في المستقبل؟

CHOICES	FREQUENCY
a) Native speakers of English الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية	85
b) Non native speakers of English الناطقين بغير اللغة الإنجليزية	12
c) Not sure غير متأكد	7

## Appendix B2

Students' View about Culture in English Language Classrooms (N=101)

**SA=Strongly Agreed; A=Agreed; N=Neutral; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree; Z=No Answer**

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Z	% SA/A	% SD/D
1. The English language is very important in today's global communication. اللغة الإنجليزية مهمة جدا بخصوص الاتصال العالمي اليوم	79% <b><u>80</u></b>	17% 17	2% 2	0 0	2% 2	0	97%	2%
2. I am learning the English language for survival and routine transactions only. أتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية لتيسير العيش والإجراءات الروتينية فقط.	6% 6	13% 13	30% 30	17% 17	34% <b><u>34</u></b>	1	19%	51%
3. Culture is very important in English language teaching and learning. الثقافة شيء مهم جدا في تعليم وتدریس اللغة الإنجليزية	40% <b><u>40</u></b>	34% 34	18% 18	6% 6	3% 3	0	74%	9%
4. My teacher teaches culture in English language classroom.	<b>55%</b> <b><u>55</u></b>	40% 40	6% 6	0% 0	0% 0	0	95%	0%
5. I am learning the English language for cultural awareness and understanding. أتعلم الإنجليزية للفهم والتوعية الثقافية	33% 33	50% <b><u>50</u></b>	14% 14	3% 3	1% 1	0	83%	4%
6. I am interested in learning the culture of the native speakers of English.	41% <b><u>41</u></b>	26% 26	17% 17	9% 9	8% 8	0	67%	17%

أرغب في تعلّم ثقافة الشعوب الناطقين بالإنجليزية								
7. I am interested in learning English language only. أرغب في تعلّم اللغة الإنجليزية فقط.	10% 10	12% 12	21% 21	26% 26	31% <b>31</b>	1	22%	57%
8. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English helps me learn the language. تعلّم ثقافة الشعوب الناطقين بالإنجليزية يساعدني في تعلّم تلك اللغة.	43% <b>43</b>	30% 30	19% 19	7% 7	2% 2	0	73%	9%
9. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English motivates me to learn more English. تعلّم ثقافة الشعوب الناطقين بالإنجليزية يشجّعني في تعلّم تلك اللغة وممارستها أكثر.	43% <b>43</b>	38% 38	10% 10	7% 7	3% 3	0	81%	10%
10. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English would interfere with my own culture. تعلّم ثقافة الشعوب الناطقين بالإنجليزية يشكل تعارضاً كبيراً في الممارسة والتمسك بثقافتي أنا.	7% 7	8% 8	29% 29	31% <b>31</b>	26% 26	0	15%	57%
11. My English teacher uses materials that address different cultures. يستخدم معلمي للغة الإنجليزية المواد (الكتب والوسائل) التدريسية التي تناقش ثقافات مختلفة.	21% 21	44% <b>44</b>	21% 21	14% 14	1% 1	0	65%	15%



12. My English teacher uses texts in English classes that include the native cultures of the UAE only. في الحصص الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية يستخدم معلمي النصوص التي تحتوي على ثقافات المحلية لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة فقط.	12% 12	17% 17	25% 25	28% <u>28</u>	19% 19	0	29%	47%
13. My teacher uses texts in English classes that include the native cultures of English speaking countries only. في الحصص الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية يستخدم معلمي النصوص التي تحتوي على الثقافات المحلية للدول الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية فقط.	12% 12	18% 8	28% 28	32% <u>32</u>	21% 21	0	20%	53%
14. My teacher uses texts in English classes that include a combination of the native cultures of English speaking countries, the UAE, and Arabs. في الحصص الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية يستخدم معلمي النصوص التي تحتوي على أشكال مزدوجة من ثقافات الدول الناطقة بالإنجليزية ودولة الإمارات والدول العربية أجمع.	32% <u>32</u>	29% 29	29% 29	4% 4	7% 7	0	61%	11%

## Appendix B3

### Students' Interview Questions

No.	Question
1.	Do you think that it's appropriate to learn culture in English language classroom?
2.	Do you think you are motivated to learn English language by learning the English culture?"
3.	Why do you think it is important to learn culture in English language classroom?
4.	Do you encourage and support the learning about culture in your English language classroom?
5.	Do you think your teacher teach culture in your English language classroom?
6.	Whose culture do you think you are learning in your English language classroom?
7.	Does your teacher teach native English speaking culture in your English language classroom?
8.	Do you think that teaching about native culture facilitates your English language learning?
9.	Do you think that learning about native English culture motivates you to learn the English language?
10.	What aspects of culture do you want to learn about in English language classroom?
11.	Do you think learning about native English speaking culture is useful for learning English?
12.	Do you think that learning about the culture of native speakers of English would interfere with your own culture?
13.	Do you think the English language is essential in global communication?
14.	Do you think you would be using the English language with native or non native speakers of English in the future?
15.	Would you like to learn about other cultures in your English language classroom?
16.	What materials does your teacher use in teaching culture?
17.	How do you think culture is best taught and learnt?
18.	When do you think is the best time to teach culture in English as a foreign language classroom?
19.	Do you think you are interested in learning about the culture of the native English speakers?
20.	Do you think you are learning the English language for cultural aware or survival and routine transaction only?
21.	What cultural topic do you think should be included in textbook?
22.	What do you plan to use the English language for in the future?

## Appendix B4

### Teachers' Responses to Closed Statements

6. What aspects of culture do you think your students want to learn?

CHOICES	FREQUENCY
a) daily life activities and living conditions (e.g. at home, school, at festivals, etc)	6
b) social conventions (good manners, dressing, and meeting people)	5
c) values, beliefs, and attitudes of the language users (what they are proud of, worry about, and found funny)	5
d) traditions	4
e) verbal communication means (greetings, apologizing, expressing gratitude, embarrassment, etc)	3
f) non-verbal language (body language and facial expressions)	3

7. What materials do you use in teaching culture?

CHOICES	FREQUENCY
a) Textbooks	6
b) Internet	5
c) Realia	3
d) Newspaper	3
e) Video	3
f) Audio	3
g) Music	2
h) Literature	2
i) Cultural studies textbooks	1
j) Not sure	0

8. What do you think your students plan to use English for in the future?

CHOICES	FREQUENCY
a) For academic purpose	5
b) For business purpose	2
c) To live in English speaking countries	0
d) Not sure	0

9. Who do you think your students plan to use their English with in the future?

CHOICES	FREQUENCY
a) Native speakers of English	3
b) Non native speakers of English	2
c) Not sure	0

## Appendix B5

Teachers' View about Culture in English Language Classrooms (N=6)

**SA=Strongly Agreed; A=Agreed; N=Neutral; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree, Z=No Answer**

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Z	TOTAL SA/A	TOTAL SD/D
1. The English language is very important in today's global communication.	<u>6</u>	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
2. I teach my students the English language for survival and routine transactions only.	0	1	0	4	0	1	1	4
3. Culture is very important in English language teaching and learning.	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	0	0	0	0	6	0
4. I teach culture in English language classroom.	<u>5</u>	1	0	0	0	0	6	0
5. I teach my students the English language for cultural awareness and understanding.	0	<u>4</u>	1	0	0	1	4	0
6. My students are interested in learning the culture of the native speakers of English.	0	<u>4</u>	1	0	0	1	4	0
7. My students are interested in learning about English language only.	1	1	1	<u>2</u>	0	1	2	2
8. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English helps my students learn the language.	2	<u>3</u>	0	0	0	1	5	0
9. Learning about the culture of	1	<u>3</u>	1	0	0	1	4	0

native speakers of English motivates my students to learn more English.								
10. Learning about the culture of native speakers of English would interfere with my students' own culture.	0	1	1	<u>3</u>	0	1	1	3
11. I use materials that address different culture.	1	<u>3</u>	1	1	0	0	4	1
12. I use texts in English classes that include the native cultures of the UAE only.	1	0	0	<u>4</u>	1	0	1	5
13. I use texts in English classes that include the native cultures of English speaking countries only.	1	0	0	<u>4</u>	0	1	1	4
14. I use texts in English classes that include a combination of the native cultures of English speaking countries, the UAE, and Arabs.	2	<u>3</u>	0	1	0	0	5	1

Appendix B6  
Teacher Interview Questions

No.	Question
1.	Were you trained to teach culture in English language classroom?
2.	Do you think that it's appropriate to teach culture in English language classroom?
3.	Why do you think it is important to teach culture in English language classroom?
4.	Do you encourage and support the learning about culture in your English language teaching practices?
5.	Do you teach culture in your English language classroom?
6.	Whose culture do you teach in your English language classroom?
7.	Do you teach native English speaking culture in your English language classroom?
8.	Do you think that learning about native English culture facilitates students' English language learning?
9.	Do you think that learning about native English culture motivates students to learn the English language?
10.	What aspects of native English speaking culture do you teach in your English language classroom?
11.	What aspects of culture do you think students want to learn about in English language classroom?
12.	Do you think that learning about the culture of native speakers of English would interfere with the students' own culture?
13.	Do you think the English language is essential in global communication?
14.	Do you think the students would be using the English language with native or non native speakers of English in the future?
15.	Do you think students would like to learn about other cultures in the English language classroom?
16.	How do you think culture is best taught and learnt?
17.	When do you think is the best time to teach culture in English as a foreign language classroom?
18.	Do you think the students are motivated to learn English language by learning the English culture?"
19.	What cultural topic do you think should be included in textbook?
20.	Are you provided with any materials by the ministry of education to teach the English language?
21.	How successful are the materials you use in teaching culture?

22.	Do you think you are teaching the English language for cultural aware or survival and routine transaction only?
23.	What do you think your students plan to use the English language for in the future?
24.	Do you think students are interested in learning about culture of native English speakers?
25.	Which areas of culture do you find most difficult to teach and why?



## VITA

Kafayat Oluwafunmilayo Tijani was born in Nigeria, on November 2, 1974. She graduated from University of Ibadan, Nigeria in January 2004, with a BA in Linguistics and Yoruba Language. Kafayat is a member of TESOL Arabia. Her interests include intercultural communication, pragmatics, and language assessment.