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*Investigating the Effectiveness of Integrating Algerian Cultural Elements into  
English Language Teaching to Enhance Students' Engagement and Language  
Acquisition: Analysis of First-Year Middle School Manuals*

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## **Dedication**

To my parents for their endless love, support and patience since my first step in life and along my whole educational journey.

To my wonderful uncle Abd El Majid for his beautiful soul.

To my wonderful brothers Fayçal, Sedik and Oussama.

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**- Bouhafs Rania**

All my gratitude to Allah, the one who held my heart when it trembled, who planted light in my darkest hours and never let go.

To my parents and siblings, thank you for being present with love, in every moment of need.

To myself, the girl I was years ago thank you for not giving up.

To the moments that lifted me and those that broke me, you made me whole.

To my friends, mentors, and every kind soul who supported me -by name or by presence- thank you, deeply and sincerely.

**- Bekiri Selma**

## Abstract

This study aims to examine how the integration of Algerian cultural elements in English language teaching influence student's engagement and language acquisition, in comparison to the use of British cultural elements in previous teaching manuals. The main question that this research aims at answering is: How does the integration of Algerian cultural elements in English language teaching impact student's engagement compared to the inclusion of British cultural elements in previous manuals? To test the hypotheses suggested which is: The integration of Algerian cultural elements in English language teaching increases Student's engagement by fostering cultural relevance and emotional connection, more effectively than manuals featuring British cultural elements. the research adopted the questionnaire survey method design, Data were collected through questionnaires. Findings reveal that integrating Algerian and British cultural content enhances student engagement and language acquisition. Not only this textbook featuring local Algerian culture alongside British culture foster student's motivation, participation, and long-term retention of vocabulary and grammar. Teachers supported the balanced cultural approach in textbooks that preserves student's cultural identity. the research hypotheses were validated, this works includes also recommendations for curriculum development and pedagogical practices Suggestions for further studies were also proposed for large sample to strengthen the findings of the current research.

*Keywords:* English language teaching, integrating cultural content, language acquisition, student engagement

## ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص كيفية تأثير دمج العناصر الثقافية الجزائرية في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية على تفاعل التلاميذ واكتسابهم للغة، مقارنةً باستخدام العناصر الثقافية البريطانية في الكتب التعليمية السابقة. وتتمثل الإشكالية الرئيسية التي تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى معالجتها في دراسة مدى تأثير دمج العناصر الثقافية الجزائرية في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية على تفاعل التلاميذ، مقارنةً بإدراج العناصر الثقافية البريطانية في الكتب التعليمية السابقة. لاختبار الفرضية المقترحة، والتي تنص على أن: دمج العناصر الثقافية الجزائرية في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية يعزز تفاعل التلاميذ من خلال ترسيخ الصلة الثقافية وبناء ارتباط عاطفي، بشكل أكثر فاعلية من الكتب التي تركز على العناصر الثقافية البريطانية؛ تم اعتماد المنهج الوصفي القائم على أداة الاستبيان، حيث تم جمع البيانات من خلال توزيع الاستبيانات على عينة الدراسة. وقد توصلت النتائج إلى أن دمج كل من المحتوى الثقافي الجزائري والبريطاني في كتب الإنجليزية للسنة الأولى يعزز من تفاعل التلاميذ واكتسابهم للغة. كما أظهرت النتائج أن الكتاب الذي يجمع بين الثقافة المحلية الجزائرية والثقافة البريطانية يُسهم في تحفيز التلاميذ، وزيادة مشاركتهم، وتعزيز قدرتهم على حفظ المفردات والقواعد على المدى الطويل. وقد أيد المعلمون هذا التوجه الثقافي المتوازن في الكتب المدرسية، باعتباره يحافظ على الهوية الثقافية للتلميذ. تم تأكيد صحة الفرضيات المطروحة، كما تتضمن هذه الدراسة توصيات لتطوير المناهج والممارسات البيداغوجية، بالإضافة إلى مقترحات لأبحاث مستقبلية تعتمد على عينات أكبر من أجل تعزيز نتائج هذا البحث.

*الكلمات المفتاحية: تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، دمج المحتوى الثقافي، اكتساب اللغة، تفاعل التلاميذ*

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## General Introduction

Language and culture are connected. True fluency isn't just about memorizing words and rules, it's about knowing how to communicate in ways that make sense within that cultural context. That's why many language programs combine cultural lessons into their teaching. But the main issue is the discussion on whether classes should only focus on the culture of the language being learned, or they should also include the students' own cultural backgrounds.

Today's teaching strategies often strike a balance, blending the learners' native culture with the target culture, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. Culture isn't seen as something fixed but as something shaped by people's interactions and perspectives. When students compare their own cultural experiences with those of the language they're learning, they build intercultural skills—a key ability that helps them connect more deeply with the language while staying engaged and invested in their learning. Using familiar cultural references, like examples from local life in textbooks, strengthens this link, making lessons more relatable and boosting motivation.

This holistic approach doesn't just improve language skills, it also supports learning on a mental and emotional level. By tying new knowledge to what students already understand, it reduces stress and makes absorbing information easier. Plus, it encourages empathy and open-mindedness, helping learners navigate cultural differences and communicate effectively in our interconnected world. Studies confirm that when lessons include cultural content, students participate more actively and feel more motivated because they see how the language applies to their lives.

In Algeria, bringing local culture into English classes is especially valuable, it bridges the gap between students' daily experiences and the language they're learning, making the process more meaningful and effective.

### **1-Statement of the Problem**

Using British cultural content repeatedly in ELT materials may hinder students' engagement and language learning in first-year middle school classrooms. With the introduction of a new manual featuring Algerian cultural elements, it becomes essential to investigate whether this shift improves students' engagement and language acquisition compared to the previous British culture-based textbook.

### **2-Aims of the study**

This study aims to examine how integrating Algerian cultural elements into English language teaching affects students' engagement and language acquisition, compared to British cultural elements in earlier manuals. By conducting this research, we aim to provide insights into the effectiveness of culturally relevant teaching materials, which can inform curriculum development and improve language learning outcomes for Algerian students.

### **3. Research Questions**

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

Q1-How does the integration of Algerian cultural elements in English language teaching impact students' engagement compared to the inclusion of British cultural elements in previous manuals?

Q2-To what extent does the incorporation of Algerian cultural elements improve students' language acquisition in English, and how does it compare to the impact of British cultural elements?

#### **4-Hypotheses**

The questions raised earlier engendered the following hypotheses:

H1 - Integrating Algerian cultural elements in English language teaching enhances students' engagement by fostering cultural relevance and emotional connection, more effectively than British culture-based manuals.

H2 - The use of Algerian cultural elements in English language teaching enhances students' language acquisition by providing relatable and contextually meaningful content. These elements outperform manuals that focus solely on British cultural content.

#### **5-Significance of the study**

This study investigates the gap in Algerian English language teaching, where textbooks mainly feature British culture, which may limit student's engagement. By exploring the impact of integrating Algerian cultural elements, the research aims to enhance learners' motivation, participation, and language acquisition. These findings will guide curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers in creating culturally responsive materials that better connect with Algerian students. This, in turn, will improve English language education outcomes.

#### **6- Methodology**

##### **6.1. Data Gathering Tools**

In this study, we adopted a mixed-methods approach to collect data, using quantitative and qualitative tools to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. For the quantitative part, we designed a structured questionnaire made up mostly of closed-ended questions. These questions aimed to measure teachers' perceptions of student engagement and language acquisition clearly and quantitatively.

To capture more nuanced perspectives, we included open-ended questions. This approach enabled participants to express their ideas freely, offering more nuanced and in-depth responses than those elicited through closed-ended questionnaires.

By integrating these two types of data collection tools, we were able to identify clear patterns while also exploring the context and meaning behind those patterns. This approach aligns with best practices in mixed-methods research, enhancing the depth and validity of our findings.

## **6.2. Population and sampling**

This study targeted middle school English teachers with experience teaching first-year students using both British culture-based and Algerian culture-based textbooks. This sample was chosen for their direct experience, which offered valuable insights into the effectiveness of integrating cultural content in English language teaching.

## **7. Structure of the study**

This study is structured into three main chapters, each designed to address specific research objectives. It starts with a general introduction outlining the research problem, research questions, and proposed hypotheses. The introduction clarifies the aims of the study and describes the methodology, including data collection tools and the target population. It also provides an overview of the study's organization and limitations.

The first chapter, titled "Literature Review", reviews important theoretical frameworks and key findings from previous studies. This chapter lays the academic groundwork by examining how cultural aspects have been incorporated into language teaching, with a special focus on the Algerian educational context.

Chapter two, Chapter Two, "Methodology and Data Analysis". describes the research design, data collection instruments, and analytical methods. It highlights the mixed-methods

approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a thorough investigation of the research questions.

The final chapter, the final chapter, “Discussion and Recommendations”, discusses the results in relation to the theoretical framework and research objectives. It explores the significance of the findings and offers practical suggestions for teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers, as well as directions for future research.

**Chapter One**  
**Literature Review**

## **Chapter One: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The incorporation of cultural components into the teaching of English has been acknowledged as a crucial factor in enhancing classroom engagement and language learning for students. In Algerian EFL classrooms, there is a growing interest in investigating whether the integration of local cultural elements may prove to be more effective than solely depending on British cultural references. Studies have indicated that combining culture with language enhances sociocultural competence and linguistic comprehension (Khouni & Boudjelal, 2019). Despite the growing interest, limited studies have compared directly the effectiveness of British versus Algerian cultural materials in enhancing engagement and acquisition, this literature review assess that gap, with an emphasis on their impact on student engagement and language learning. This review aims to explore existing research in order to pinpoint best practices for culturally responsive language teaching methodologies within Algerian educational contexts.

### **1.Theoretical Perspectives on Culture and Language Teaching**

#### **1.1. Models of Cultural Integration in Education**

Cultural integration involves incorporating cultural elements into the classroom, as teachers integrate them into the materials and methodologies to ensure that students develop not only linguistic proficiency but also intercultural awareness and communicative skills essential for real-world interactions (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993). Numerous researchers and scholars have explored this subject, each offering their unique insights on how culture should be embedded in education.

One of the most notable frameworks regarding cultural integration is Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). This framework emphasizes the importance of enhancing learners' abilities to engage with individuals from diverse cultures. Key components include knowledge, skills for interpreting and relating, discovery and interaction abilities, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness, in Algerian classrooms this model can be applied in helping students to relate their own life experiences to a linguistic structure by reinforcing the language skills to communicate and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Byram advocates to integrate cultural materials and experiences that challenge students to reflect on both their local and others' cultural perspectives, through developing critical thinking and empathy.

Next, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) proposed the cultural representation model, according to them, "Materials can be based on the target culture, the learners' own culture, or a variety of international cultures, each serving different pedagogical purposes" (p. 204). They classified educational materials into three categories: those representing the target culture, the source culture, and international cultures (Hakander, 2017).

This model is relevant in multilingual and multicultural contexts, such as Algeria, where the choice and balance of cultural content can significantly affect student engagement and identity formation by adapting cultural content in ELT materials to meet student needs and instructional goals is essential for effective language education.

Kramsch (1993) presents a distinctive perspective by conceptualizing culture as a symbolic system, offering a theoretical lens through which culture can be understood and integrated within language education. She highlighted that culture reflects identity, values, and worldviews, demonstrating a strong connection between language and culture so that the two cannot be separated.

Kramersch (1993) emphasizes that culture is not an optional or secondary component in language learning; rather, it is an integral element that underlies all language skills from the very beginning of the learning process. Furthermore, she asserted that learning a language encompasses not just acquiring vocabulary and grammar but also understanding cultural materials, this view point highlights the idea that learning language is directly related to learning about culture. More recently, Banks (2008) model of multicultural education presents stages of cultural inclusion: the contributions approach, the additive approach, the transformative approach, and the social action approach. Banks (2008) explains that multicultural education is both a reform initiative and an ongoing process aimed at restructuring educational systems to ensure equal opportunities for students from all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Although this model was initially applied in broader educational settings, it holds significance in language education by illustrating how profound or superficial cultural content can be.

These models collectively emphasize the necessity of purposeful and critical integration of culture into language instruction. They offer frameworks that assist educators in selecting content and methodologies that align with intercultural objectives, learner identity, and the socio-political context within the classroom.

## **1.2. The Role of Culture in Enhancing Student Engagement and Language Acquisition**

### **1.2.1 Cognitive benefits of integrating local culture**

Numerous studies have confirmed that incorporating cultural activities reflecting students' cultural backgrounds into language teaching materials fosters cognitive engagement by enhancing motivation, interest, and participation in language learning (Dornyei, 2001).

Research indicates that culture plays a significant role in increasing learner engagement and motivating them to practice more Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis asserts that language acquisition can be directly influenced by motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety, particularly when local cultural components are integrated, allowing students to find personal relevance and emotional connection.

Khouni and Boudjelal (2019) emphasized the positive effect of the incorporation of Algerian history and culture in English language classes, they found That By embedding Algerian traditions and history, the materials became more relevant to learners' experiences, leading to greater engagement. teachers proved students showed better comprehension when contextualizing the learning materials, linking the cultural relevance to effective language learning.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) reinforce that. They established that learning is a socially mediated process, meaning that cultural elements assist students in developing their cognitive abilities by providing real-life contexts that facilitate understanding.

Studies by Herron et al. (1999) and other scholars has demonstrated that students can enhance their language use in specific contexts appropriately and acquire a richer vocabulary by engaging with authentic cultural materials such as songs, literature, and traditions.

Khouni and Boudjelal (2019) found that integrating Algerian history and culture into English language classes This approach not only facilitates comprehension but also fosters a sense of identity and belonging, which are essential for sustained engagement, this aligns with Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), who confirmed that familiar cultural contexts can reduce the mental road for learners this allows then to concentrate more on linguistic knowledge.

### **1.2.2. Cultural representation and language retention**

The incorporation of cultural elements in educational resources significantly impacts language retention. Study by Lee, J. S (2012) asserted that students exposed to culturally embedded narratives showed improvement in vocabulary retention and appropriate use of expressions, moreover McKay (2003) noted that students exhibited improved reading comprehension and acquired more vocabulary compared to those engaged with materials that lacked cultural relevance. This indicates that utilizing both the target culture and local culture can boost student involvement and participation.

## **2. International models of successful cultural integration in ELT**

Countries like Japan, China, and Brazil have successfully included local cultural components in their English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks. For instance, Japan's materials feature traditional customs and local storytelling methods, which enhanced student engagement in the classroom (Matsuda, 2012). Similarly, Brazilian ELT programs have woven in Brazilian literature and music, allowing students to associate English learning with their local cultural elements (Paiva, 2005).

New Zealand offers an example of integrating indigenous culture more specifically Māori traditions into ELT, teaching materials include Māori legends, vocabulary and perspectives fostering intercultural awareness (May & Hill, 2005).

## **3. Algerian culture in the educational context**

### **3.1. Historical and social background**

Language instruction in Algeria has been significantly influenced by the country's historical events and sociocultural context. The history of Algeria has been characterized by Islam, Berber (Tamazight) traditions, and the colonial era. During the colonial period, French became the main language used in schools, government, and public life (Grandguillaume, 2004). After independence, Arabic emerged as the dominant language, symbolizing national identity, while French remained a secondary language. As part of its

strategy to align with globalization, Algeria has recently taken steps to incorporate English more prominently into its educational policies (Benrabah, 2013).

Khouni and Boudjelal (2019) found that the incorporation of French in Algeria have led to the limited use of English among people, this makes the integration of Algerian cultural content important because it makes the content more relatable to the students history, this leads to increase motivation for the students.

Historically, English instruction focused on British or American cultural integration; however, the government has now opted to include more Algerian cultural aspects than British ones to find a balance between linguistic skill and cultural identity. In recent decades government have aimed to make textbooks represents the Algerian identity, and teaching English as a foreign language made the question of how to include Algerian culture within English textbooks (khouni & Boudjelal, 2019).

### **3.2. Integration of Local Cultural Content in Curriculum**

Local cultural elements in the Algerian textbooks consist of history, traditions, literature, national figures, and everyday life aspects. These elements are reflected in Algerian proverbs, Berber folktales, and prominent national figures such as Emir Abdelkader. These aspects will assist students in enhancing their linguistic structures, improving reading comprehension, and expanding their vocabulary.

Belabbes (2024) confirmed that the textbooks include materials like literature films and multimedia resources to develop learners understanding of different cultures and she mentioned that local culture and the foreign one are carefully integrated, this method helps students to differentiate between cultures and enhance their ability to communicate cross-culturally.

Researchers have analyzed cultural representation in textbooks to assess how the culture is used. They noticed that the government is making efforts to include the Algerian

culture alongside the British culture (Aoumeur & Ziani, 2022). But other scholars found that this integration still underrepresented compared to the foreign cultural content Belabbes (2024), however the Algerian traditions are mentioned with absence of the textualization while the British content presented through celebratory lenses (Messerehi, 2014), This lack of local representation can result in decreased engagement and hinder language acquisition.

### **3.3. Challenges and perceptions of Algerian cultural content in ELT**

Despite the positive impact of integrating local cultural elements into English language teaching (ELT), educators in Algeria face significant challenges in implementing culturally-based teaching methodologies. A major challenge is the insufficiency of resource adapted to Algerian cultural content. Bacha (2002) reported that many teachers face difficulties due to absence of appropriate teaching materials, insufficient teachers training, and institutional support necessary for the effective inclusion of local culture into the curriculum. This scarcity limits teacher's capacity to design lessons that authentically connect language learning with students' cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, the perception of English as a foreign language disconnected from students' identities and daily experiences contributes to lower engagement. Hamzaoui (2017) notes that many Algerian students view English as a remote and external language that does not align with their cultural realities, which can lead to reduce motivation and participation in the classroom. This perception creates a psychological barrier that decrease learners from fully learn the language, thereby negatively affecting their acquisition process.

## **4. British Cultural Elements in Traditional ELT Manuals**

The incorporation of cultural aspects in English Language Teaching (ELT) manuals has been regarded as crucial for aiding learners in developing not only language skills but also an understanding of culture (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

As Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) stated:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other, as conditioning elements of further action. (p. 181)

. This definition highlights why cultural content, particularly British traditions, has historically played a central role in ELT materials. Historically, British cultural references have dominated ELT resources, reflecting the long-standing impact of British educational traditions and linguistic standards across the globe (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). These cultural elements offer learners important insights into the social norms, values, and daily life of native English speakers, thus enhancing the learning experience and promoting intercultural awareness (Byram, 1997). Investigating the characteristics and level of British cultural content in ELT manuals is vital for evaluating their relevance and effectiveness, particularly when tailoring these materials to different cultural settings, such as those in Algeria (Kramsch, 1993).

## **5. Historical Use of British Cultural Elements**

Traditional ELT manuals often showcase various British cultural elements, encompassing historical events, social customs, holidays, literature, and everyday life scenarios. For example, numerous textbooks include mentions of UK national holidays such as Christmas and Remembrance Day, which assist learners in grasping cultural practices associated with language use (McKay, 2003). Literary works by renowned British authors such

as Shakespeare, Dickens, and Austen are extensively utilized in English language instruction due to their ability to immerse students in authentic language, diverse vocabulary, and cultural heritage simultaneously. These texts not only assist learners in enhancing their language abilities—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—but also familiarize them with British social customs, humor, and values, thereby improving their intercultural communication skills. In particular, novels are admired for their ability to inspire students, boost creativity, and offer impactful content that helps in language acquisition.

Educators and researchers share the view that literature provides linguistic depth and genuine language use, showcasing dialogues and narrative styles that reflect real-world communication. Nonetheless, some critique the predominant emphasis on British cultural themes, suggesting that it may alienate learners from diverse backgrounds and emphasizing the need for a broader selection of culturally diverse materials in English language instruction. Ultimately, the incorporation of English novels and literary works in language classrooms is regarded as a versatile and comprehensive method that enhances the learning experience for both students and teachers by making lessons more engaging and culturally enlightening.

## **6. Critiques of British-Centric ELT Materials**

English education data (ELT), which focuses on the British (ELT), is greatly criticized for creating cultural imbalances and reduces the relationship and motivation efficiency of students other than the English -language environment. These resources often prioritize in the British cultural norms, customs and perspectives, which may seem lonely and unfamiliar to students, which reduces the interaction and passion of language learning (Lima, 2020). This difficult emphasis on British culture often tracks the cultural background of students, which is attractive and not important, which has a negative impact on the motivation to actively participate in the class (British Council, 2020). In addition, such resources are often not enough

to measure inter-cultural competency, and are essential for effective communication in today's world.

By predominantly centering on British cultural references, ELT textbooks often do not equip learners for successful interactions in varied international settings, where English functions as a lingua franca (Branigan, 2021). This limited cultural perspective constrains learners' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversities, which is critical for achieving genuine communicative competence. As a result, learners may develop language skills but remain culturally unprepared for real-life communication beyond British norms (Ndura, 2004; García, 2005). The cultural imbalance present in British-centric ELT resources raises concerns about their overall relevance. Many learners utilize English for activities that do not involve direct interaction with British culture, such as regional business, travel, or academic endeavors within their own countries or in other non-Anglophone environments (Branigan, 2021). When course materials do not accurately represent learners' real-life contexts and requirements, they risk becoming superficial and clichéd, which further lessens motivation and educational outcomes (British Council, 2020). Consequently, there is increasing agreement among educators and researchers that ELT materials should incorporate local cultural elements alongside the target culture to improve engagement, relevance, and intercultural competence (Alptekin, 1993; Branigan, 2021).

### **6.1. Case Study on the Effectiveness of British Cultural Elements**

British cultural elements have traditionally played a central role in English language teaching, aiming to provide students with a rich understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and cultural knowledge, including British history, traditions, holidays, and well-known literary works (Belabbes, 2024). Research indicates that such cultural references can enhance students' cultural awareness and provide important contexts for language use (Koudded, 2024).

However, the impact of British cultural content is complex in contexts like Algeria, where these elements may seem distant from students' everyday experiences (Messerehi, 2014).

Studies focusing on Algerian secondary school English textbooks reveal that while British cultural content introduces significant aspects of the English language and culture, it often lacks connection to students' own cultural experiences and interests. This disconnect can reduce the attractiveness of the materials and lower student motivation (Belabbes, 2024). When learners cannot relate to the cultural examples presented, meaningful interaction with the language becomes more difficult (Koudded, 2024). Furthermore, the limited presence of Algerian cultural elements in these materials challenges learners' ability to develop a balanced cultural competence that respects both their identity and the target culture (Messerehi, 2014).

Therefore, although British cultural elements provide valuable insights and contribute to language learning, their effectiveness depends largely on their relevance to students' cultural backgrounds. To address this, educators and researchers advocate for combining British cultural content with Algerian cultural references in ELT materials. This integration helps create more engaging, motivating, and culturally responsive resources that better prepare students for authentic communication (Belabbes, 2024; Koudded, 2024).

Several case studies support this perspective. Belabbes (2024) reviewed Algerian ELT textbooks and documented a shift from exclusive British cultural representation toward a more balanced inclusion of both Algerian and British cultures, aiming to enhance intercultural competence. Similarly, Messis and Ghaouar (2021) analyzed Algerian middle school English textbooks and found a predominance of "big C" cultural themes (e.g., literature and history) over "little c" themes (e.g., daily life and social norms), highlighting the need for more relatable cultural content to foster learner engagement.

These studies suggest that while British cultural elements enrich ELT materials by providing authentic language contexts, their pedagogical effectiveness depends on their alignment with learners' cultural realities. Incorporating local cultural references alongside British ones fosters stronger learner identity and motivation, enhancing intercultural understanding and language acquisition (Belabbes, 2024; Messis & Ghaouar, 2021).

## **7. Comparative Analysis of First-Year Middle School Manuals**

### **7.1. Comparative Criteria for Cultural Content**

To meaningfully evaluate the cultural content of *Spotlight on English* and *My Book of English*, this section applies a set of comparative criteria commonly used in English Language Teaching (ELT) textbook analysis. These criteria include (1) the diversity of cultural elements, (2) the balance between surface and deep culture, and (3) the contextual relevance to learners.

#### **7.1.1. Diversity of Cultural Element**

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) categorize cultural elements in ELT materials into three dimensions: visible products, everyday practices, and underlying perspectives that reflect a society's values and beliefs. In *Spotlight on English*, the cultural representations are predominantly British, focusing on holidays like Christmas and Guy Fawkes Day, as well as geographical references such as London landmarks and traditional British meals (Messis & Ghaouar, 2021). The textbook presents a monocultural model where English is tied closely to British life, which may be limiting in multicultural classrooms.

In contrast, *My Book of English* broadens the cultural scope by including Algerian, international, and, to a lesser extent, British references. Algerian holidays like Yennayer and Independence Day are featured, along with culturally familiar contexts such as traditional

clothing and family structures. Furthermore, the textbook touches upon global issues (e.g., pollution, world sports events) to introduce learners to English as a global language rather than just a British one (Belabbes, 2024).

This shift reflects a more pluralistic and inclusive approach to cultural content, which supports learners' identity affirmation while exposing them to intercultural understanding.

### **7.1.2. Balance Between Surface and Deep Culture**

Following the framework of Gerfenova and Nemtchinova (2022), surface culture includes observable elements like food, music, and festivals, while deep culture involves abstract ideas such as social norms, values, and worldview. In *Spotlight on English*, cultural information remains largely on the surface level, with frequent mentions of British customs and holidays but limited engagement with underlying values or social systems (Appendix A). For instance, while learners might read about afternoon tea or Buckingham Palace, they are not encouraged to reflect on what these practices mean in the broader socio-cultural context.

On the other hand, *My Book of English* attempts to address both surface and deep cultural aspects. While it still includes visible traditions and celebrations, the textbook also prompts reflection on deeper issues such as family roles, gender equality, and social responsibility through project-based tasks and reflective questions. This represents a pedagogical advancement toward developing critical cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

### **7.1.3. Contextual Relevance and Learner Engagement**

Contextual relevance refers to how well cultural content aligns with students' backgrounds, experiences, and realities. Numerous studies argue that cultural content that is

foreign or irrelevant to learners can reduce motivation and hinder comprehension (Ndura, 2004; Branigan, 2021). Spotlight on English presents culturally rich but distant content, which may appear abstract or disconnected from Algerian students' lives. Although it introduces authentic English in context, it does not sufficiently bridge the gap between the foreign culture and the learners' own environment.

By contrast, My Book of English offers a more localized cultural context, allowing students to see themselves reflected in the content (Appendix B). Lessons about local traditions, food, and geography build familiarity, while international topics introduce learners to English as a global tool. This hybrid approach enhances both motivation and relevance, facilitating a more meaningful language learning experience (Koudded, 2024; Belabbes, 2024).

In sum, the comparative analysis of the two manuals reveals a pedagogical and cultural shift from a British-centered, surface-level approach (Spotlight on English) to a contextualized, multi-perspective, and deeper cultural engagement (My Book of English). The latter better aligns with modern ELT principles by balancing local cultural representation with international awareness, ultimately contributing to improved learner motivation, identity development, and intercultural competence.

## **8. Gaps in the Literature**

The literature reviewed in this chapter underscores the dynamic and evolving role of cultural elements in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly within the context of Algerian middle school education. Traditionally, ELT materials—largely influenced by British educational models—have centered on British cultural content, highlighting holidays, literature, and lifestyle aspects associated with the United Kingdom (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; McKay, 2003). While these cultural inclusions were intended to enrich language learning

by situating it within authentic sociocultural contexts (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993), they have also faced criticism for their narrow cultural focus and limited relevance to learners in non-Anglophone settings such as Algeria (Ndura, 2004; Branigan, 2021).

The comparison between *Spotlight on English* and *My Book of English* reveals a meaningful pedagogical shift toward embracing more locally relevant and culturally diverse content. Whereas *Spotlight on English* tends to emphasize British-centric themes that may feel distant to Algerian students, *My Book of English* thoughtfully integrates Algerian, international, and selected British cultural references. This more inclusive approach not only fosters greater learner engagement but also supports identity affirmation and the development of intercultural communicative competence (Belabbes, 2024; Koudded, 2024).

Despite these encouraging developments, several important gaps remain in the literature:

### **8.1. Empirical Evidence on Learning Outcomes**

Although the theoretical advantages of embedding local culture in ELT materials are well recognized, there is a notable lack of empirical research examining how such integration concretely impacts language acquisition, academic performance, or intercultural competence among Algerian middle school students. Future research would benefit from classroom-based studies employing assessments, interviews, and observations to provide clearer evidence of effectiveness.

### **8.2. Deeper Exploration of Cultural Dimensions**

While recent textbooks like *My Book of English* have begun to move beyond superficial cultural elements, most existing materials and studies still focus predominantly on

visible cultural products such as food and festivals. There is a pressing need for more nuanced engagement with deeper cultural aspects—values, social norms, and worldviews—that encourage critical reflection and intercultural awareness (Gerfenova & Nemtchinova, 2022; Kramersch, 1993).

### **8.3. Teacher Perspectives and Practices**

The current literature offers limited insight into how teachers perceive and enact cultural content within their classrooms. Understanding educators' attitudes, challenges, and instructional strategies is essential to ensure that textbook design aligns effectively with classroom realities and maximizes cultural learning opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter explored how culture is represented in English language textbooks, especially focusing on the use of British cultural elements in traditional ELT materials. While British culture has long been seen as a model for English learning, many researchers argue that it may not always suit learners from different backgrounds, like Algerian students. Such materials may appear disconnected and fail to align with the lived experiences of students.

Recent efforts in ELT have started to shift toward including local and more diverse cultural content. This shift is evident in the comparison between *Spotlight on English*, which predominantly features British culture, and *My Book of English*, which integrates Algerian and international cultural elements. This change shows a growing awareness of the need to make learning more relatable and motivating for students.

The review also highlighted key factors for comparing cultural content in textbooks, such as variety, depth, and relevance. While some progress has been made, gaps still exist—

especially in research on how these materials affect students' engagement and learning outcomes in real classrooms.

In conclusion, the reviewed literature underscores that culturally balanced ELT materials are both more effective and meaningful.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Methodology and Data Analysis**

## **Chapter two: Methodology and Data Analysis**

### **Introduction**

Following the literature review, this chapter outlines the methodology used to evaluate the validity of the proposed hypotheses. It provides a detailed description of the research design, participants and sampling procedures, and data collection instruments. The chapter begins by presenting the research location and participant selection process, followed by an explanation of the data collection methods. Finally, it describes the procedures used for analysing the collected data.

### **1. Research Location**

The research was conducted in several middle schools located in El Taref city, Algeria. This location was chosen for its accessibility to the targeted sample, enabling the collection of reliable data through questionnaires administered to teachers. The study focused on teachers of first-year middle school students. These educators had experience using both the older textbooks featuring British cultural content and the newer versions incorporating Algerian culture.

### **2. Research Design**

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The study primarily employed quantitative descriptive analysis to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement and language acquisition in relation to the cultural content of English textbooks. The questionnaire consisted mainly of structured close-ended items, some of which included an "Other" option to capture additional written responses.

These open-text comments were analyzed qualitatively by categorizing and summarizing key ideas, with results presented in a chart to highlight additional participant perspectives

### **3. Participants and Sampling**

A total of 24 middle school teachers participated in the study. Purposive sampling was employed to select teachers with experience teaching first-year students using both British culture-based and Algerian culture-based textbooks. This sample was chosen because their experience provided valuable insight into the effectiveness of integrating cultural content into English language teaching. The teachers were from various schools across the Wilaya of El Tarf, representing a diverse teaching context. Participants' teaching experience ranged across four categories: 1–3 years, 4–6 years, 7–10 years, and more than 10 years.

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant educational authorities, with research permissions granted by school administrators. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained to protect participants' privacy

### **4. Data Collection Method (Materials)**

Data were collected through a questionnaire designed for this study (Appendix C). The questionnaire consisted of four main sections: (a) background information, such as teaching experience and textbook types; (b) student engagement with cultural elements in textbooks; (c) language acquisition influenced by cultural content; and (d) teachers' views on integrating Algerian and British cultural elements into English teaching.

The instrument included multiple-choice questions, Likert-scale items, and open-ended questions to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. It aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions of student engagement and language acquisition when using textbooks incorporating both British and Algerian cultural content, questionnaires were distributed in person at participating schools, with responses collected anonymously.

### **5. Data Analysis**

This study's analysis combined quantitative and qualitative data from the mixed-method questionnaire. Closed-ended questions were analysed using frequencies and percentages. Open-ended responses underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in teachers' perspectives

## 6.Questionnaire Analysis

The teachers were handed a questionnaire seeking their insights on the use of Algerian cultural elements in first year middle school English textbooks. The results are presented in the following:

### 6.1. Section 1: Background Information

#### Question 1

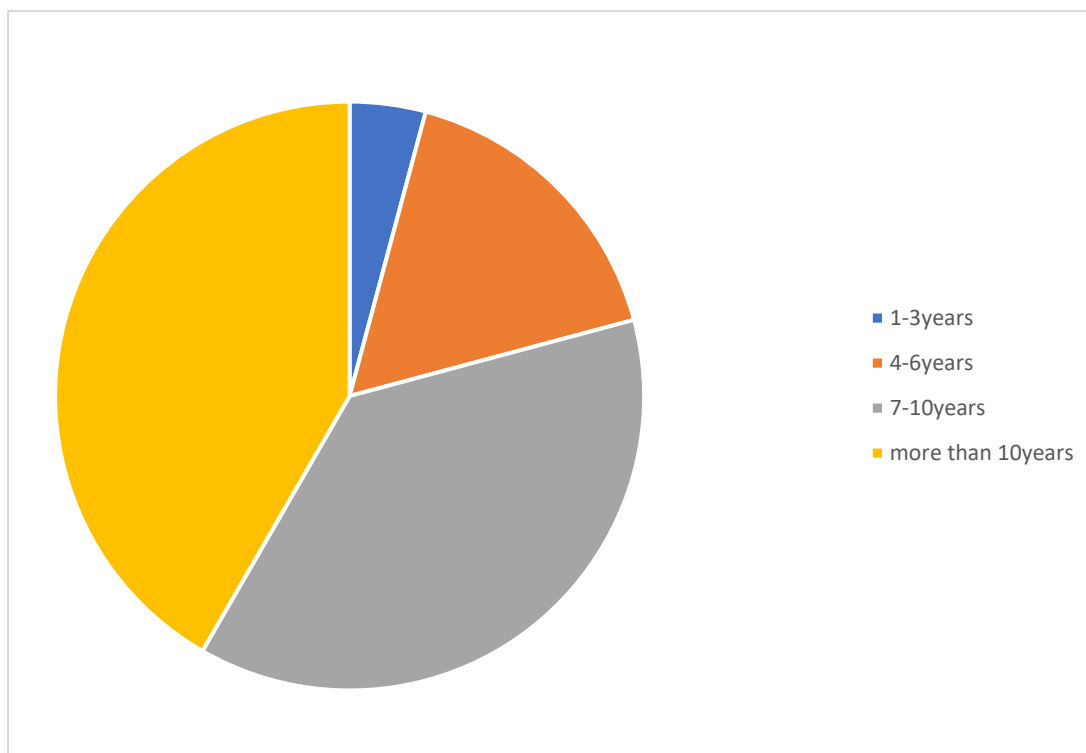
*How many years have you been teaching English?*

Participants were asked to indicate their years of teaching experience. Table 1 and Figure 1 present the distribution of responses.

**Table 1**

Distribution of participants by years of teaching experience

Years of Teaching Experience	Frequence	Percentage
1–3 years	1	4.17%
4–6 years	4	16.67%
7–10 years	9	37.50%
More than 10 years	10	41.66%
Total	24	100%



*Figure 1. Distribution of participants' teaching experience by years.*

Participants were asked to report their years of teaching experience. As shown in Table 1 and Figure 1, the majority of the teachers have substantial experience in teaching English. Specifically, 41.66% of the participants reported having more than 10 years of teaching experience, while 37.50% indicated between 7 and 10 years. A smaller proportion of teachers had between 4 and 6 years (16.67%), and only one participant (4.17%) reported 1 to 3 years of experience. This distribution suggests that the sample predominantly consists of experienced educators, which may enhance the reliability of their insights regarding the integration of cultural content in English language teaching.

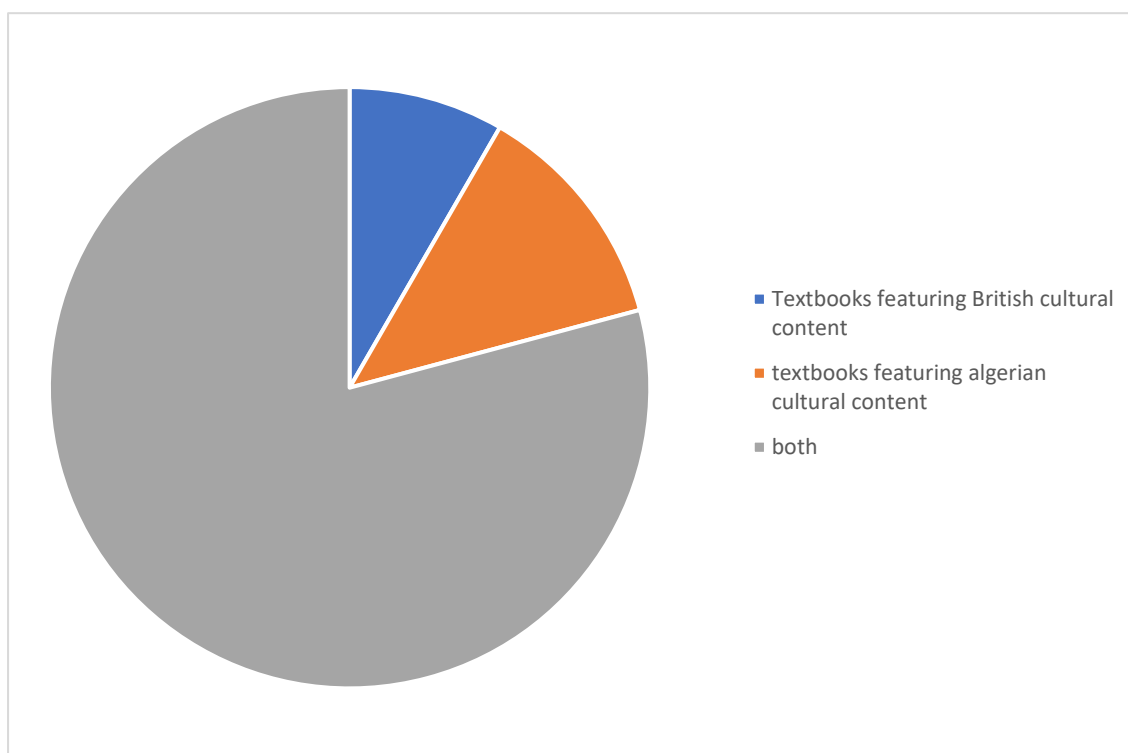
## **Question 2**

*Which type of first-year English textbook(s) have you used?*

Table 2 and Figure 2 summarize participants' experiences with Algerian and British cultural content in textbooks.

**Table 2****Types of First-Year English Textbooks Used by Participants**

Preffered Cultural Content	Frequency	Percentage
British content only	2	8.33%
Algerian content only	3	12.50%
Both	19	79.17%
Total	24	100%



*Figure 2. Distribution of participants by the types of first-year English textbooks used.*

As shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, the majority of participants (79.17%) reported having used first-year English textbooks that incorporate both Algerian and British cultural content. A smaller portion of participants (12.50%) indicated that they had used textbooks featuring only Algerian cultural content, while only 8.33% reported using textbooks with exclusively British content. These results suggest a strong trend toward the adoption of culturally blended materials in first-year English language instruction, highlighting the

increasing emphasis on integrating local cultural elements alongside foreign ones in Algerian educational contexts.

### 6.1. Section 2: Student Engagement

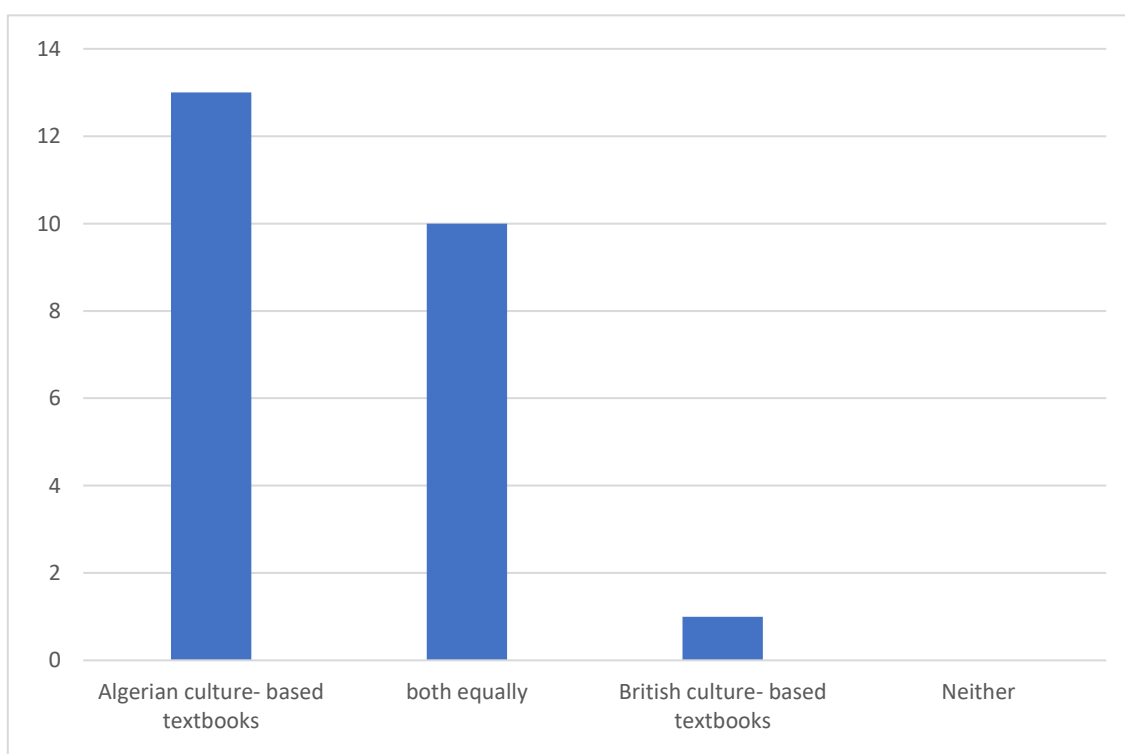
#### Question 3

*Which type of textbook do students seem more engaged with?*

Table 3 and Figure 3 show how teachers evaluated student engagement across textbook types.

**Table 3**  
Students' Perceived Engagement with Different Cultural Bases in English Textbooks

Perceived Cultural Basis	Frequency	Percentage
Algerian culture-based	13	54.17%
Both equally	10	41.67%
British culture-based	1	4.17%
Neither	0	0.00%
Total	24	100%



*Figure 3. Distribution of Students' Engagement with Textbooks Based on Cultural Content.*

As illustrated in Table 3 and Figure 3, more than half of the participants (54.17%) perceived students to be more engaged with Algerian culture-based textbooks. Additionally, 41.67% of respondents reported equal student engagement with both Algerian and British culture-based textbooks, while only one participant (4.17%) indicated greater engagement with British culture-based materials. These findings suggest that incorporating Algerian cultural elements into English language textbooks may enhance student engagement, potentially due to the relevance and familiarity of the content to students' own cultural experiences.

#### Question 4

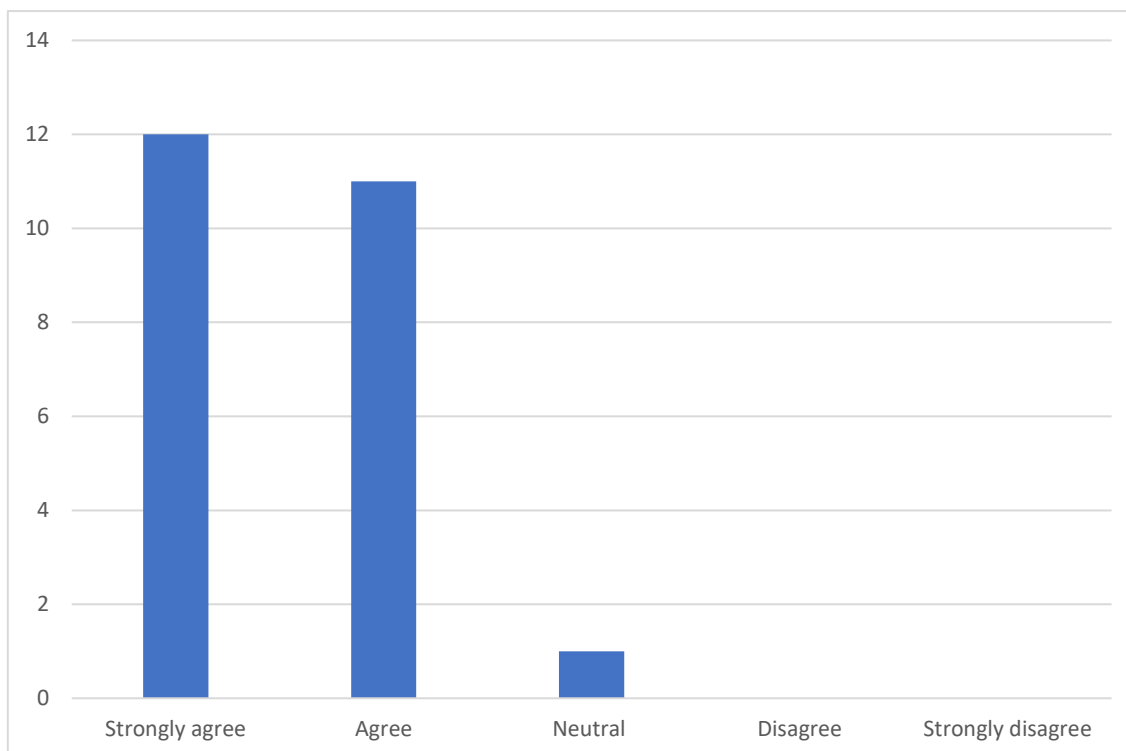
*Do you agree that students feel more engaged when English lessons incorporate Algerian cultural elements?*

Table 4 and Figure 4 display levels of agreement among respondents.

**Table 4**

Teachers' Perceptions of Student Engagement with Algerian Culture-Based Textbooks

Option	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	12	50.00%
Agree	11	45.83%
Neutral	1	4.17%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Total	24	100.00%



*Figure 4. Teachers' perceptions of student engagement with Algerian culture-based textbooks.*

As presented in Table 4 and Figure 4, a substantial majority of participants expressed positive views regarding student engagement with Algerian culture-based content in English lessons. Specifically, 50.00% of respondents strongly agreed and 45.83% agreed that students feel more engaged when Algerian cultural elements are incorporated. Only one teacher 4.17% remained neutral, and no participants disagreed *or* strongly disagreed. These findings suggest a strong consensus among teachers that integrating familiar cultural references can significantly enhance student interest and participation in English language learning.

### **Question 5**

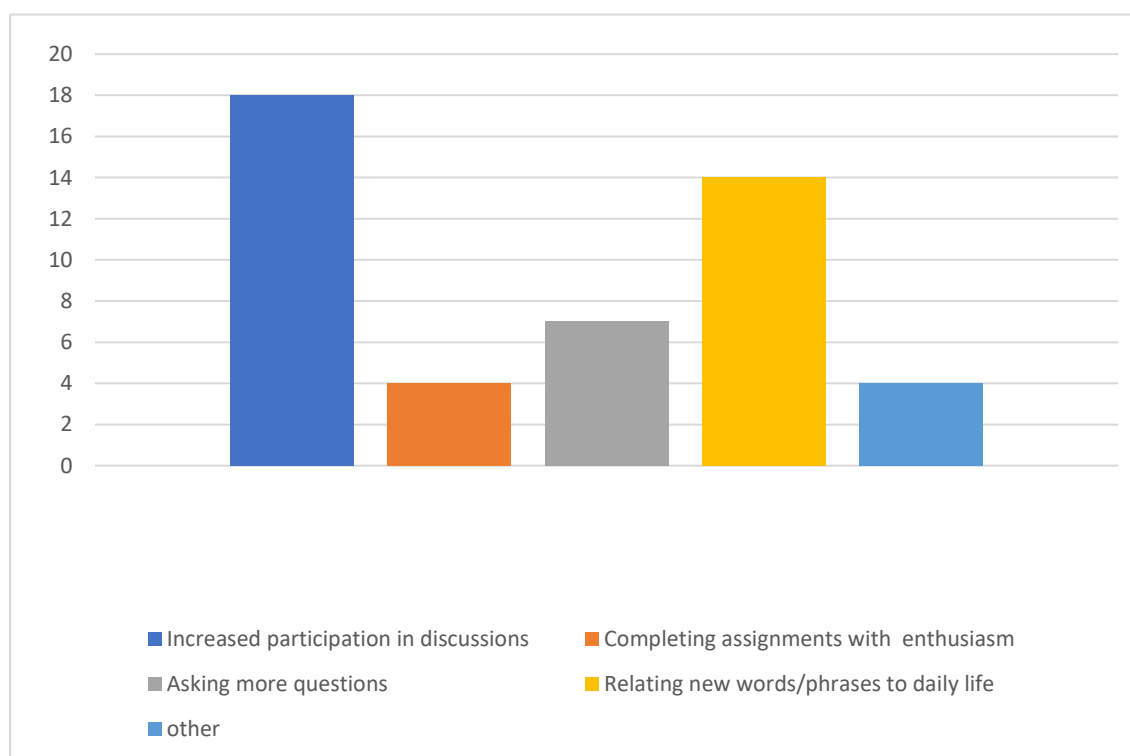
*What signs indicate that students are more engaged when using textbooks with Algerian cultural elements?*

This question allowed for multiple selections. Table 5 and Figure 5 and Figure 6 summarize the most observed signs of engagement.

**Table 5**  
Teachers' Observations of Student Reactions to Algerian Cultural Content in English Lessons.

Option	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Increased Participation	18	38.30%
Completing Assignments Enthusiastically	4	8.51%
Asking More Questions	7	14.89%
Relating to Daily Life	14	29.79%
Other	4	8.51%
Total	47	100.00%

*Note.* The total number of responses ( $n = 47$ ) exceeds the number of participants ( $N = 24$ ) because respondents were allowed to select more than one type of student reaction.



*Figure 5.* Distribution of observed student reactions to Algerian cultural content in English lessons.

Further clarification of the “Other” category is presented in Figure 6.

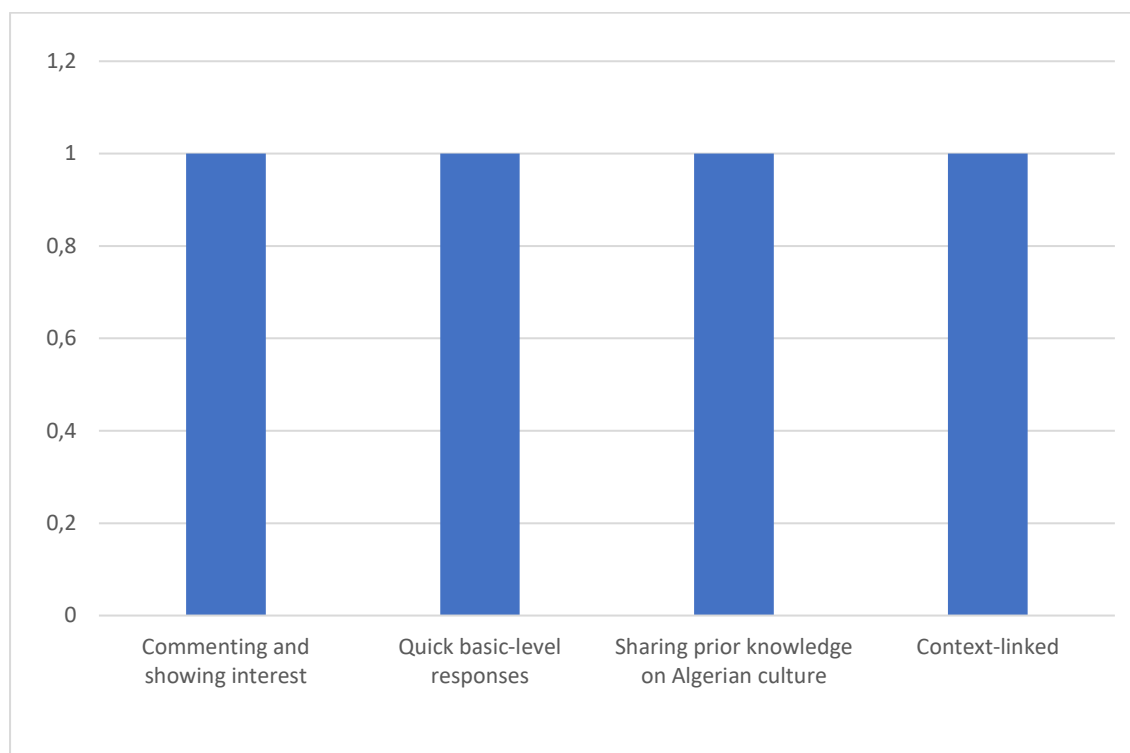


Figure 6. Breakdown of additional teachers' responses categorized as “Other.”

As shown in Table 5 and Figures 5 and 6, the most frequently observed reaction among students when Algerian cultural elements were included in English lessons was increased participation 38.30%, followed by relating content to daily life 29.79%. Teachers also noted that students were asking more questions 14.89% and completing assignments enthusiastically 8.51%. A small percentage (8.51%) of responses were classified as “Other”, further detailed in Figure 6. These included behaviors such as commenting and showing interest, quick basic-level responses, sharing prior knowledge on Algerian culture, and giving context-linked answers. These additional observations highlight the variety of subtle, yet meaningful, ways in which students engaged with culturally relevant content. Overall, the findings suggest that integrating Algerian culture not only enhances participation and understanding but also encourages students to connect classroom material with their own background and experiences.

## 6.2. Section 3: Language Acquisition

### Question 6

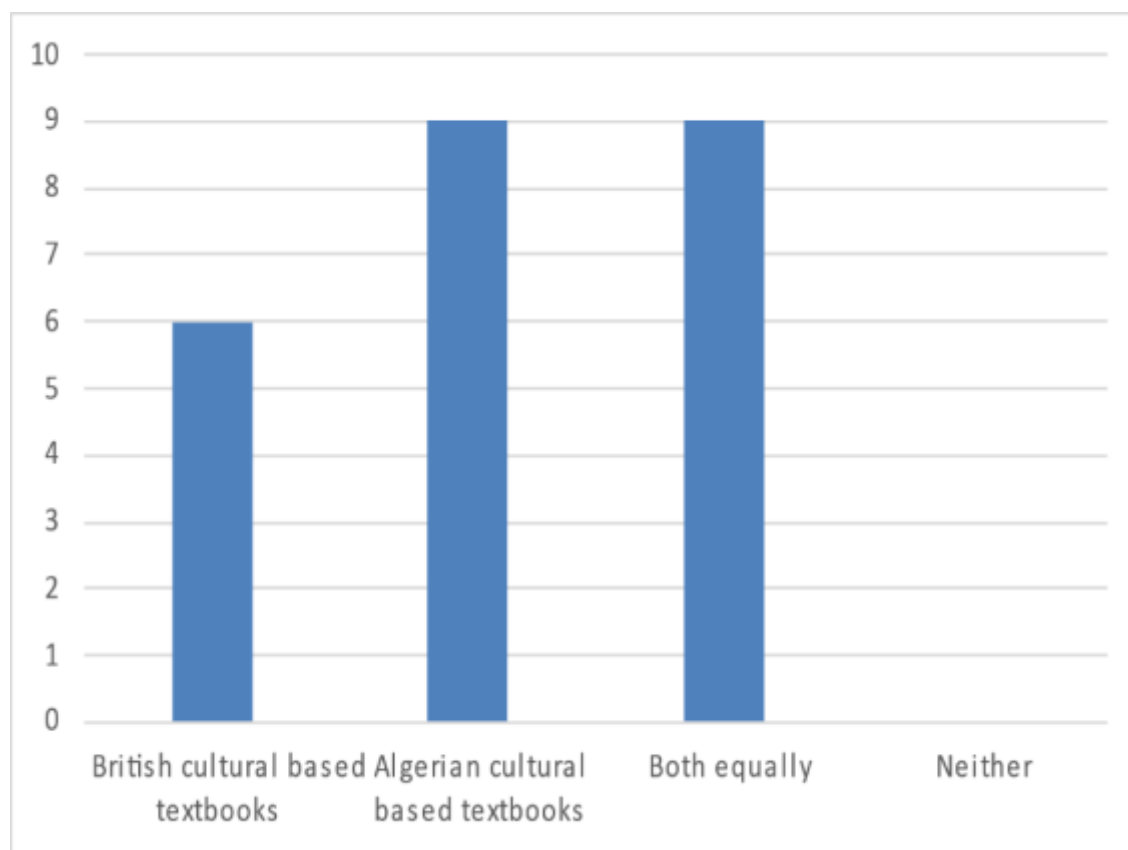
*Which type of textbook supports better understanding of vocabulary and grammar?*

Table 6 and Figure 7 show the responses related to linguistic comprehension.

**Table 6**

Type of textbooks that supports understanding of vocabulary and grammar

Answer	Population	Percentage
British culturally based	6	25.00%
Algerian culturally based	9	37.50%
Both equally	9	37.50%
Neither	0	0%
Total	24	100%



*Figure 7. Teachers View Point on Which Textbook Supports understanding of Vocabulary and Grammar.*

From the gathered data from Table 6 and Figure 7, most of the participants prefer Algerian cultural-based textbooks 37.5% or a balanced integration of both Algerian and

British cultural elements 37.5%. And only 25% of the respondent preferred British- culturally based textbooks, and none selected “Neither.”

This data indicates a clear preference among teachers towards incorporating Algerian cultural element either solely or together with British content into English language teaching materials. This means that teachers think that local cultural elements are more relatable and meaningful for students, possibly enhancing both engagement and language acquisition. This aligns with the core aim of this study

The absence of responses for “Neither” means that all teachers see teaching effectiveness in at least one of the proposed cultural approaches.

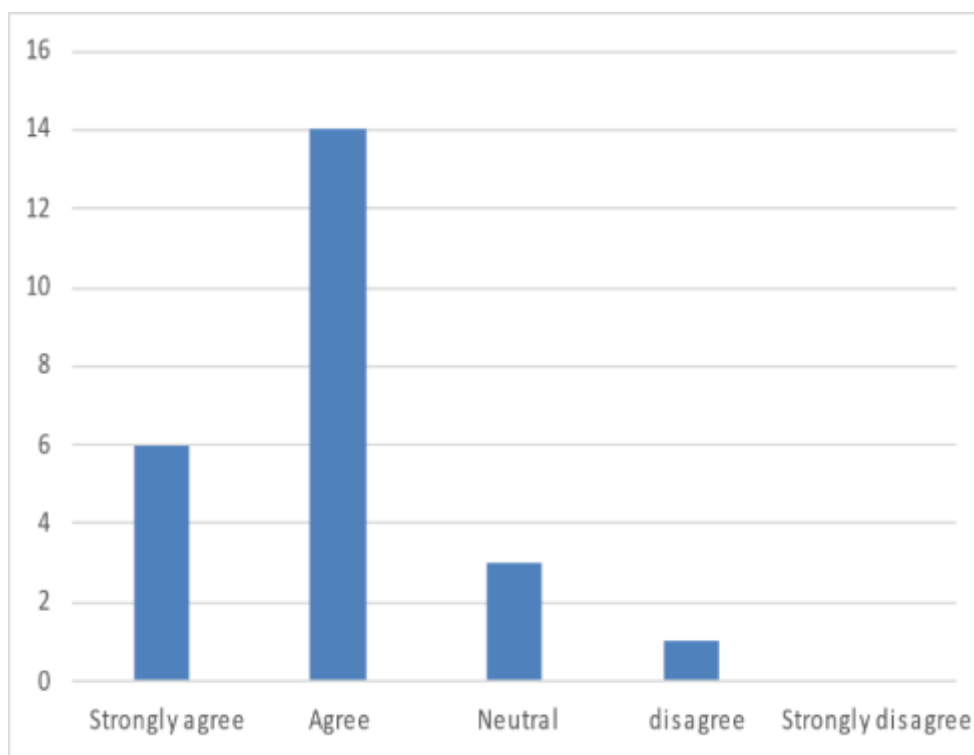
### Question 7

*Do you think Algerian cultural elements help students remember and use English expressions better?*

Table 7 and Figure 8 summarize the participants' views on memory and language use.

**Table 7**  
Participants' Views on the Impact of Algerian Cultural Elements on Memory and Use of English Expressions

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	6	25.00%
Agree	14	58.33%
Neutral	3	12.50%
Disagree	1	4.17%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Total	24	100%



*Figure 8. Participants' views on the impact of Algerian cultural elements on memory and use of English expressions.*

As shown in the Table 7 and Figure 8 The majority of respondents either agreed ( $n = 14, 58.33\%$ ) or strongly agreed ( $n = 6, 25.00\%$ ) on the effectiveness of Algerian cultural elements in remembering and using the English language, indicating a generally positive perception. A smaller percentage of teachers were neutral ( $n = 3, 12.50\%$ ); moreover, only one respondent disagreed  $4.17\%$ , and none strongly disagreed.

### **Question 8**

*What challenges do students face when learning English through British cultural elements?*

This multiple-choice question yielded various responses. Table 8 and Figure 9 show the most frequent challenges.

**Table 8**

## Challenges Students Face When Learning English Through British Cultural Elements

Challenge	population	Percentage
Difficulty of understanding foreign contexts	21	52.50%
Lack of interest	5	12.50%
Pronunciation struggles	11	27.50%
Other	3	7.50%
Total	40	100%

Note. Participants could select more than one challenge; therefore, the total number of responses (40) exceeds the number of participants (24).

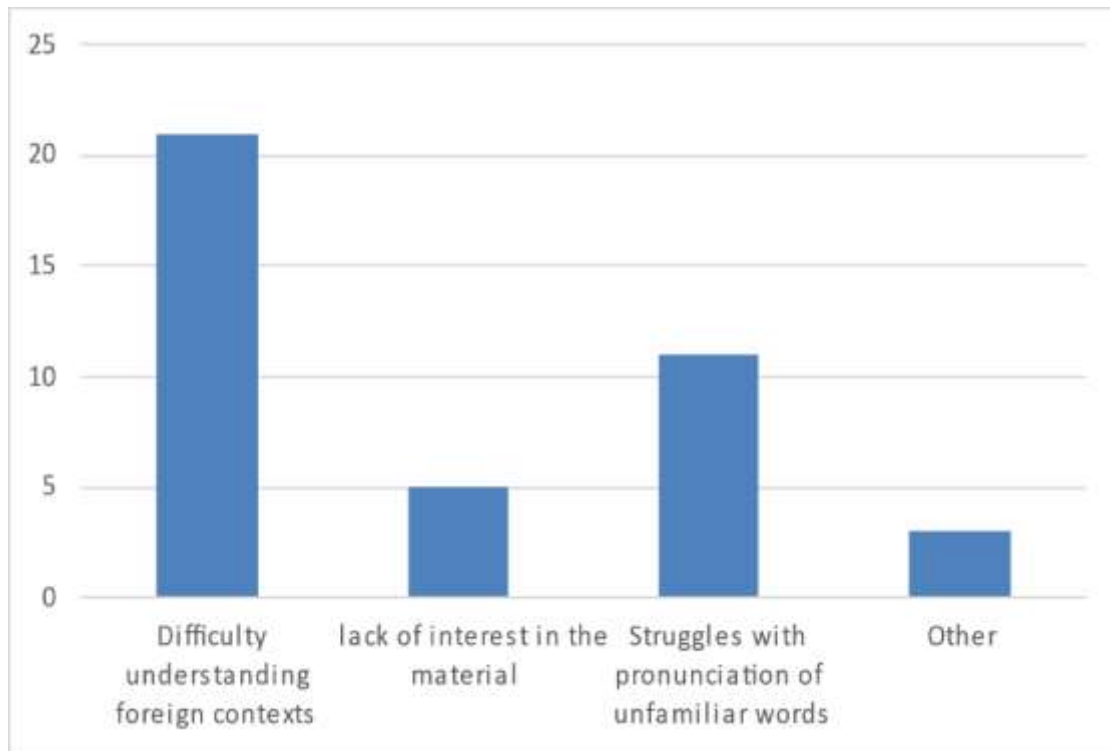
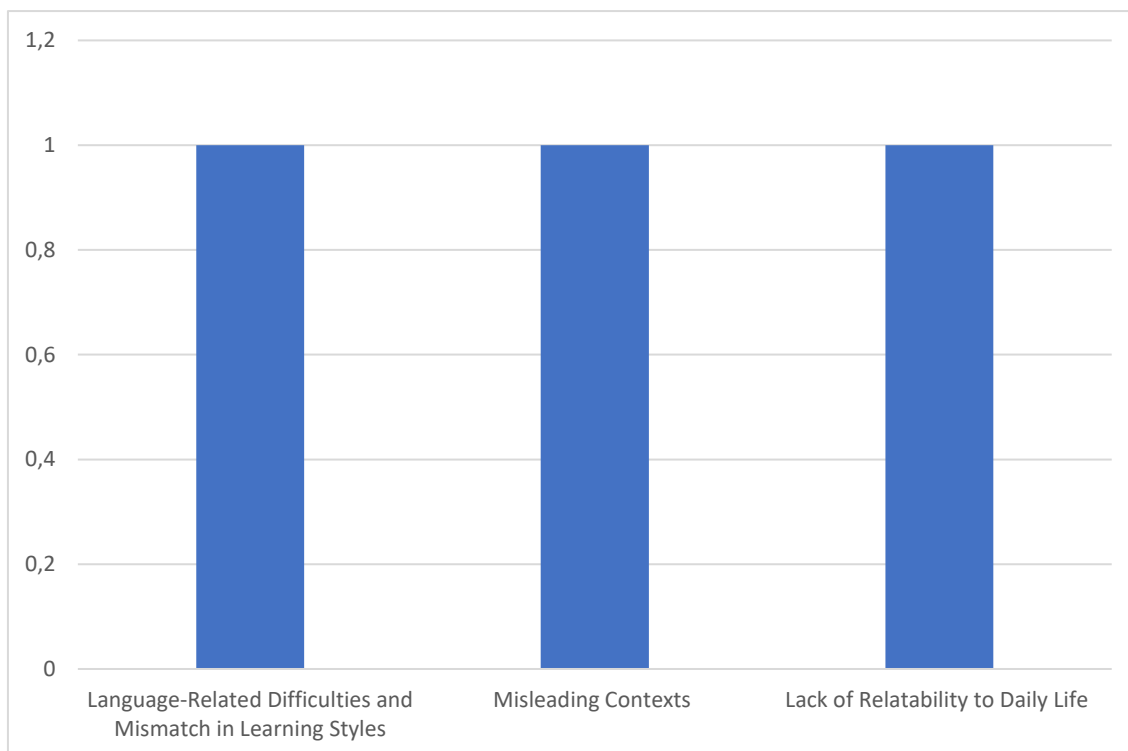


Figure 9. Challenges students face when learning English through British cultural elements.



*Figure 10. Breakdown of “Other” Challenges Students Face When Learning English Through British Cultural Elements.*

Among the students who responded positively to the previous question, 52.50%—representing the majority—indicated that the primary challenge students face when learning English through British cultural elements is the difficulty of understanding foreign contexts. This suggests that unfamiliarity with British cultural references may hinder students’ comprehension and reduce overall language acquisition. Additionally, 27.50% of participants reported that students struggle with pronunciation, particularly of unfamiliar words, highlighting that British English pronunciation can pose a significant barrier to effective learning. A further 12.50% identified lack of interest in British cultural content as a key challenge, emphasizing the importance of incorporating culturally relatable material to sustain student motivation. Lastly, 7.50% of respondents selected “Other” challenges, which are further detailed in Figure 10. These included language-related difficulties and mismatches in learning styles, misleading contexts, and a lack of relatability to daily life, all of which reinforce the need for culturally relevant materials in language instruction.

### 6.3. Section 4: Teaching Perspectives

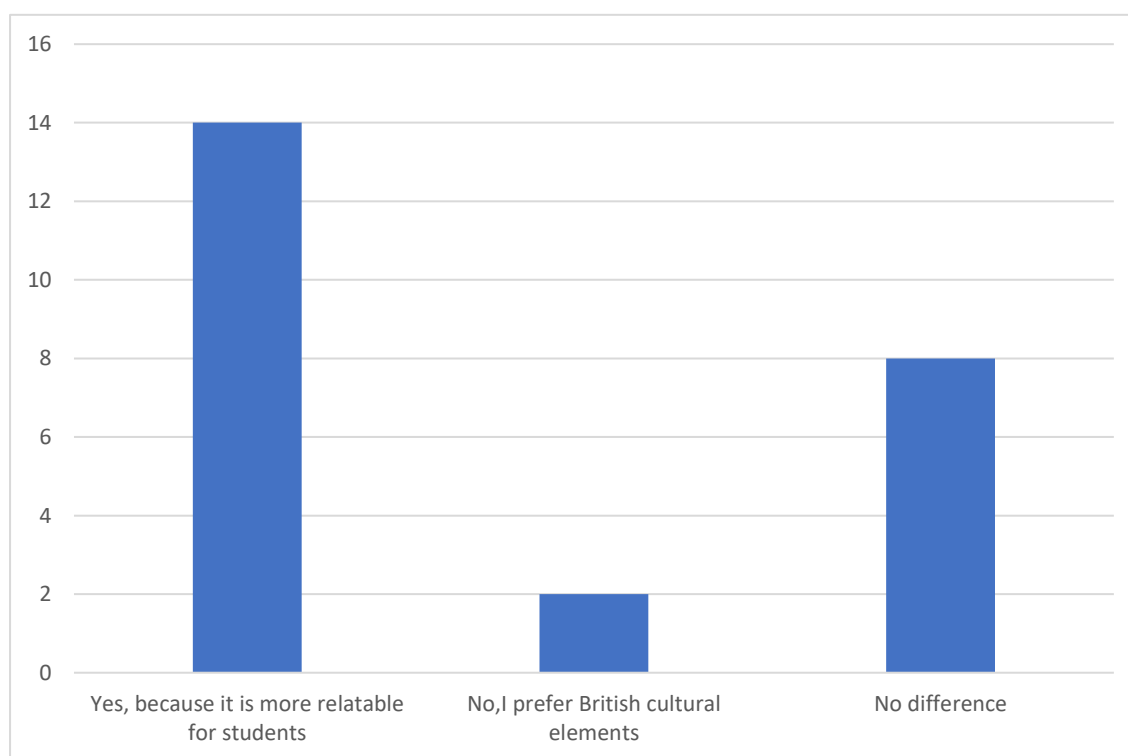
#### Question 9

*As a teacher, do you feel more comfortable teaching English using Algerian cultural elements?*

Table 9 and Figure 11 illustrate teachers' preferences and comfort levels.

**Table 9**  
Teachers Comfort Level in Teaching English using Algerian Cultural Elements

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, because it is more relatable	14	58.33%
No, I prefer British cultural elements	2	8.33%
No difference	8	33.33%
Total	24	100%



*Figure 11. Teachers Comfort Level in Teaching English Using Algerian Cultural Elements*

In response to the question concerning their comfort level in teaching English using Algerian cultural elements, 58.33% of the participants—the majority—reported feeling comfortable with this approach, noting that it is more relatable and meaningful for their students. This reflects a broader recognition of the value of culturally relevant pedagogy in enhancing student motivation and creating an inclusive language learning environment. In

contrast, 33.33% of the teachers stated that they perceived no notable difference between using Algerian and British cultural elements. Only 8.33% expressed a preference for British cultural content, which may indicate a shift away from traditional foreign-based materials in favor of more locally grounded resources that resonate with students' lived experiences. These findings highlight the increasing importance of cultural inclusivity in educational practices and support the integration of familiar cultural references in language instruction.

### Question 10

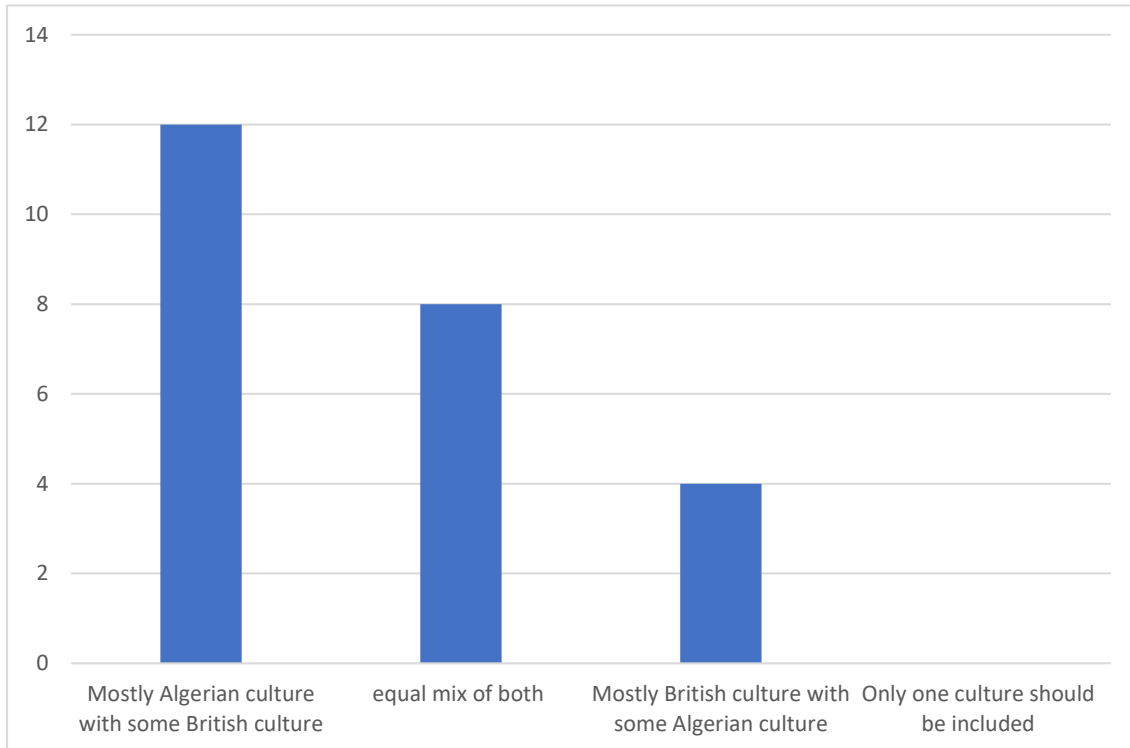
*What do you believe is the best approach to balance British and Algerian cultural elements in English teaching?*

Table 10 and Figure 12 summarize teachers' recommendations for cultural balance.

**Table 10**

Participants' Beliefs on the Best Approach to Balancing British and Algerian Cultural Elements in English Teaching

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Mostly Algerian with some British	12	50.00%
Equal mix of both	8	33.33%
Mostly British with some Algerian	4	16.67%
Only one culture	0	0.00%
Total	24	100%



*Figure 12. Participants' beliefs on the best approach to balancing British and Algerian cultural elements in English teaching.*

The analysis of participants' responses regarding the most effective approach to balancing British and Algerian cultural elements in English language teaching revealed that 50% preferred incorporating more Algerian culture with some British content. This suggests an emphasis on local cultural relevance while still acknowledging the value of British cultural elements. Additionally, 33.33% of respondents believed that an equal mix of both cultures would be the most effective approach, aiming to equip students with cultural knowledge from both local and global perspectives. In contrast, 16.67% indicated a preference for using mostly British culture with some Algerian elements, reflecting a more traditional, internationally oriented approach to language instruction.

### Question 11

*Do you have any additional comments or suggestions about integrating Algerian cultural elements in English teaching?*

**Table 11**  
Summary of Themes from Teachers' Responses

Theme	Frequency (n)	Description
Balancing Algerian and British Cultures	5	Emphasizing integration of both cultures
Cultural Relevance and Learner Engagement	5	Making learning relatable and motivating
Pedagogical Considerations	3	Curriculum design respecting cultural values
Cultural Awareness and Language Proficiency	2	Enhancing understanding of language context
Regional Differences	1	Variations based on students' backgrounds
Practical Integration Suggestions	1	Using idioms, proverbs, and literature

### Analysis:

The participants' responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common perspectives regarding the integration of Algerian cultural elements in English language teaching. Several key themes emerged, reflecting teachers' beliefs about cultural balance, relevance, pedagogy, and learner engagement.

### Theme 1: Balancing Algerian and British Cultures

Many teachers emphasized the importance of integrating both Algerian and British cultural elements to enrich learners' understanding and usage of English. They argued that this balance helps students appreciate cultural differences and apply language appropriately. For example, one participant noted, "Algerian cultural elements can be integrated along with British cultural competence to draw learners' attention to the difference between two cultures in order to learn using the target language appropriately."

Five respondents highlighted the gradual exposure to British culture after establishing a foundation in Algerian cultural content, particularly for younger learners.

### **Theme 2: Cultural Relevance and Learner Engagement**

Several participants stressed that using Algerian cultural content makes English learning more relatable and engaging. Teachers believed that incorporating students' daily life, traditions, and values promotes motivation and social cohesion. One teacher expressed, "Integrating Algerian culture in English teaching helps preserve identity and connect students to their roots while learning the language."

Another added, "Using real-life situations makes learning practical and relevant, and familiar topics can increase learners' motivation."

This theme was mentioned by five participants, underscoring the importance of cultural relevance.

### **Theme 3: Pedagogical Considerations and Curriculum Design**

Some teachers emphasized the need for well-structured lesson planning that aligns with curriculum goals while respecting cultural and religious values. One respondent commented, "A well-structured plan should be followed in designing lessons according to the curriculum, but importantly, the core values as Muslims and Algerian culture should be followed too."

This theme highlights the importance of culturally sensitive pedagogy in English language teaching.

### **Theme 4: Cultural Awareness Enhances Language Proficiency**

A few teachers highlighted that cultural awareness not only enriches knowledge but also improves language proficiency by helping learners understand appropriate usage and context. One participant explained, "Cultural awareness is important because it contributes to language proficiency...cultural integration encourages learners to perceive and experience deeper levels of the culture."

Two participants mentioned this theme, recognizing its value in effective language acquisition.

### **Theme 5: Regional Differences in Cultural Preferences**

One participant noted the influence of students' backgrounds on cultural preferences, suggesting a need for context-sensitive approaches: "Students who live in the cities prefer British and American culture, but students who live in the countryside prefer Algerian culture."

This observation indicates that cultural integration strategies may require adaptation based on learners' environments.

### **Theme 6: Practical Suggestions for Integration**

Teachers also proposed practical methods for cultural integration, such as incorporating Algerian literature, idioms, and proverbs into English lessons, to enhance cultural understanding.

### **Non-Responses and Negative Views**

A minority of participants either did not respond or expressed disagreement with integrating Algerian cultural elements.

### **Interpretation of Results**

The analysis indicates that most teachers support incorporating Algerian cultural elements alongside British culture in English language teaching.

Teachers perceive this approach as beneficial for fostering learner engagement, enhancing motivation, preserving cultural identity, and promoting effective communication skills.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the methodology and analysed data collected from English language teachers regarding the integration of Algerian cultural elements in English teaching.

The findings, derived from both quantitative and qualitative approaches, highlighted widespread support for cultural integration, with noted benefits for learner engagement and identity development.

However, challenges such as curriculum constraints and disparities in regional implementation were also identified.

These results will be further analysed in the next chapter, where they will be contextualised within the research questions and existing literature to provide deeper insights.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

## Chapter three: Discussion and Recommendations

### 1. Discussion

This research examined the effect of cultural content of English language textbooks on students and the challenges they face when learning English through different cultural content. The findings provide significant insights into the effect of cultural elements in language acquisition and offer implications for curriculum development in Algerian schools.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) posited that incorporating Algerian cultural elements into English language teaching enhances students' engagement by fostering cultural relevance and emotional connection more effectively than textbooks centered solely on British cultural elements. This hypothesis received strong empirical support. Specifically, 54.17% of participants reported greater student engagement when using Algerian culture-based textbooks, while 41.67% observed comparable engagement levels with both British and Algerian cultural materials. Only a small minority 4.17% favored British culture-based resources. These findings underscore the significant emotional and cognitive bonds students establish with culturally familiar content, thereby corroborating

Teachers' qualitative responses reinforced these quantitative findings through behavioral indicators of engagement. Notably, increased student participation 38.30% and the tendency of students to relate lessons to their everyday lives 29.79% were the most frequently observed effects of integrating Algerian cultural elements. The data suggest that culturally proximate materials not only capture learners' attention but also facilitate deeper, more meaningful educational experiences. Indeed, an overwhelming 95.83% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that Algerian cultural content increases student engagement, directly affirming the validity of H1.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) proposed that Algerian cultural elements in English language teaching improve students' language acquisition by providing relatable and contextually

meaningful content, surpassing the efficacy of materials focused on British cultural elements. This hypothesis was also robustly supported. When queried about which textbooks best support vocabulary and grammar learning, 37.5% of teachers preferred Algerian culture-based materials, with an additional 37.5% endorsing a balanced approach. Only 25% favored exclusively British content. This distribution indicates that cultural familiarity enhances cognitive processing and comprehension,

Further, 83.33% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that Algerian cultural references aid students in remembering and using English expressions more effectively. This finding substantiates emphasis on the pedagogical advantages of contextually meaningful content, which promotes memory retention and communicative competence. . The minimal dissent—only one teacher disagreed and none strongly disagreed—highlights a broad consensus on the efficacy of integrating Algerian cultural content for language learning.

This strong agreement also suggested that by incorporating students' heritage and lived realities, educators create a more inclusive and psychologically supportive learning environment, thereby not only advancing linguistic development but also empowering learners to participate confidently in the classroom.

This study addresses the gap in understanding the practical effects of cultural content on student engagement and learning outcomes. by conducting a teacher-centered, empirical investigation situated within the Algerian middle school context. Unlike prior research that relied predominantly on document analysis, the present study gathered firsthand data from practicing English teachers who have utilized both British and Algerian culture-based textbooks. This approach provides a more authentic and pragmatic understanding of how cultural elements influence language acquisition and classroom engagement. The integration

of quantitative data with qualitative thematic analysis enhances the robustness of the findings by revealing measurable trends alongside rich contextual insights.

Moreover, the study highlights specific challenges—such as pronunciation difficulties, unfamiliarity with foreign cultural contexts, and diminished motivation when content lacks local relevance—that have been underrepresented in earlier literature. These teacher-reported observations draw attention to the cognitive and affective dimensions of language learning, aspects often overlooked in purely theoretical studies.

By centering the perspectives of local educators, the study contributes a practice-oriented dimension to the broader academic discourse on culturally responsive English language teaching (ELT).

Consequently, the findings not only reaffirm the significance of cultural familiarity in enhancing student motivation and comprehension but also provide localized insights that are highly pertinent for curriculum designers, teacher educators, and policymakers operating in similar postcolonial or multilingual educational settings. Ultimately, this research strengthens the argument for integrating Algerian cultural content into ELT materials and advocates for more context-sensitive approaches to English language education in North Africa and comparable contexts worldwide.

In addition to the benefits observed, this study also identified key challenges that may hinder the effectiveness of cultural integration in English language teaching. These include linguistic, contextual, and motivational barriers experienced by students. The most commonly identified challenge was difficulty understanding foreign contexts 52.50%, then pronunciation struggles 27.50% and lack of interest 12.50%. These findings support the argument for unfamiliar cultural references can create cognitive barriers and decrease motivation. Pronunciation difficulties reinforce the effect of unfamiliar phonology on student

confidence and development. The “Other” category 7.50% included challenges such as limited prior knowledge and difficulty relating content to students’ personal experiences,

These challenges may hinder comprehension and reduce motivation, as unfamiliar cultural context can create cognitive barriers. The results suggest that while exposure to target culture is essential for intercultural competence, reliance on foreign cultural elements without adequate scaffolding may decrease language acquisition for learners in non-native contexts.

In light of these challenges, a significant theme emerged in the open-ended responses was the need for a balanced approach. Many educators advocated for an “equal mix of both” or “mostly Algerian culture with some British culture,” particularly in the early stages of language learning. This approach was supported as essential for maintaining students’ cultural identity while gradually introducing them to global viewpoints and authentic language use.

Many teachers highlighted the need for “artistic techniques” and “appropriate use of pedagogical means” to connect cultures and make English learning relevant for Algerian students.

## **2. Limitations of the study**

This study encountered a lot of struggles that effected the research process, as outlined below:

- The study's sample was limited to middle school teachers from a specific region, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings.

- A notable limitation was the low participation rate among experienced teachers, whose insights would have been particularly valuable; many of these veteran educators declined to complete the questionnaire.

- The reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of response bias. •Future research should aim to include larger, more diverse samples to enhance representativeness and validity.

- Incorporating student perspectives would provide a more holistic understanding of the influence of cultural elements on language learning

- The lack of long-term data to determine whether the benefits of culturally integrated textbooks on language skills and intercultural understanding are sustained over time.

### **3.Recommendations**

#### Recommendations for Future Practice and Policy

- Acknowledging the limited scope of this study, highlighting clear patterns that can inform future improvements in teaching practices and educational policy.

- Emphasizing a balanced and nuanced incorporation of Algerian culture alongside British culture in future textbook development, advancing beyond superficial inclusion to promote critical cultural awareness.

- Collaborating with experienced teachers to ensure cultural content is relevant, authentic, and pedagogically effective during curriculum development.

- Providing comprehensive professional development programs to equip teachers with the skills and confidence required for effective culturally responsive teaching

- Training programs should incorporate strategies for integrating culture into language instruction, managing diverse classrooms, and fostering intercultural dialogue.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a detailed discussion of the hypotheses formulated at the outset of the study in relation to the study's research questions. The empirical findings provided strong support for both hypotheses. Specifically, Hypothesis 1, which proposed that

incorporating Algerian cultural contents into English language textbooks enhances student engagement more effectively than British culture-based materials, was confirmed by both quantitative data and qualitative teacher observations. Students exhibited higher participation levels and were better able to relate lessons to their personal experiences when exposed culturally relevant materials

Hypothesis 2, which suggested that Algerian cultural references foster language acquisition by offering relatable and contextually meaningful content, was also confirmed. Participants reported improvement of vocabulary retention, grammar comprehension, and overall communicative competence of the students when integrating Algerian culture-based materials or a balanced mix of Algerian and British content. These findings confirmed the cognitive and affective benefits of culturally familiar materials in language learning.

The chapter identified also challenges during the study, these included students' difficulties with unfamiliar foreign contexts, issues with pronunciation, and the lack of motivation. These challenges highlight the importance of carefully scaffolding cultural content to minimize cognitive overload and prevent student disengagement.

the chapter recommends adopting a balanced pedagogical approach that incorporates Algerian cultural elements alongside British cultural references. This strategy supports the preservation of students' cultural identity while introducing them to global perspectives and authentic language use, thereby enhancing both local relevance and intercultural competence. Furthermore, the use of artistic and pedagogical techniques for bridging cultural gaps and enhance learner motivation was emphasized.

Finally, the chapter recommends avenues for future research to build upon the present findings, these include conducting longitudinal studies and investigations into specific teaching methods to integrate cultural content effectively. Such research would suggest a deeper insight into curriculum development and contribute to more context-sensitive English language education particularly within Algeria and similar multilingual, postcolonial settings.

## General Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of integrating Algerian cultural elements into English language teaching to enhance student engagement and language acquisition among first-year middle school students. The research problem focused on whether local culture-based textbooks improve students' engagement and language learning outcomes compared to the use of British culture-based contexts.

To test the research hypotheses, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative tools to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, the research combined quantitative data from structured questionnaires with qualitative insights from open-ended responses gathered from middle school teachers especially those who experienced with both textbook types. The results from the questionnaires clearly demonstrate that incorporating Algerian cultural content positively influences student motivation, increases classroom participation, and facilitates language acquisition by lowering affective filters, reducing anxiety, and building learner confidence. The findings also reveal that students face challenges associated with British cultural content—such as difficulties in understanding foreign contexts and diminished student interest—were identified as factors that may hinder comprehension and motivation.

The study's results confirmed both hypotheses, demonstrating that culturally contextualized materials rooted in students' heritage, significantly enhance engagement and facilitate more effective language learning compared to materials based only on foreign cultural content. Teachers feedbacks further highlighted the value of using balanced pedagogical approach that incorporates both foreign and local cultural contents, and recommending an equal integration of these materials. this approach maintains students' both cultural identity while and fostering both local relevance, intercultural competence.

Despite these significant findings, the study acknowledges certain limitations. The sample was limited to teachers' perspectives, which may not gather students' experiences and attitudes. In addition to that, the results limit insights into long-term effects of cultural integration on language proficiency. Also, the sample was limited to middle school teachers from a specific region, this may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research is recommended such as incorporating student viewpoints and longitudinal methodologies to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural elements impact language learning, these recommendations would be beneficial to improve the quality of teaching.

Finally, this research provides implications for textbook designers, curriculum developers, and educators in Algeria and foreign contexts. It highlights the importance of culturally responsive teaching materials that use balanced materials that incorporate local and foreign cultural elements to enhance level of engagement and students' outcomes. Additionally, the study advocates for pedagogical techniques that fill cultural gaps and improve students' motivation, promote more effective and inclusive English language education.

In conclusion, integrating Algerian cultural elements into English language teaching supports students' linguistic and cultural development and enriches students' learning experiences. This approach aligns with broader educational objectives of enhancing intercultural understanding and equipping learners to participate effectively in a globalized world.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Sample Page from the Previous Textbook (Spotlight on English)

The following page is taken from the old first-year English textbook. It illustrates surface-level cultural references such as landmarks, including Statue of Liberty. This example supports the analysis discussed in Chapter One.

**LEARN ABOUT CULTURE**

**Work in pairs.**  
**a. Ask and answer about these monuments.**  
*e.g. - What is number 1?*  
*- It's Tower Bridge.*

1  
 2  
 3  
 4  
 5  
 6  
 7

STATUE OF LIBERTY  
 BIG BEN  
 EIFFEL TOWER  
 GOLDEN GATE  
 MAQAM ESHAHID  
 TOWER BRIDGE  
 TAJ MAHAL

32

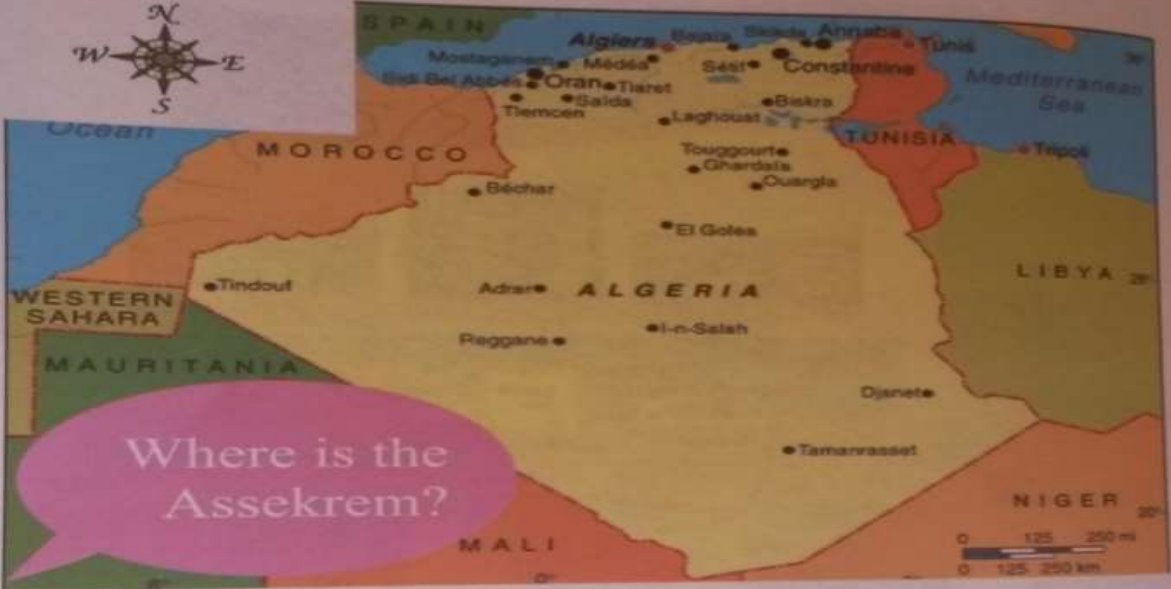
## Appendix B

### Sample Page from the New Textbook (My Book of English)

This page is taken from *My Book of English*, the current first-year English textbook. It highlights efforts to integrate Algerian cultural elements such as famous monuments and places in Algeria that foster cultural relevance and identity.

I listen and do.


Task1. I look, listen and repeat.



Where is the Assekrem?


- The Assekrem is in the South.
- The suspended bridges of Constantine are in the East.
- The Casbah of Algiers is in the North.
- The Jeddar tombs are in the West.

Now, Younes wants to know about Great Britain. He writes to Margaret.



Hi, Margaret. These are the famous monuments and places in my beloved country Algeria. How about yours?

Scanned by  
fb: Aber Sabil



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## Appendix C

### Teachers Questionnaire

Dear Teacher,

This questionnaire seeks your insights on the use of Algerian cultural elements in first-year middle school English textbooks. Your feedback is essential for this research and will remain confidential. Thank you for your valuable contribution.

#### Section 1: Background Information

**1. How many years have you been teaching English?**

- 1–3 years
- 4–6 years
- 7–10 years
- More than 10 years

**2. Which type of first-year English textbook(s) have you used?**

- Textbooks featuring British cultural content
- Textbooks featuring Algerian cultural content
- Both

#### Section 2: Student Engagement

**3. Which type of textbook do students seem more engaged with?**

- British culture-based textbooks
- Algerian culture-based textbooks
- Both equally
- Neither

**4. Do you agree that students feel more engaged when English lessons**

**incorporate Algerian cultural elements (e.g., traditions, places, people)?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**5. What signs indicate that students are more engaged when using textbooks with Algerian cultural elements? (Check all that apply)**

- Increased participation in discussions
- Completing assignments with enthusiasm
- Asking more questions
- Relating new words/phrases to daily life
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 3: Language Acquisition**

**6. Which type of textbook supports better understanding of vocabulary and grammar?**

- British culture-based textbooks
- Algerian culture-based textbooks
- Both equally
- Neither

**7. Do you think Algerian cultural elements help students remember and use English expressions better?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**8. What challenges do students face when learning English through British cultural elements? (Check all that apply)**

- Difficulty understanding foreign contexts (e.g., traditions, places, names)
- Lack of interest in the material
- Struggles with pronunciation of unfamiliar words
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 4: Teaching Perspectives**

**9. As a teacher, do you feel more comfortable teaching English using Algerian cultural elements?**

- Yes, because it is more relatable for students
- No, I prefer British cultural content
- No difference

**10. What do you believe is the best approach to balance British and Algerian cultural elements in English teaching?**

- Mostly Algerian culture with some British culture
- Equal mix of both
- Mostly British culture with some Algerian culture
- Only one culture should be included (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions about integrating Algerian cultural elements in English teaching?**