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## USING FILMS AS TEACHING MATERIALS IN THE COURSE OF CIVILIZATION: TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVES

### Abstract

This paper aims to examine students' and teachers' perceptions of integrating films in the course of civilization as a means to reinforce the course objectives in terms of enhancing students' culture learning and critical thinking at the Department of English of Bejaia University. Two research instruments were used for collecting data: students' questionnaire to enquire about their perceptions and attitudes towards learning civilization with film and teachers' interview to find out whether films have a place in their classes of civilization and their idea on the potential of film to teach civilization. The qualitative and quantitative data obtained reveal all the students and most of the interviewed teachers are in favour of integrating films in cultural instruction. Yet, there appears a mismatch between the students' high interest in learning with multimedia and the traditional materials the instructors use in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Course of civilization, film, culture learning, critical thinking, foreign language classroom.

### 1. Introduction

The incorporation of civilization modules mainly American and British civilization in foreign language curriculum at Algerian higher education system aims at contextualizing language learning and enhancing students' culture learning and critical thinking.

Civilization teaching in Algerian universities is generally based on the transmission of factual knowledge about big 'C' culture mainly the history, geography and political institutions of the United States and Britain (Nait Brahim, 2005). As for the materials used by civilization teachers, they are mainly traditional chalk and board, and handouts. However, multimedia technologies are not commonly used for teaching culture while film is generally absent. Resultantly, this approach does not lead to substantial insights into the culture of the target country. Furthermore, it is observed that students demonstrate boredom in civilization classes where the emphasis is on the memorization and regurgitation of dry historical facts.

In fact, this traditional way of teaching civilization does not account for students' attitudes, habits and interests in learning. In the media-dominated culture in which we live, television and the Internet are part of the daily life of Algerian students. The latter belong to the "visual generation" where they get most of their understanding of foreign cultures from visual media and not from books. Besides, by the wide use of the Internet, they are exposed to English-language media mainly to US cultural products like music, videos and TV programmes. So, it is appropriate to bring this material to the classroom. Writing about using technology in education, peck et al. (2007, p.20) state that "as far films are concerned, no explanation and justification is needed at this time of predominantly visual culture, of increasingly visual texts, of the visual generations we encounter at school and everywhere else". Accordingly, teachers should cope with students' needs and make their lessons more interesting and enjoyable because this helps promote language and culture learning.

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Besides its motivating effect on the learners, film is perceived by some foreign language professionals (Mychalkzyk, 1976; Rollet, 1995; Herron et al., 2002; Ingram, 2001; Zoreda, 2006) as an effective means to enhance culture learning in the foreign language classroom. This is due to its rich authentic cultural content and its interpretative aspect which helps build critical thinking.

The present study undertakes to examine students' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of integrating films in the course of civilization at the Department of English of Bejaia University. It is expected that the research findings would provide insights into how civilization courses are taught and learned in the Department, and pave the way for the implementation of innovative methods that promote culture learning in Algerian universities.

## **2. Review of Literature**

### *2.1. Advantages of Using Film in the Foreign Language Classroom*

Researchers who explored the role of film in the foreign language classroom highlighted its positive effects on the process of language and culture learning. These are summarized in the following points:

#### *2.1.1. Motivating Language Learners*

Motivation is considered a crucial factor in determining successful foreign language acquisition (Ellis, 1994). In his speech to the North of England Conference, Sir Christopher Ball (1995, quoted in Chambers, 1999) stated: "There are only three things of importance to successful learning: motivation, motivation and motivation... any fool can teach students who want to learn". Moreover, Briam (2010, p. 386) holds that "enjoyment and motivation to learn about other cultures can go hand in hand". This relationship between motivation and learning implies that in a class of culture studies, the transmission of knowledge alone does not guarantee learning as learners may pay attention or may not, depending on their interests and needs. Thus, teachers should develop effective supporting teaching materials that stimulate learners' motivation to engage in culture learning.

Recent empirical studies highlight the motivating effect of films on language learners. Walsh and Reese (1995) assert that among all the media used in language education, films have proved their potential to attract students' attention. As a matter of fact, this medium can easily gain the interest of students because it can convey information relevant to their world experience. This is reinforced with its storytelling style (Chao, 2013, p. 250), in addition to the effects of image and sound that capture and hold the viewer's attention and interest in ways that words do not. Furthermore, film is an excellent stimulus for discussion and participation in the classroom (Cook et al., 1988).

#### *2.1.2. Film as a Source of Authentic Language and Culture*

One of the challenges of teaching English in an EFL context is that English is not taught in the natural setting in which it is used, as is the case with teaching English in Algeria. Since English is not used for communication in everyday life, Algerian EFL learners do not have many opportunities to be exposed to English language and culture outside the classroom as easily as ESL learners. One suggestion to address this drawback in the English classroom is to use authentic materials in print, audio or visual forms to give students the opportunity to use the language in realistic contexts. By watching films, students can listen to native speakers and see how they behave in authentic contexts without leaving the classroom. So, it can be argued that film can, to some extent, substitute for the input that may be difficult for students to receive from the more restricted classroom environment or outside the classroom.

In this context, Champoux (2007) maintains that “inexperienced students will likely benefit from the use of film because of a greater feeling of reality”. This view is shared by Cook and his associates (1988, p. 97) who argue that “with the exception of total immersion in the target culture itself, there is simply no better medium to bring both student and teacher into direct contact with the foreign culture, providing that the videos selected for classroom use are truly representative of (foreign language speaking) cultures and have meaningful cultural contexts”. In the same vein, Kramsch (1991, p. 236; quoted in Harrison, 2009) states that videos promote the teaching of culture “in a multidimensional and authentic way”. Likewise, Mishan (2004, 2016) holds that movies can be considered as authentic materials and they provide the learners with genuine input. We can say that films bring the outside world into the classroom (Tomalin & Stempleski, 2001).

Film provides a full visual context and addresses different senses simultaneously which helps students’ comprehension. When watching a film, students do not only listen to the characters but also watch their movements and behaviour. The non-verbal aspects of communication like facial expressions and gestures support the verbal message and provide a focus of attention for students while they listen (Donalghy). In the meantime, by observing the behaviour of the characters, they learn about the culture.

Additionally, the visual aspects of film foster cultural learning insights. Film gives life to culture by presenting actual people, their customs and products, cities, and countries with outstanding vividness and reality, and this gives film a unique advantage in presenting the culture of a specific period compared with other methods. Phelps (2012) holds that films mustn’t be mistaken for real life, but they lead us back to it, more thoughtful about the people and cultures that we encounter. We can learn about culture by observing the behaviour and attitudes of the fictional characters in film and the factors that influenced and shaped that behaviour and attitudes.

### *2.1.3. Film as a Means to Enhance Learners’ Critical Thinking*

Integrating films in cultural instruction does not merely provide students with socio-cultural information but also encourages them to analyse, evaluate and synthesize this information (Ingram, 2001; Pegram, 2008). It is clear that for cultural analysis, we cannot take mediated texts, like movies, television programs, recorded music, advertisements, etc., which are created for a specific audience, at face value; one has to be conscious of their function as entertainment or propaganda (Corbett, 2003). Yet, this interpretative aspect of cultural products like films is important because it reflects varying viewpoints and attitudes in the target culture and hence avoids presenting culture as a monotonous entity and describing it in a generalized and stereotyped way.

Furthermore, presenting students with different views present in films and other documents on the same issue will result in an improved ability to analyse and draw conclusions (Ingram, 2001). Film can be compared to texts (documents, excerpts) from other disciplines like history, sociology, political science, social anthropology and literature. By comparing the approaches taken in these texts with that of the film and understanding what facts and viewpoints shown and what is left out by the movie, students get a deeper understanding of the target culture and forge critical thinking abilities.

### *2.2. Research on Using Film to Teach Culture*

Review of research on using films in the foreign language classroom reveals that only few studies dealt with using films to teach culture as opposed to the wealth of existing research on integrating films in the language classroom to develop communicative competence (Herron et al., 2002, p. 38; Rollet, 1997, p. 132).

Among the few researchers who explored the role of film in cultural instruction, John Mychalkzik (1976) described a course entitled “Civilization through Film”, which he taught at Boston College in 1976. He argues that the coordination of lecture, reading and film provides an intensive approach to the programme of civilization offering students an exposure to contemporary culture in its creative form (art, literature, and achievements) as well as in its everyday manifestations and leading them to an in-depth understanding of the target culture. At the end of the one semester course, students wrote ‘course critics’ to evaluate their learning experience. Results showed that students’ motivation was stimulated. Furthermore, students learned to avoid ‘generalizations and idealizations’ of other cultures.

Rollet (1995) wrote a book-length study on the role of fiction film in the teaching of French civilization. She views fiction film as part of popular culture which reflects society and shapes the creation of national identity, and as such it is a valuable tool to be used in cultural instruction.

Ingram (2001) described an interdisciplinary approach to teaching civilization at university level. Popular films formed part of a broad range of sources that he used to discuss the theme of ‘modernity and modernization in post-World War II France. He argued that through this approach students are prompted to examine French society from a range of diverse disciplinary perspectives. This enhances their understanding of the particularity of the French society vis-à-vis other societies and former periods in the history of France. Moreover, by working with texts from different disciplines, students are encouraged to examine different perspectives towards the same issue or concept and to "evaluate different kinds of evidence and argument, to synthesize materials when it is possible, and to compare and contrast them when it is not" (2001, p. 1156) and hence help build critical thinking.

Other researchers (Pegram, 2008; Wildner-Basset, 1990; Zoreda, 2006) explored film as a means to facilitate intercultural learning in the foreign language classroom. They concluded that films can be effective for teaching a foreign culture and enhancing intercultural learning.

Chao (2013) used diaries to investigate the perceptions of EFL university students towards an intercultural course that used foreign films as an instructional tool and to study the progress of their intercultural competence. The results obtained from the analysis of the learners’ diaries showed that many participants appreciated the course and that they made a significant progress in developing intercultural skills: motivation, attitudes, knowledge and awareness.

Herron and his associates conducted studies with beginning-level college students of French (1999), and then with elementary level French students (2000). They investigated whether these students learn culture included in a video-based second language course. They further researched the issue in a study with intermediate level students of French (2002). These studies highlight the effects of a curriculum that includes an authentic video component on enhancing foreign language learners’ cultural knowledge and understanding.

All of the above studies show that films can be integrated in civilization courses to motivate learners, enhance their culture learning and build critical thinking and intercultural competence.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1. Aim of the Study*

This study was designed to examine students’ and teachers’ perceptions of integrating films in the course of civilization as a means to reinforce the course objectives in terms of enhancing students’ culture learning and critical thinking at the Department of English of Bejaia University.

### *3.2. Participants*

The study used the teachers of civilization and 79 third year students enrolled in the specialty of Foreign Language Literature and Civilization as informants. The choice of 3rd year students was based on two main reasons. First, third year students are believed to have acquired a linguistic competence and cultural knowledge which allows them to understand films in English and assimilate and discuss their content.

The number of the teachers of civilization in the Department was four; three were males and one was female. Three of them hold a magister degree and one hold a Master degree. They all taught American and British civilization with an experience which varies from 2 years to 25 years. Three of them were carrying out a Doctorate research.

### *3.3. Procedure*

In order to examine students and teachers' perception of the effectiveness of films to teach civilization to third year students, a survey method was adopted. Data was collected using two research instruments namely a students' questionnaire and teachers' interview.

#### *3.3.1. Students' Questionnaire*

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed to get information about the learners' opinions and attitudes towards studying civilization as well as the methods and materials used by their civilization teachers. It also aims to know about their learning preferences and their perception of integrating films in their classes of civilization.

The questionnaire includes 25 items which are divided into 6 sections; each one is intended to elicit a specific set of information. The first section is concerned with students' motivation and attitudes towards the course of civilization. The second section targets their attitudes towards the current methods and materials used for teaching civilization. The third section is about students' learning preferences. The fourth section is about their familiarity with film outside the classroom and their exposition to films in the classroom. Section five focuses on students' interest in studying civilization through films. Finally, the last section asks respondents for open comments and suggestions.

The students filled in the questionnaire in scheduled civilization class time. Since eleven (11) students were absent, the questionnaire was distributed to sixty-eight (68) students. We explained the instructions to the students encouraging them to answer the questions honestly as part of a study and not as a test.

Students' questionnaires resulted mainly in numerical data in addition to qualitative data. Answers to close-ended items were subjected to statistical analysis; the percentages and frequencies of the answers were calculated and presented in tables and graphs. As for the open-ended type questions, they do not lend themselves to statistical analysis and provided more detailed information about students' attitudes and opinions. So they were subjected to qualitative analysis.

#### *3.3.2. Teachers' Interview*

Teachers' interview (see Appendix B) includes eighteen questions (18) focused on the teachers' experiences and thoughts about using films in the teaching and learning of civilization with the possibility for further explanations and precisions. They aim to get information about their current practices in teaching this subject and to know whether films are utilized in their classes of civilization. If so, how they use it and the effects it has on students' culture learning. The interview also aims to get the teachers' opinion about the pedagogical value of film as teaching material in cultural instruction.

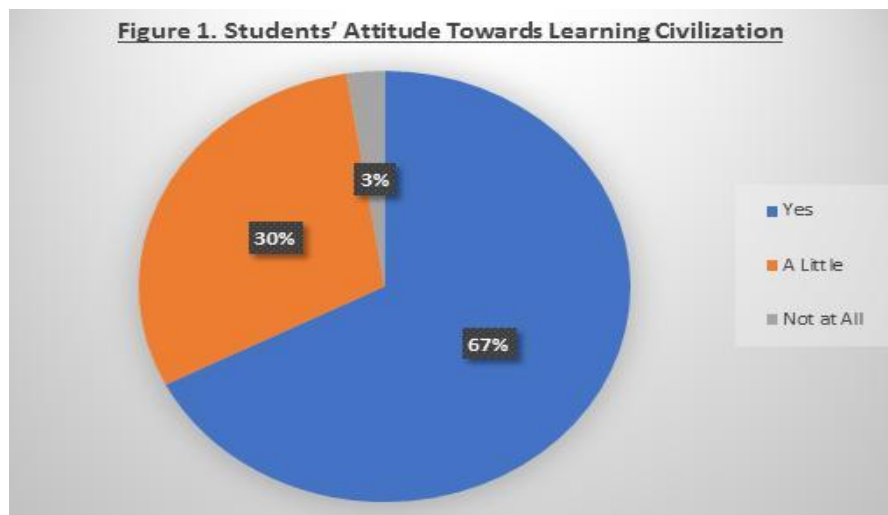
We conducted a face-to-face interview with the teachers. Only one teacher was on a medical leave, so he was interviewed by e-mail. The interviews were carried out in the head of

the department's office. We explained to the participants the purpose of the interview and asked permission to record it. Then, the interviews were transcribed and analysed using content analysis.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine students' and teachers' perception of integrating films in the course of civilization as a means to reinforce the course objectives in terms of culture learning and critical thinking. Students' questionnaire and teachers' interview were used to collect the needed data.

The first section of the questionnaire aims to check students' appreciation of the courses of American and British civilization. The data obtained from the respondents' answers reveals that an important number of students appreciate civilization courses. Students' interest in culture leaning suggests the need for research on how best to teach them culture. On the other hand, it is not wise to ignore those who did not show interest in studying civilization. In fact, 30% of the students seemed to be little enjoying these courses and 3% mentioned they do not enjoy them at all (Figure 1).



The interviewed teachers, on their part, acknowledged that many students have negative attitudes towards the study of civilization and find it boring because they consider it as the study of remote history (Question 6). The first teacher commented as follows: *“teaching civilization is not easy... We have first to motivate them... Many students come to the class of civilization with the idea that civilization is boring. So the teacher has to use materials in order to motivate them and to stimulate them”*.

The second teacher opined that only a *“minority of students... are interested”* in studying civilization and that *“unfortunately there are not enough teaching materials in our university which could be used to motivate them”*. Similarly, the third teacher noted that only a minority of the students he teaches are motivated to study civilization. The fourth teacher did not refer to students' motivation and said that he is satisfied with his method of teaching because *“students have a better assessment of the society in question”*.

The data obtained from the questionnaire (Question 1) shows that most students equated studying civilization with studying history (table 1).

**Table 1***Students' Opinion about the Reasons of Studying Civilization*

<b>Students' goal in studying civilization</b>	<b>Absolute Frequency</b>	<b>Relative Frequency</b>
Understand history, political and social institutions	61	90%
Understand culture and way of life	32	47-5%
Culture differences, cultural awareness	14	20%
Develop positive attitudes	12	17-5%
Develop critical thinking	32	47-5%
Language proficiency	14	20%
Other	7	10%

Additionally, the results displayed in table 2 reflect a strong focus on history in civilization courses.

**Table 2.***Students' Identification of the Cultural topics included in civilization courses*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Absolute Frequency</b>	<b>Relative Frequency</b>
History	68	100%
Political institutions	55	81%
Achievements	15	22 %
Beliefs	25	37 %
Educational system	05	7-5%
Economic system	17	25%
Customs, traditions	22	32-5%
Ethnicity, lifestyles	12	17-5%
Family	7	10%
Body language	None	0%
Media, science, technology	3	4-5%

The strong focus on the historical element in civilization courses is confirmed by the testimony of the teachers' interview; when asked what objectives they set themselves in the course of civilization, all of them emphasized the importance of the transmission of facts about the history of the target country, in addition to the enhancement of cultural understanding and critical thinking.

For the first teacher, the objectives of the course of civilization depend on students' academic level. The objectives for first year students are to give them information about the culture, history and geography of the United States and Britain: "*For 1st year students, the main objective is by the end of the year they grasp certain concepts related to the culture and civilization of the target countries: Britain and the US... to understand some facts about the geography of the two countries, the development of their history*".

At the second-year level, the objectives of the course include, in addition to the transmission of factual knowledge, the development of students' critical thinking through understanding the cause and effect relationships of historical events: *"the objectives are larger and broader than the first year. They should understand the circumstances in which some events happened. They should answer the questions like why and how such events happened that way. They should provide explanations about causes and effects of things"*.

Likewise, the second teacher mentioned the transmission of factual knowledge about Britain as the main objective of the course of British civilization she was teaching: *"we have to transmit to our students some information about British civilization and people in general"*.

Teachers' emphasis on the transmission of historical facts may partly explain the lack of motivation of learners. In addition to this, the teacher informants seem to introduce culture by themselves through the method of lecturing. It is clear that this method gives students minimum exposure to the target culture and civilization. Resultantly, students do not enjoy the real value of exploring and learning about another culture. This generates a loss of motivation and decreases interest and curiosity to learn about the foreign culture. In the answers given by the interviewees to question five, there was no mention of any supporting document (authentic or not authentic) to their lectures apart from the handouts. Only one teacher said he used educational videos to enhance some lectures. This fact was confirmed by the students' responses when asked in Question five to identify the methods and materials used by their teachers.

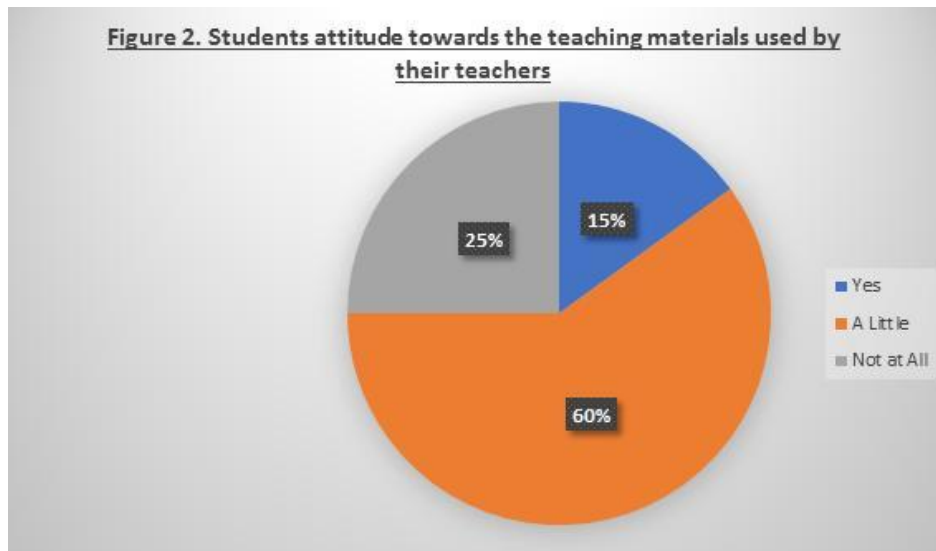
**Table 3**

*Students' Identification of the Teaching Materials used by their Teachers of Civilization*

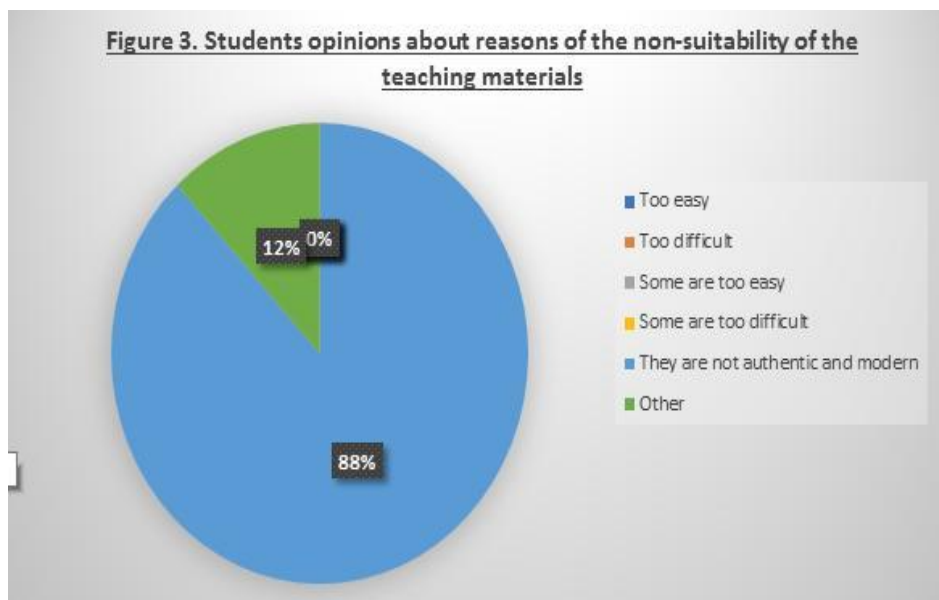
<b>Teaching material used by teachers of civilization</b>	<b>Absolute Frequency</b>	<b>Relative Frequency</b>
Textbooks/ books	05	7.5%
Handouts	68	100%
Chalk and blackboard	44	65%
Newspaper, magazines	None	00%
Literature	None	00%
Visual aids	19	28 %
Audio-visual material	17	25%
Other	04	06 %

One of the findings of the questionnaire is that the methods and the materials used by the teachers of civilization did not suit students' needs and interests: with the exception of 15% of the respondents who considered the teaching materials as efficient, the majority (60%) stated that they are "a little" effective, and the others (25%) mentioned "Not at all". This is illustrated in Figure 2.





For the reasons behind the non-suitability of the teaching materials, the majority of the informants (88%) pointed out that they are not authentic and modern as shown in Figure 3.



Students' negative attitudes towards the teaching materials used by their teachers indicate the need to introduce new materials that would motivate them and stimulate their curiosity to learn about the target culture. Film seems to be a suitable material to use because nowadays students belong to a generation of the image, and this material seems to provide for many of them more motivation than the blackboard chalk or the teachers' handouts or even the books of history and civilization. This is confirmed by the data obtained from the questionnaire.

The second section of the questionnaire targets students' learning preferences. As presented in table 4, students stated they learn cultural information from different sources mostly from the Internet (75%), film (72-5) and television (67- 5%) programs. Books and the classroom ranked fourth; they were ticked by 62% of the respondents.

**Table 4***Sources from which the Students Learn about Culture*

Options	Number	Percentage
Books	42	62 %
Newspapers	12	17-5
Radio	7	10%
Television	46	67-5
Film	49	72-5
Internet	51	75%
Classroom	42	62%

In addition to this, when the students were asked to indicate those teaching materials which arouse their interest to learn about culture, it was found that audio-visual materials like films are the most attractive to them (95%) and auditory materials like cassettes are the least attractive (3%). Visual material like pictures and printed sources like books and teachers handouts come in the middle with 35% and 17-5% respectively. The answers are illustrated in table 5.

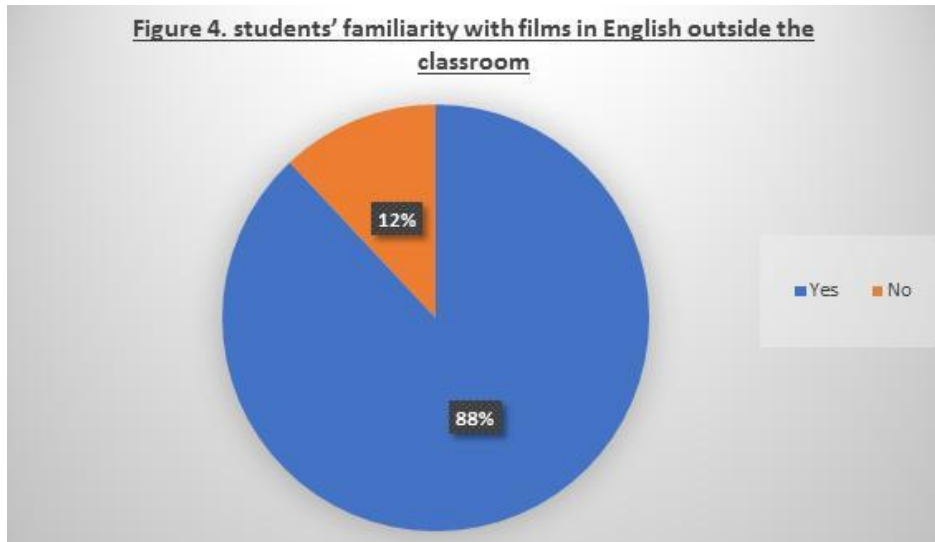
**Table 5***Students' Preference of Teaching/Learning Material*

Options	Student' number	Percentage
Visual material like pictures	23	35%
Auditory material like cassettes	2	3%
Audio-visual material like films.	64	95%
printed material like books, teachers' handouts	12	17-5%
Other	5	7-5%

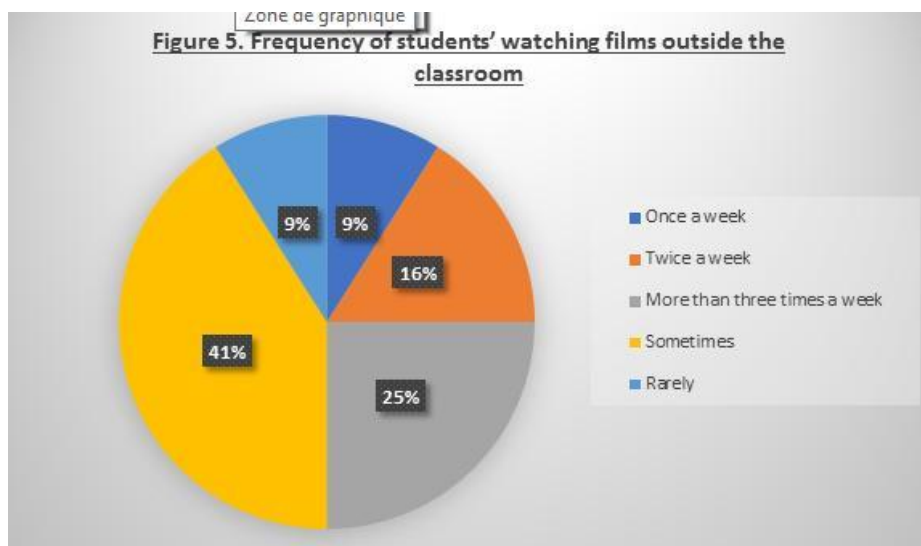
This result was consolidated by the data obtained from the teachers' interview. The first three teachers believe that film suits student's learning style, and it is a medium which motivates them. The following are quotes from the teachers:

- The first teacher: *"students enjoy learning with videos"*.
- The second teacher: *"generally students dislike reading but if you propose to use films they will be interested. I think films motivate the students to learn the language first, then about culture"*.
- The third teacher: *"when you ask students to do research they do not go to books but show Internet to see pictures and videos... When a student is asked to read Pride and Prejudice, he's not going to read Pride and prejudice but to watch the movie, this is good but they don't read"*.

The results of the questionnaire (figure 4) also show that the majority of students are familiar with the film medium: the majority of the participants (88%) mentioned they watched films outside classroom while only (12%) stated "No".



It can be seen from figure 5 that the frequency of students' watching films outside the classroom is as follows: 41% of the students watch films sometimes; 25% more than three times a week, 16% twice a week, 9% students once a week and 9% watch films in English rarely.



Besides, table 7 indicates that when the participants were asked what they learn from films, more than half of them considered that films help them to communicate fluently in English (72%); then, they expose them to traditions and way of life (47) and idiomatic expressions (45%). Exposition to history, political, social, and economic aspects of culture ranks last (27-5).

**Table 6***Students' Views on what they Learn from Films*

<b>Students' views on what they learn from films</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Idiomatic expressions	31	45-5%
How to communicate fluently in English	49	72%
Traditions and way of life	32	47%
History, political, social and economic aspects of culture	19	27-5%

Another key finding of the study is that all the informants (100%) were in favor of studying civilization with films (question 22). The approach of supplementing civilization courses with films was also greeted with considerable enthusiasm by the interviewed teachers; all of them, except one, think that films can enhance students' process of learning.

When asked about film's potential to enhance culture learning, the first teacher argued for the incorporation of films in the cultural studies syllabus: *"of course, I do like educational videos; films become a must and the panel of teachers have to select and agree on a list of movies and they should be used all along the year, they should be integrated in the syllabus. I think the teachers have to see objectives: why they use this movie and not another"*. He added that: *"teaching through videos is good, it is stimulating, motivating"*.

The second teacher answered: *"it's a great idea to teach with films... for example if I teach the plays of Shakespeare, it is really wonderful when you teach the book, the manuscript, and support students with adaptations"*. She further stated that *"to provide students with films you make them into direct contact with the culture; there is no intermediary, as if they lived in the period"*.

She also commented that using films in the class of civilization helps enhance cultural awareness and develop positive attitudes towards the target culture: *"yes, even though you can find that students do not accept some practices in the foreign culture but I think that the teacher should be adviser and sustain them and help them and explain to them that we are different, we have our culture, there are cultures that function differently, so we have to accept them"*. She carried on saying that *"here the film will make them discover, it shows students that there are other cultures and that they have to accept, the film has more advantage than disadvantages"*.

The third teacher believes that film can improve learners' understanding of the lectures. He said: *"yes, I completely agree with you, in addition to ideas you have a picture, for example if you use a movie about the Great Depression they will understand the hard times better"*.

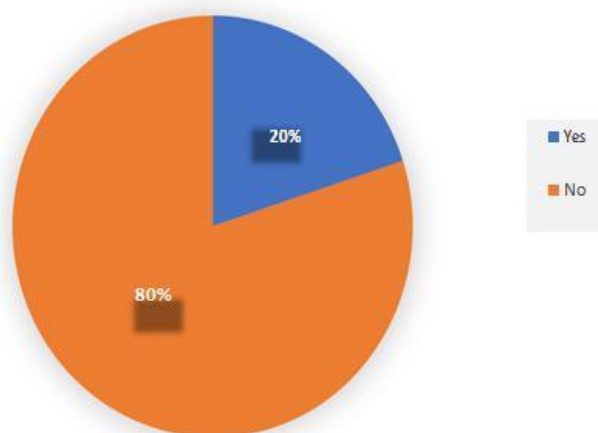
Only one teacher, the one with the longest experience, thinks that films cannot enhance culture learning and that only a lecture based on presentation and discussion can lead to culture understanding. This can be explained by the influence of predominant traditional teaching methods.

Despite the fact that the teachers consider film effective for teaching civilization, this material is almost absent in their courses (Question 7). Only one teacher used once the film *Elizabeth* with the objective of enhancing his students' motivation but not as a pedagogical tool to reach pedagogical objectives. He said: *"few years ago I brought a film of Elizabeth in the Tudor course"*. As far as the effect of films on the learners' understanding of the lectures and the enhancement of their culture learning, he asserted that he doesn't know: *"unfortunately, I didn't give them any material after to see whether the movie was very effective or had any*

*impact on their understanding, the one thing which is clear is that they enjoyed the movie; it was something which enriched the course of civilization”.*

This is confirmed by students’ answers to question 19; Figure 6 shows that the majority of them claimed they had no previous experience with film in the class of civilization.

**Figure 6. Students’ Exposure to Videos in the Classroom in the First and Second Years**



Only two students mentioned they watched a film in the second year without accompanying activities. We deduce from these findings a mismatch between students’ high interest in learning with audiovisuals and the traditional materials the teachers use in the classroom.

Likewise, the data obtained from the teacher’ interview shows that little use of audiovisuals particularly films exists in the department to assist students in culture learning. The two first teachers mentioned the lack of resources as the main obstacle to the use of films in the classroom. They referred notably to the lack of audio-visual materials and the insufficient number of media rooms for the overcrowded classrooms obliging them to work with hand-outs only. The second teacher commented as follows: *“Algerian universities suffer from the lack of means and materials. I would really prefer to use some sophisticated means like films, videos, but unfortunately I hadn’t this chance so I was obliged to rely on traditional material like hand-outs, my own material”.*

Additionally, the lack of knowledge of the methods of teaching culture and of using films in the classroom seem to be another major hindrance for the implementation of films in the Department. This lack of knowledge is due to the kind of training the teachers received in which the methodology of teaching civilization is absent. All the teachers stated that they received no formal training in teaching civilization or in the use of multimedia and audiovisuals as shown in the following quotations:

The first teacher: *“No specific training, but I try to look on Internet. I try to find some YouTube videos or daily motion videos on teaching. I think lot of things can be found on Internet about film studies, I think it is a module which should be enhanced at university especially in our specialty literature and civilization”.*

The second teacher: *“no training, only once in a private school about civic education... but it is not enough, I think teachers need training to make us more suitable for teaching and to make our courses more effective”.*

The third teacher: *“in this interview I’m speaking about my own experience. I followed no training”*.

When the students were asked to give the reasons why film is suitable for studying civilization (question 23), their answers revealed the results shown in table 7: For them the most important advantage of films in the classroom is that they help them remember (60%) and understand better their lectures (50%). A considerable number of them agreed that this medium enriches their knowledge (45-5%), creates motivation (30%) and generates a relaxed classroom atmosphere (22%). Yet, a lesser number of the participants mentioned that films can contribute to foster their mastery of English (17-5%) or develop their critical thinking (17-5%) and only a minority of them believes that films stimulate classroom participation and discussion (10%). These findings indicate that most students consider film as a means of entertainment and exposure to the target language and culture which can enhance their understanding and memorization of their lectures.

**Table 7**

*Reasons why the Students Think Films are Suitable for Studying Civilization*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
generate a relaxed classroom atmosphere	15	22%
create motivation	20	30%
foster mastery of English	12	17-5%
Encourage to discuss and participate in the classroom	7	10%
make remember better	41	60%
Enrich cultural knowledge	31	45-5%
facilitate understanding of civilization lectures	34	50%
Develop critical thinking	12	17-5%
All the above suggestions at the same time	19	27-5%
Other	5	7,5%

Students’ opinion is shared by the third and fourth teacher. To answer question (12) of whether the interpretative aspect of film can be used to enhance learners’ interpretative skills and critical thinking, the first teacher raised the question of film faithfulness; he argued that it is important to use films which are faithful to historical events. He said that *“films are works of fiction and are not generally faithful to the events of history...It depends on the directors, some of them try to be faithful to the events... the more faithful a film, is the better”*. He added that *“films would be of greatest interest if the information is true, because some directors use fancy and imagination, so they provide incorrect information which may be misleading for the students”*.

The second teacher emphasized the importance of the teacher’s guidance since films have a convincing impact on students. For example in *“Macbeth, the film adaptation make you afraid and even dislike women, film can influence negatively the students especially when the students are not mature enough, in general the culture portrayed in films can influence our culture and attract them, they will like to follow it and this may lead to assimilation or may be reject it completely, so the teacher should always guide the students”*.

Even though these teachers agreed that with a good selection and teachers’ guidance, films can help build learners’ interpretative skills, in their overall discussion of the role of film in civilization courses they focused on this medium’s potential to entertain and motivate students and to offer exposure to the target culture.

The second teacher commented that “*films are used for entertainment first*” and second to teach the language and give students exposure to the culture. “*I think that films motivate students to be curious to know how British people lived in a specific time. You entertain them and raise their motivation and curiosity especially when they watch in groups there is a kind of help if somebody does not understand. In addition to this you will incarnate this tradition of watching films*”.

Moreover, the main reason for which the third teacher did not introduce films in his class is his preference for working with printed sources and his idea that films are considered as only entertainment by the majority of students. Moreover, he expressed the view that introducing films in the class of civilization comes at the expense of developing students’ writing and analytical skills. He commented as follows: “*no, I advise students to do that at home so that they develop their imagination and provide interpretation, but in the classroom I prefer something written and discussed.... A film may help and it can change the way a book is interpreted, but still is not that*”.

## **5- Conclusion**

The findings of the study show that all the students and most teachers are in favour of introducing films as teaching materials in the course of civilization. They perceive that films can motivate students and enhance culture learning and understanding. Yet, there appears a mismatch between students’ high interest in learning with multimedia and the traditional materials the instructors use in the classroom. There seems also to be a gap between the teachers’ beliefs and the pedagogical implementation of these beliefs. The lack of adequate teaching material and resources is mentioned by the teachers as the major reason why they do not use films and other media in their classes of civilization. It is also clear from the teachers’ answers that the lack of training in the methodology of teaching civilization as well as the use of audiovisuals in the classroom is another factor which dissuades them from introducing film in the classroom. In addition to this, the use of film in cultural instruction is not a pedagogical approach supported by teachers who may consider this practice as simply providing entertainment to students.

These results highlight the need of reinforcing teachers’ training in the methods and techniques of teaching civilization. Besides, since many teachers do not possess the necessary skills to use multimedia technology effectively, it is equally important to provide them with adequate training in the use of multimedia materials. There is also an ardent need to provide the required technological equipment in Algerian universities and to equip language departments with audio-visual materials, media rooms and computer laboratories, libraries of videos including feature films to make them prepared for the implementation of new and effective methods of teaching and learning.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Students' questionnaire

Dear Students,

I'm undertaking a research in the use of films in the teaching of civilization. I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions. This is not a test, so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers and you don't have even to write your name on it. I'm interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers sincerely as this will be of a paramount importance for the fulfilment of my research. Thank you very much for your help. Please put a check mark (X) in the box that is relevant for the answer you select, or write in the space provided.

Age: ..... -Gender.....



**Section one: Student’s motivation and attitudes towards learning civilization**

1 -Why do you think you are learning civilization?

- a- To understand the history and the social and political institutions of British and American people
- b- To understand the culture and way of life of British and American people
- c- To be aware of the difference between your culture and the British and American cultures
- d- To develop tolerance and acceptance of differences between your culture and foreign cultures
- e- To develop your critical thinking about social, political and cultural issues which shape societies
- f- To improve your English proficiency

Other:

.....

2- Do you enjoy learning civilization?

- Yes                       a little                       not at all

3- If no, why?

- a- The content is difficult to understand
- b- The content is inadequate
- c- The teaching materials are not interesting
- d- The way of teaching is not interesting

Other:

.....

**Section 2: Students’ attitudes towards current methods and materials used for teaching civilization**

4- Which of the following cultural themes you are dealing with in the class of civilization?

- history
- political institutions
- achievements
- beliefs
- educational system
- economy
- family
- customs, traditions
- ethnicity, lifestyles
- body language
- media, science, technology

5- What is the material used by the civilization teacher in the classroom?

- a- books and textbooks
- b- handouts
- c- chalk and blackboard
- d- newspapers, magazines
- e- literature
- f- Visuals (maps, pictures)
- g- audio-visual material (videos, films,)

Others:

6- Do the material used by your civilization teacher good enough for studying civilization

- Yes  a little  not at all

7-If your answer is (no), is it because:

- a- They are all too easy
- b- They are all too difficult
- c- Some of them are too easy
- d- Some of them are too difficult
- e- They are not authentic and modern

Others:

8- Do the methods used by your civilization teacher satisfy your actual needs?

- a- Yes, thoroughly.
- b- Yes, partly.
- c- Not at all.

9- What role do you take in the civilization class?

- a- Active participant who discusses and expresses his opinion
- b- Passive participant who just receives knowledge

**Section 3: students' learning preferences:**

10-Apart from the lectures of British and American civilization at university, from where do you get information about these cultures?

- a- books
- b- newspapers
- c- radio
- d- television
- e- film
- f- internet
- g- classroom

Other:

11- What type of material is likely to arouse your eagerness to learn about British and American civilization?

- a- Visual material like pictures, maps
  - b- Auditory material like cassettes
  - c- Audio-visual material like films, documentaries.
  - d- Printed material like books, teachers' hand-outs
- Others:

.....

12- Do you prefer to study civilization?

- a. Individually
- b. In pair
- c. In group

#### Section 4: Students' experience with film

13- Do you watch films in English?

- a- Yes
- b- No

14- If your answer is (Yes), how often do you watch them?

- a- Once a week
- b- Twice a week
- c- More than three times a week
- d- Sometimes
- e- Rarely

15- How much do you manage to understand the language of English films?

- a- Thoroughly
- b- Partly
- c- Not at all

16- Do you read subtitles in captioned English films?

- a- Yes
- b- No

17- If your answer is (Yes), is it because:

- a- The language of the English films is difficult for you to understand
- b- Your attention is unconsciously directed to the subtitles
- c- Both suggestions at the same time

18 -What do you learn best from film?

- a- Idiomatic expressions
- b- How to communicate fluently in English
- c- Traditions and way of life
- d- History, political, social and economic aspects of culture

19- Did you watch videos (films, documentaries, cartoons) in your classes in the first and second year?

- a- Yes
- b- No

20- If yes, in which classes?

.....

21- Were these videos accompanied with activities?

- a- Yes
- b- No

**Section 5: students' interest in studying civilization with film**

22- Do you think that using films is a good way to study civilization and culture?

- a- Yes
- b- No

23-If your answer is (Yes), is it because

- a- They generate a relaxed classroom atmosphere
- b- They create motivation
- c- They foster your mastery of English
- d- They encourage you to discuss and participate in the classroom
- e- They make you remember better
- f- They enrich your cultural knowledge
- g- They facilitate your understanding of the lecture of civilization
- h- They develop your critical thinking
- i- All the above suggestions at the same time

Other:

.....

24-If your answer is (No), please specify why?

.....

**Section 6: further suggestions**

25- Do you have any further comment or suggestions to add about the use of film in the course of civilization?

.....

## **Appendix B : Teachers' Interview**

1. How long have you been teaching civilization?
2. What are the main objectives which you set for yourself in your course of civilization?
3. Do you emphasise on cultural aspects in teaching civilisation or do you only focus on historical facts or both? Why? Why Not?
4. What teaching methods or techniques do you use to attain your objectives in your class of civilization?
5. What are the materials/resources you usually use in your class?
6. Do you feel that your students enjoy learning civilization?
7. In many western universities, films are used in teaching culture and civilization. Have you ever opted for films to supplement your course of civilization?  
If yes, what effects did the use of film have on your student's motivation?
8. And what effect it had on their culture learning?
9. Do you think that films are suitable teaching materials for your students?
10. Do you think that films, as cultural products and audio-visual media, can enhance culture learning?
11. Knowing that films do not reflect real events but are only an interpretation of them, do you think that films suits civilization teaching?
12. Do you think that the interpretative aspect of film can be used to enhance students' interpretative skills and critical thinking ?
13. From our discussion on the advantages and challenges of using films, do you agree that films are cultural documents that are worth to be included in the civilization course syllabus?
14. Could you suggest a method for using films to supplement the course of civilization?
15. Did you follow any particular training to improve your teaching methods? If your answer is 'yes', would you please specify some improvements that you have achieved so far through this training?
16. What is the last film you have watched?
17. Any further comment?

Thank you!