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Investigating Libyan EFL University Teachers` Integration of Cultural Content in Reading Comprehension Teaching

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the integration of foreign culture in reading comprehension in Libyan universities EFL (English as a Foreign Language) curriculum. In addition, it aimed to investigate the challenges that EFL teachers face when incorporating cultural aspects in their teaching. To fulfil the purpose of the study, a questionnaire was distributed to 80 Libyan EFL university teachers who taught reading comprehension. To analyze the obtained data, SPSS 26 software was used. The findings revealed that EFL Libyan university teachers incorporate culture in their teaching of reading comprehension in the classroom by: using authentic reading materials, focusing on cultural vocabularies, encouraging students to discover the cultural aspects of the target language, using cross- cultural comparison, and encouraging students to practice extensive reading after class. The results also highlighted that EFL Libyan university teachers encounter challenges when incorporating culture in reading comprehension classes. The challenges included limited class time, the difficulty of adapting cultural materials to students` linguistic level, lack of cultural training for language teachers and the fact that language teachers not being sent abroad to experience the foreign culture of the target language. It is recommended for EFL Libyan university teachers to focus on cultural elements in reading comprehension classes and to encourage students to discover the target language` culture. Moreover, it`s recommended for language departments to include a cultural training course for students and to send language teachers abroad to experience real-life situations of the target language` culture.

Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis entitled:

Investigating Libyan University Teachers Integration of Culture in Reading Comprehension and

that no part has been plagiarized. I also declare that all the materials submitted in this work

which is not my own work have been identified with citation and referencing.

Signature…………………   Date…………………

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my deceased grandparents whose encouraging words lit my path.

To my family for showing unlimited love and support.

To my beloved husband, Tawfeeq, for his understanding and compassion.

And last, to all the curious people around the world who find comfort and happiness in posing

the right questions.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem and the aims of the study. It also presents the research questions and the significance of the study. The structure of the thesis is also presented.

1.1 Background of the study

In a globalized world, foreign language learning is necessary in order to be able to communicate with the "other" who is different from us. Starting from commerce to making new friendships, language works as a channel to link people from different cultures and backgrounds together. In addition to learning new vocabularies and grammatical structures, foreign language learning helps learners develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Therefore, it became sufficient to determine the extent to which Libyan university EFL teachers include foreign cultural awareness materials and activities when teaching reading comprehension in the classroom. The study also focused on various flaws and professional practices that need to be improved and proposed solutions (Kramsch, 2013).

Speakers of different cultural backgrounds bring their own values and social norms to the conversation. This, in return, makes language teaching /learning process more challenging as the focus of language teaching and learning is not only on linguistic structures but on metalinguistic structures as well. EFL teachers ` responsibility is noble as they have the opportunity to minimize intolerance and prejudice by teaching students about socio-cultural varieties in the world. Learning about the "other's" culture and perception, helps paving the way for a more understanding and accepting of the world.

Cultural elements in language teaching /learning provide a rich learning source for students. These elements provide foreign language learners with a sufficient background of the culturally appropriate behaviors when addressing people. Foreign language learners need to know that appropriate intonation and expressions in their native language could be inappropriate for other language speakers. This knowledge is built gradually through helping learners` language develop skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Reading comprehension is an important skill in foreign language teaching as it exposes foreign language learners to new vocabularies and different grammatical structures more than any other language skill. Reading exposes foreign language learners to different topics that broaden students` horizon. Thus, using reading materials in EFL classroom would provide EFL university students with a wide range of subjects that reflect the target language community`s culture (Lu, 2018). Moreover, native speakers who bring their own communities' norms, values, and life experiences to the text write the reading materials (Mohammed, 2014). Those reading materials do not only serve as teaching various linguistic structures; however, they also work as a bridge between cultures. Therefore, raising students` cultural awareness is vital in understanding the implied meanings of texts and text interpretation in general. This would in return assist EFL university students build cultural awareness/background and improve their socio-linguistic competence.

In Libya, English is taught as a foreign language as a specialization in higher education institutions. EFL students learn various basic courses in the first two years such as grammar, writing and reading comprehension. In reading comprehension course, teachers attempt to incorporate cultural awareness content when teaching reading comprehension. However, many obstacles hinder their incorporation of cultural content when teaching reading comprehension

course. According to (Belaid, 2018; Elarbash, 2019), only few studies investigated such an area in the field of TEFL in Libyan universities. Thus, this study was designed to investigate Libyan university teacher's incorporation of the target language culture inside reading comprehension classes. In addition, the purpose of this study is to find out to what extent they integrate the foreign culture in reading comprehension classes. It also aimed to investigate the obstacles faced by the respondents when doing so.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Students who learnt English as a foreign language in non-English speaking countries, such as Libya, rarely find chances to communicate with native speakers orally and identify their cultural norms. Those students would not find opportunities to build their cultural awareness of the foreign language by direct contact with the foreign language culture. Therefore, foreign language classes of reading comprehension could be the idealist place to build a cultural awareness of the target foreign language. The students can read various texts to learn about native speakers` norms, values and customs as well as understanding the cultural differences between nations. Thus, it is significant to explore whether such classes are utilized by teachers to enhance their students' foreign culture awareness. Additionally, it is essential to identify the obstacles that would hinder foreign culture teaching in classroom. Consequently, the research was designed to explore what extent Libyan university EFL teachers incorporate the target culture in their teaching of reading comprehension to raise students `background knowledge. Moreover, it aimed to find out the challenges they face which stop them from incorporating the target culture content.

1.2 Aims of the Study

1. This study aims to investigating Libyan EFL university teachers` integration of the target language` culture inside reading comprehension classes.

2. The study also aims to identifying the obstacles faced by Libyan university EFL teachers when integrating foreign culture awareness content.

1.3 Importance of the Study

This study highlighted to what extent Libyan university EFL teachers integrate foreign cultural awareness materials and activities when teaching reading comprehension in classroom. The study also shed light on some issues and professional practices that require improvement and put forward proposals for enhancing them. The study raised the awareness of the importance of cultural integration in EFL reading comprehension classes as raising students cultural background plays a positive role in comprehending the target language texts and helps them identify cross-cultural differences. In addition, the study provided suggestions for English language departments to include cultural courses for the students and the teachers.

1.4 Research Questions

Q1. To what extent do Libyan EFL university teachers incorporate foreign culture in reading comprehension classes?

Q2. What are the obstacles faced by Libyan EFL university teachers when incorporating the target language`s culture in reading comprehension classes?

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This study is organized into five chapters as follows:

Chapter One highlights the aims and rationale of the study. It also outlines the importance and the research questions of the study. The statement of the problem and a theoretical background of the study are also provided in this chapter.

Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature and provides the key concepts of the topic. It also identifies the gap within the literature review.

Chapter Three provides a description of the method used in the data collection. It also provides a brief justification of why the method was selected to collect the data needed for the study.

Chapter Four presents the quantitative analysis of the collected data. It also highlights the key findings of the result obtained from the analysis.

Chapter Five discusses the key findings of the data obtained and links the findings with the literature reviewed. In addition, it presents the researchers' recommendations that would be considered by teachers or education institutions for further research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on different definitions of culture. The relation between language and culture is also included in this chapter. It also reviews the teaching of the target culture in Libyan EFL context as well as the challenges faced by Libyan EFL teachers. Previous studies regarding the core point of the research are highlighted in this chapter.

2.1 The Concept of Human Culture

The term culture was first introduced by the English Anthropologist Edward Tylor in his book, Primitive Culture, in 1871. Tylor said that culture refers to a set of ideas, language, traditions, customs, norms, values, and social behavior practiced and acquired by a group of people (Li and Karakowsky, 2001).   The word "culture" is derived from the Latin "colere" which means "cultivate" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 3). The term "human culture" encompasses a wild range of meanings from beliefs and habits to history and customs. Culture is a unique social framework that characterizes one group from another. In addition, culture is not genetically inherited; it is learned through one's life in a social environment (Spencer-Oatey, 2012).

Cultures are dynamic and constantly evolve as a result of the social and political transformations in the society. In other words, culture does not exist in vacuum; however, it is an integral part of a society's social structure which is influenced by social, political, historical, and economic conditions and patterns (Nieto 2010). Culture as a civilization is divided into two categories: *Big C Culture* and *Small C Culture*. The former refers to music, art, literature, historical events, and institutions of society.

It also refers to people groups as nations and distinguishes them from one another. Conversely, the latter embraces traditions and lifestyles of large groups of people as well as subgroups (Lafayette, 1975; Robinson, 1998).

The term culture was interpreted and defined by many sociologists, anthropologists, and linguists. For instance, Adaskou et al. (1990) defined culture by outlining four meanings of culture; *(a)* aesthetic meaning includes music, media, literature, and cinema; *(b)* sociological meaning refers to the organization of family, interpersonal relations, customs and material conditions; *(c)* semantic sense encompasses the whole conceptualization system such as perceptions and thought processes; *(d)* pragmatic or sociolinguistic sense refers to the background knowledge, social and paralinguistic skills, and language code which are necessary for successful communication.

Likewise, Eagleton (2000) explained that culture can be defined as "(1) the body of artistic and intellectual work, (2) a process of spiritual and intellectual development, (3) the values, customs, beliefs and symbolic practices by which men and women live or (4) a whole way of life" (p,1). That is, culture is a set of values, beliefs, customs, thoughts, social behaviors, and symbolic practices that people act in a social environment. Culture reflects groups' unique social identity that distinguishes them from others.

According to Said (1993), culture serves as a source of identity and includes creating opposites and "the Other," whose existence is constantly vulnerable to interpretation and reinterpretation in light of the distinctions between "us" and "other." Said considers cultures as highly diversified, hybrid and heterogonous. His idea of culture is therefore dynamic and in change.

Through the interaction of ideologies and current daily necessities, culture is constantly being rebuilt. Moreover, it involves appropriations, shared experiences, and delicate interdependencies of all types among many civilizations.

Some studies stress the element of behavior when referring to the term "culture". (Larson and Smalley, 1972; Thomson, 1990; and Peck, 1998) all suggest that culture and behavior are connected in that understanding of culture affect how people behave within a society. Moreover, People's perceptions of the world around them might be unexpectedly influenced by the cultural setting in which they are raised. Language learning, as a result, is learning the behavior of a given society and its cultural norms.

It can be concluded that the previous definitions of culture are similar with only minor differences, despite the fact that there might not a single agreed definition. However, the key concepts can be obtained by combining these definitions. The first definition of culture is the framework in which a member of a society exists, acts, thinks, feels, and interacts with others. It is the set of values that all members of a society hold in common. Second, culture is a system with patterns that are recognizable to others. Third, culture is communicated through language because it is built on symbols that take the form of abstract terms for referring to and comprehending concepts. Finally, people who live in the same society share a common culture.

2.2 Culture and Language

Language is a tool for disseminating cultural elements such as customs, values, and art. It transmits the culture of societies and reflects the sociocultural identity of its speakers. Undoubtedly, language is the society heritage that is being passed from one generation to another "through signs such as words, gestures and pictures" (Mohamed, 2014, p. 30).

The interaction between people and groups in our daily lives serves as a good example of the relationship between communication and culture. "The language we use must have been influenced by where we live, as well as the ethnic neighborhoods around us" (Rabiah, 2018, p. 7). In other words, Language is culturally embedded, and it is impossible to understand it outside

of the context of the society in which it is used. Moreover, people live in the same community, according to, Alfab et al., (2022) share cultural values that affects the way they perceive the world. Furthermore, language and culture have a long history of coexisting, and they influence what it means to be human.

Culture is considered a fundamental component of language. According to Kramsch (2013), culture is the fifth skill of language, in addition to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The pedagogical separation of language from culture would prevent learners from using language properly in different contexts (Seelye, 1976; Emmitt et al., 1997; Myron and Koester, 2010; Sheeraz et al, 2015). Brown (1994) emphasized this view by stating that language and culture "are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the importance of either language or culture" (p. 165). In the same vein, Samovar, Porter, and Jain (1981) emphasize:

> Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted (p. 24).

Certain languages are historically linked to specific cultures; these languages serve as the key to these cultures, particularly with regard to their literature; the languages themselves can only be fully understood in the context of the cultures in which they are inseparably linked; as a result, language and culture are studied together.

The phrase "langua-culture," which denotes a natural connection between the two, was used by Agar (1994) to stress this tight relationship. Harumi (2002), who argue that it is unwise to separate a language's grammatical aspects from its culture, advocate the inter-influence of both culture and language on one another as well.

Teaching foreign culture, therefore, should be a crucial part of teaching English as a foreign language in the classroom because teaching a foreign language requires the development of learners' intercultural communicative competence (Curtain, 2016). In addition, teaching culture requires EFL teachers to teach language and its underlying values, attitudes, and customs. Thus, EFL teachers should not neglect foreign cultural knowledge when teaching a foreign language as this would lead to issues related to learners' intercultural communicative competence as well as their linguistic background knowledge (Purba, 2011).

It is concluded that the relationship between language and culture is vital for language education. Foreign language teachers and learners should learn and understand the target language culture as this, in return, leads them to figure out the differences in opinion and the diversity of interpretations held toward the use of language.

2.3 Integrating Foreign Culture in Language Teaching

The incorporation of culture into language learning is now so widespread that it is required in textbooks and lectures, not only as a supplement but additionally to enhance the language component. Cultural elements are frequently used to introduce new vocabulary and grammar to explain specific language formations, or the subject of reading passages about

cultural norms in the target language that may be sufficiently different from or completely new to those the language student is familiar with (Rodriguez and Fernando, 2015).

Foreign language teaching unquestionably embraces foreign culture teaching; thus, foreign language teachers are considered foreign culture teachers (Wang, 2008). That is, teaching cultural aspects should be essentially integrated in foreign language teaching as language and culture are inseparable. According to Brown (2001), language learners can more effectively engage themselves in the authentic and functional use of the language when they are exposed to the culture of the foreign language. Moreover, if culture is incorporated with the study of language, students will derive lasting benefits from their language course. In other words, learners who gain certain cultural knowledge can also develop more positive attitudes and become more tolerant with other cultures. As a result, culture needs to be incorporated into the teaching of language knowledge and skills so that students can learn to respect and understand other cultures.

Some language education researchers have stated some categories of which culture can be presented in language classroom. For Cortazzi and Jin (1999), the target culture, the source culture, and the international culture are three categories of cultural knowledge that can be presented in language instruction.

The target culture introduces students to the way of life in nations where the language they are studying is used as a first language. Learning about the target culture may increase a learner's interest in the language or help them form favorable opinions of the nations and people who speak that language. The source culture draws on the cultures of the learners. In addition, the international culture covers a variety of cultures from around the world or cultural subjects that are important to the global community.

Pitkowska (2015), on the other hand, differentiates three key methods for incorporating culture into language teaching: the knowledge-based approach, the contrastive approach, and the intercultural communicative competence approach. Knowledge-based approach attempts to give students knowledge of facts and information about the culture of the target language, including customs, habits, everyday folklore, literature, or the arts. The contrastive technique encourages students to consider the parallels and differences between their own culture and the culture of the target language and to search for a link between the two (Nguyen 2017).

In the same vein, Larzén (2005) suggests three goals for teaching culture, including knowledge of various cultures, skills for intercultural communication, and tolerance and empathy. In order to achieve the first goal of providing cultural background information, learners are required to acquire some knowledge of factual information, information about cultural items, or information about ways of living and thinking relevant to the target language culture.

Kramsch (1993) asserts that the purpose of foreign languge learning is to cultivate mutual understanding and effective participation in a globalized world . In addition, EFL learners should learn cross-cultural communication knowledge and skills when learning a foreign language as this helps them understand the links between language and culture as well as cultural differences (Liton & Madanat, 2013).

As Gao (2006) and Tran (2021) stated, foreign language teachers should be aware of the cultural content of a foreign language, and they should impart it to language learning classroom so as to raise their cultural awareness. Seeley (1997) also affirms that "learning a language in isolation of its cultural roots prevents one from becoming socialized into its contextual use" (p.10). Hence, Cultural contents are implied in language, and it is inherently taught for ensuring effective communication between interlocutors.

On the other hand, there are also opinions against incorporating culture into language instruction and emphasizing local cultures in EFL instruction. Many linguists and scholars have discussed the importance of a local culture over the target language culture in language education. For instance, Wei (2005) asserts that although the British and American cultures are regarded as the cultures of English language learning, language learners should be familiar with their own cultures as well. Moreover, according to Lev Vigotsky's social development theory, local culture plays a role in the acquisition of a target language as people express their needs through objects from their culture. Vigotsky argues that the incorporation of these cultural tools produced higher levels of cognitive abilities. (Dricsoll, et al., 2005). In addition, English has been going through what is called "nativization" in some countries such as Pakistan. A study by Mahboob (2009) analyzed English textbooks used in Pakistani secondary schools, claimed that it is not just English used in those textbooks, however, a variety of Pakistani English is used to deliver Pakistani cultural norms and ideologies to students.

The integration of cultural content into foreign language teaching makes EFL learners familiar with other cultures and enables them to understand foreign cultural perspectives and experiences and identify the gap between cultures (Peterson and Coltrane, 2003; Liton and Madanat, 2013).

2.3.1 Intercultural Communicative Competence

Hymes (1972) coined the phrase "communicative competence" in 1966, and since then it has gained popularity among researchers and teachers. He coined the term in response to Naom Chomesky`s distinction between competence and performance. Hymes (1972) added the sociolinguistic viewpoint to Chomsky's linguistic view of competence by defining

communicative competence as both an inherent grammatical competence as well as the capacity to apply grammatical skill in a range of communicative circumstances.

Communicative competence, thus, is defined as the ability to communicate effectively and properly with people of other languages and cultural backgrounds (Sun, 2014). Intercultural communicative competence takes into account language teaching and focuses on the ability to communicate with individuals from another country and culture in a foreign language (Byram, 1997).

Intercultural communication (or communicative competence) is defined similarly by Chen and Starosta (1999) as "the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviors that negotiate each other's cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment" (p. 28). They claimed that intercultural competence is made up of three essential elements of intercultural communication competence: intercultural sensitivity (affective process), intercultural awareness (cognitive process), and intercultural adroitness (behavioral process). These three elements are all referred to as verbal and nonverbal skills required to act effectively and appropriately in intercultural interactions.

The Communicative language Teaching approach in 1980s started to focus on culture after neglecting it in the beginning of 1970s in teaching methods such as Silent Way, Direct Method, Total Physical Response and the Natural Approach.

The role of culture in ESl curriculum developed as it is found in works of Rivers's (1981) and Hammerly's (1982). Other significant studies on culture learning were those of Robinson's (1988) and Valdes' (1986). The cultural syllabus was backed by studies in the 1990s, and Stern's (1992) underlined its significance. Recent research and publications by authors like Byram (1994; 1997a; 1997b) and Kramsch (1993; 2001) have solidified the symbiotic relationship

between teaching ESL/EFL and target culture. Additionally, the expansion of English as a global language makes it impossible to avoid including cultural content in EFL curricula.

One of the ultimate goals in the field of English language education in the current context of globalization has been identified as providing ICC to ESL/EFL learners (e.g., Byram, 1997; Deardoff, 2006; Fantini, 2000; Lázár et al., 2007) in an effort to expose students to cultural differences that will help students become interculturally aware of their own culture and the presence of otherness as well as to appreciate and respect them. In addition, English language instruction should give students the information and skills necessary for effective intercultural communication in order to overcome cultural barriers and foster more peaceful, fruitful relationships (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2012).

A study was conducted by Salem (2013) on the intercultural competence of university students in Lebanon revealed that the majority of students who took the intercultural course claimed that they improved their capacity for self-reflection and their readiness to be more adaptable, tolerant, and open to others.

They also asserted that by applying their cultural understanding in everyday life, they were able to develop bonds with people from other backgrounds and create mutual respect.

In order to assist FL learners to become more competent in terms of culture knowledge and interactions, it is necessary to use teaching materials and employ competent teachers that support the development of learners' intercultural communicative competence in classroom. The use of authentic materials at the intercultural level should not be limited to texts produced by native speakers; however, it ought to include materials produced by non-native speaking teachers and experts (Feng & Byram, 2002). In addition, foreign language teachers are essential for

promoting curiosity and independent exploration in order for foreign language learners to be active participants while developing intercultural communicative competence (Lopez-Rocha 2016).

In conclusion, if the primary objective of communicative language instruction is to give students meaningful interactions in natural settings with native or near-native speakers of the target language, it is essential to teach about the culture so that students may understand how to achieve their communicative goals.

2.3.2 Teaching Surface and Deep Culture

The idea of several degrees of culture is represented by the image of an iceberg. The portion of the iceberg that can be seen clearly above the water or the top symbolizes surface culture. Surface culture, often known as culture (with a capital "C"), is easily observable and includes fine arts, literature, theatre, classical music, popular music, and other visible indicators like popular games, cuisine, or attire.

Even though they do not entirely characterize a culture, these traits are nevertheless readily apparent and comprehended, and textbooks frequently utilize them to illustrate other cultures. In other words, the cultural iceberg metaphor distinguishes between surface culture and deep culture (Rodriguez and Fernando, 2015).

Deep culture is often unnoticed and consists of the facets of identity that have the greatest impact on how we view ourselves, perceive the world, and connect with others. In other words, most of the culture is hidden beneath the surface, and the deeper features of culture serve as a foundation for the more visible features.

According to Schein (2010) the three levels of culture, are Artifacts, Espoused Beliefs and Values, and Basic Underlying Assumptions. He mentions the Mayan and Egyptian pyramids as

illustrations of how artifacts of culture and deeper meaning may be distinguished from one another. Both types of pyramids are extremely obvious cultural artifacts, yet they serve quite distinct underlying cultural purposes—the former being tombs and the latter being temples. Espoused Beliefs and Values are the following level, in Schein's estimation. According to Schein, Espoused beliefs and values frequently leave significant portions of behavior unexplained, giving us the impression that we comprehend a portion of the culture but still do not have the culture in hand. The third level is Basic Underlying Assumptions. He claims that these assumptions have been taken for granted to the point where there is little diversity within a social unit as these assumptions frequently lack confrontation and debate, making them very challenging to alter (Schein, 2010).

Culture at the surface level is simple to teach; national attire, festivals, dishes, and other topics can be demonstrated with physical objects or pictures. Moreover, literature can be read aloud or presented to a class.

However, deeper cultural concepts typically need to be taught or personally experienced. English language learners studying in the US, the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, or Canada will pick up cultural cues that will help them understand English not just in the classroom but also when they go outside, shop, or attend social events.

The culture of the nation they reside in will also be assimilated, much like the language they are acquiring. However, EFL students who study English in their home countries will not learn much about the deep culture. As a result, the integration of deep and surface culture should be enhanced by language teachers occasionally in order to help learners avoid generalizations and stereotyping, and moreover enables them to build a proper perception of other cultures (Rodriguez and Fernando, 2015).

2.4 Teaching Target Culture in Libyan EFL Context

English is one of the main courses in the Libyan national curriculum and it is a compulsory subject for all stages. However, this was not the case during the last century. English language instruction started at first during the British Administration and continued to be taught as a main course in elementary stages till 1973 when it was restricted to only preparatory stages. The method which was used to teach English at the time was the Grammar Translation Method in which the first language was used and the focus was on grammar only neglecting the communicative and cultural aspects of the language. (Mohammed, 2014).

Teaching of English in Libya was banned between 1986 and 1993 due to the political tension between the government of Libya back then and the governments of England and the US (Orafi & Borg 2009). This restriction had a lasting effect on Libyan students, particularly if they went on to work in professions that required them to speak English in order to interact with international workers. Apart from the returning English teachers who returned to teach English in schools, there were not enough English teachers when English language instruction restarted in 1993 (Orafi et el., 2022).

The revised edition of "English for Libya" was introduced in 2000, encompassing units dedicated to reading, vocabulary, grammar, functional use of language, listening, speaking and writing. This curriculum included exercises that are based on communicative norms and that promoted both productive and receptive language use. In 2018, the Libyan government has introduced "21st Century English for Libya" to enhance English language learning. English started to be taught at primary stages again. The new curriculum integrates a general English

syllabus with skills such as study skills, teamwork, critical thinking and problem-solving. Activities such as pre-writing, initial letter and sound recognition, blending letters together, whole word recognition, games, songs and stories are taught. After Libya was allowed back into the international community in 2013, English language textbooks in the country were changed to better serve students' needs and enhance the effectiveness of learning (Mohammed 2014).

It can be concluded from the brief presentation of ELT history in Libya that there was no opportunity to focus on culture in language classrooms. One of the reasons is that the restriction of teaching English in Libyan schools came with a negative attitude towards everything that concerns the Western culture. It is obvious that the cultural norms of the "Other" back then was demonized which was inappropriate for teachers to focus on explicitly or even inexplicitly.

However, because of the new textbooks that contain explicit and implicit cultural and linguistic messages, current position of English in Libya as it is compulsory to be taught in all stages, and the increasing tide of globalization which made the world one village, the attitudes towards cultural teaching are changing.

Generally, Libyan EFL teachers are aware of the significance of the use of target language culture in their professional practice in classroom. The majority of the teachers hold a positive attitude towards the integration of EFL culture in their teaching (Elarbash, 2019; Ahmed, 2015). For example, Ahmed (2015) investigated the perceptions of 20 Libyan teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) at Sebha University towards teaching EFL culture inside Libyan EFL classrooms . The study found that most of the participants had positive

attitudes towards teaching EFL culture in EFL classroom. Similarly, Khalifat and Reddy (2022) investigated Libyan teachers` and students` perception of the teaching of culture. They concluded that both EFL teachers and students share a positive opinion about the teaching of the target` culture.

However, due to Libya being a religiously conservative country, some EFL cultural topics may not be culturally appropriate or/and acceptable inside the education institutions. Belaid (2018) examined Libyan EFL teachers and students' attitudes towards the use of culturally sensitive materials in language classrooms and he found that teachers were most disinclined to use such materials in their classes. The students were also reluctant to use the culturally sensitive materials. In addition, Law 501 of regulating education service delivery at Libyan educational institutions put some restrictions on teaching culturally sensitive materials to students, especially the materials related to foreign cultures. The law states that any materials inconsistent with Islamic religion and Arabic culture have to be excluded.

2.4.1. Challenges Faced by Libyan EFL Teachers

Libyan EFL teachers encounter challenges in regard to integrating foreign culture when teaching English as a foreign language in classrooms.

Textbooks and handouts, in Libyan education institutions, usually include materials which are not consistent with both teachers and students' culture. This makes "learners become de-motivated and passive students" (Altaeb, 2021, p 52) and, thereby, they do not interact actively and/or effectively with the EFL cultural content in textbooks or handouts.

Moreover, there is a misrepresentation of the Orient and its culture as well as the stereotypical images of oriental culture in EFL textbooks in Libya (Mohammed, 2014). Another challenge, according to Ramadan et.,al (2019), is that the EFL textbooks taught and used in

Libyan education institutions were not prepared and designed by Libyan pedagogical experts or teachers; these materials were rather developed and/or written by British and American firms. "English language textbooks made for export are produced in English-speaking countries (the Inner Circle) by well-known publishers such as Longman, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press" (Mohammed ,2014, p 35). According to several scholars, the usage of these textbooks poses an ideological and cultural threat to students, teachers, and society at large. Belaid (2018, p 211) argues that "a little or no attention is paid to what is acceptable and permissible in such societies when writing EL books for Arab EFL learners. Such behaviors may develop a kind of identity loss among language learners." This led to many problems that partially hindered the integration of EFL cultural content because the designed teaching and learning materials are not in line with the socio-cultural needs, attitudes, and perceptions of both Libyan EFL teachers and learners.

Teachers themselves, in various parts of the world not only Libya, still ignore the crucial role of introducing culture as a component of language. They aim to develop simply their students' linguistic skills rather of giving them the cultural competence they need to act appropriately and effectively in intercultural settings.

Due to the demanding curriculum, teachers believe they do not have enough time to discuss cultural elements in their teaching practices (Gonen & Saglam, 2012; Hong, 2008), and they lack the necessary training to know how to incorporate culture and intercultural communication in the language classroom as well as how to measure students' IC and changes in their attitudes as a result of culture. Therefore, Libyan EFL teachers should receive assistance in gradually realizing the value of incorporating intercultural material into traditional English

language classes and in comprehending the underlying motivations for switching their current teaching style to an intercultural language approach.

Another challenge that faces EFL teachers is that not all the students agree with the benefits of including intercultural material in English language education. They do not believe that learning about many cultures while learning the English language would increase their intercultural knowledge, intercultural attitudes, intercultural awareness, and intercultural abilities. Tran (2016) justifies this by stating that EFL students only want to concentrate on learning English, not its culture. This could be attributed to their inadequate English language skills.

One of the biggest challenges that EFL teachers face is assessing the level of cultural competence that students have attained because each student start the language learning process with different perceptions. Moreover, the level of motivation students have in learning foreign language culture and the types of activities to use to promote cultural awareness are considered a great challenge as well (Lopez- Rocha, 2016).

Liu (2014) carried out a study to determine the challenges that Chinese teachers faced in intercultural language teaching. They found that the Chinese government attitudes towards the foreign culture prevented students from experiencing foreign culture, which is similar to the Libyan case in the previous century. Another study conducted by Rahal (2017) listed five challenges that EFL teachers encountered in Tunisia. The five challenges are: lack of authentic materials, lack of the cultural knowledge of the target language, poor textbooks, limited exposure to authentic culture environment, and native culture interference. Moreover, although using authentic materials is crucial in teaching culture for English learners in Libya, they are difficult

to adapt to students` level of language. Furthermore, adapting and finding authentic materials is time-consuming for the teachers (Benavent 2011).

2.5. The Role of Culture in Reading Comprehension

Reading skill has a well-established role for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, and it has become more important with the spread of information technology, which necessitates improved reading abilities not only to meet academic requirements but also to stay current with the vast knowledge surrounding them (Al Asmari, 2018). Reading as a reciprocal activity involves different mental activities to be performed concurrently. As students read, they are generally going forward from analyzing the text in smaller vocabulary units to larger conceptual units (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Each reader has a different understanding of a text because each person has a different background knowledge. In other words, the comprehension of a text does not rely only on linguistic skills but also on the prior knowledge the reader has (Carell,1983). Schema theory has addressed the role of prior knowledge in the reading process.

Schema theory deals with previous knowledge structures stored in the mind and how readers combine their previous knowledge with the material at hand (Ketchum 2006). According to Widdowson, (1983 p, 34) schema is "the cognitive constructs which allow for the organization of information in long-term memory".

The notion of schema theory holds that no text, whether spoken or written, carries meaning on its own; rather, it just gives instructions to listeners or readers on how to extrapolate meaning from their own prior knowledge. According to Gagne (1985), a reader's familiarity with a topic encourages elaborative processing of concepts, which is beneficial when reconstruction is needed during recall or retrieval. In light of the Johnson`s (1982)

experiment, this viewpoint is strengthened. She asked the children to read a paragraph on Halloween that contained both known and unknown facts. The first half of the piece is about experiences they had two weeks prior, and the second half is about obscure Halloween facts, even to native speakers. Results showed that texts with familiar themes were significantly more quickly remembered and understood by learners than texts with new themes. Readers typically are unable to understand texts when the writer's and readers' cultural schemas are different.

In general, there are three main categories of schemata: formal schemata, content schemata, and cultural schemata (Gilakjani, 2011). These three categories are closely linked with reading comprehension. Content schema, according to Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), refers to the readers' familiarity with the subject matter of the text. The idea that a reader's comprehension of a text depends on how much pertinent previous knowledge they have about the subject matter of that particular text is supported by a study done by Koh (1986) to demonstrate the effects of familiar context on students' reading comprehension.

Formal schema, on the other hand, is defined as knowledge of language and linguistic conventions, including knowledge of how texts are ordered and what the primary characteristics of a specific writing genre are (Alderson, 2000).

The terms "cultural models" and "cultural schemas" are interchangeable, because they both refer to schematic representations of common concepts.

According to anthropologist Palmer (1996), cultural schemata include rituals related to weddings, funerals, holidays, and a variety of other cultural occurrences. Through this method, learners from various cultural backgrounds may understand the same text in various ways.

Although the readers' linguistic element is crucial for reading comprehension, there are instances when we are unable to read between the lines without the aid of cultural background

knowledge since the meanings of words are acquired in certain cultural contexts. According to Lin (2004), some barriers hinder readers from comprehending the message of a text even though he/she has the linguistic ability. In other words, some vocabulary, for instance, can have an equivalent in learner's first language. Moreover, different cultures' interpretations of a word's full meaning and its cultural connotations differ from one another. Another barrier is proverbs and slang as cross-cultural barriers which not only exist in the abundant vocabulary, but also exist in the aspect of sentences. Second language learners encounter difficulties while reading English proverbs because the proverbs contain abundant connotations of culture.

EFL cultural awareness can play a key role in developing and understanding the target language whether it is spoken, written, or read. According to Benrabha (2015), Libyan EFL students who lack cultural background knowledge are not able to understand writers` attitudes, conclusions, and implied meaning within reading texts.

Cultural background knowledge can be enhanced by exposing learners to different texts in reading comprehension classes as this exposure helps learners to acquire cultural schemata and develop their linguistic skills (Altarriba and Forsythe, 1993; Benrabha, 2015; Bensalah and Geuroudji, 2020).

As evidence of the significance of the integration of foreign culture when teaching reading comprehension, Erten and Razi (2009) found that cultural familiarity facilitates text comprehension. They explained that if learners lack relevant cultural schemata, they may face difficulty comprehending a text and answer reading activities properly. Similarly, Esen and Mufit (2017) designed a study to determine the effects of using reading texts in the book titled 'Select Readings' to teach cultural elements in EFL classes for first year students at university.

The study concluded that the use of reading texts to teach cultural elements is effective to the cultural knowledge of university students.

In addition, Gurkan (2012) investigated the influence of cultural familiarity on reading comprehension. He used a 2 x 2 true-experimental research design to study a sample of 60 Turkish university students. Gurkan explored that short story from the target language culture contributed to developing second language learners' reading comprehension skills. Likewise, in his experimental study that targeted first-year students majoring in English at Hebron University, Ibrahim, al et. (2013) found that students with cultural background knowledge performed better in reading comprehension than those who do not have any knowledge.

In their study of the effect of cross-cultural foundation information on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension, Ghorbandordinejad and Bayat (2014) found that "familiarity with specific culturally-oriented language reading content improved Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension."

Similarly, Razavi and Gilakjani, (2020) found in their study in the Iranian context that teaching cultural content, such as cultural norms and values, enhanced students` reading comprehension skills.

The use of cultural background knowledge in the teaching of reading should be emphasized by teachers. Readers will be better able to understand texts if they have a sufficient understanding of cultural context. Without the necessary cultural background, it will be difficult for readers to understand the passage's accurate meaning (Lu, 2018).

Language teaching practices can be used effectively in order to eliminate stereotypes and to promote cultural awareness, human shared values and human rights. Language classrooms

are one of the best medium channels in forming the base for mutual respect understanding as well as collaboration among different nations.

Lee (1999) found that using newspapers in foreign language instruction not only helps students improve their knowledge of current lexical items and idiomatic expressions but also increases their ability to interpret, analyse, synthesize, and evaluate cultural texts beyond the comprehension of simple facts. In addition, recent news can be found in the mass media. It is an excellent teaching tool since it allows for genuine connection with the target language and culture. They aid in the development of coping mechanisms and outperform the edited texts' simpler language (Seelye 1993). In the same vein, Taniverdi (2008) designed a course based on newspapers published in England for undergraduate students at Kocaeli University. For an eight-week period, students were required to read three newspapers each week. The use of groups of three students was encouraged since they were able to collaborate and share ideas.

Students, the study concludes, affirm that they have gained new knowledge about England, English people, and English culture. Some stereotypes have been proven wrong after they learned about the social, historical, and theological context of the target language.

The media is a fantastic resource for learning about "new" places and enhancing the cultural competency of students. Press articles, TV newscasts, and talk shows can give students the language and cultural authenticity they require to become culturally competent. These real-world readings give students important chances to learn about the target culture in their reading comprehension classes and in other language courses, in general.

Role-playing or dramatization is a particularly effective method for teaching students about English language culture. In role-playing exercises, particularly those involving cultural

diversity, students may have access to real-life experiences. Moreover, Boakye (2021) concluded that a vast number of students had improved their reading fluency and reported both cognitive and social benefits after introducing role-play in their reading texts as this teaching method allows students to experience different reading strategies as well as realistic scenarios.

Another way to develop cultural background is reading after class. It is a good technique to help learners increase their cultural understanding because students' textbooks have very little information about cultural background. Students should broaden their horizons while also actively learning cultural knowledge outside of the classroom (Yang, X 2017). Reading English-language original works, such as novels, newspapers, and magazines would help students become well-known with art, history, customs, and habits. Therefore, encouraging students to practice extensive reading is beneficial for students` cultural awareness as well as their reading proficiency.

In addition, the best and most direct way for students to understand cultural differences is through conversation with English native speakers because a country's culture background is reflected in its people's manners and ways of thinking.

Due to the world economy's rapid development, there are numerous opportunities to interact with foreigners and English native speakers. According to, Yang, X (2017) students should converse as much as they can in English. They can acquire a lot of knowledge from native speakers that cannot be found in textbooks and reference materials.

Using audio-visual materials is another way to promote students` cultural awareness. Using movies with rich content, for instance, describing various aspects of culture of different people is a very appropriate way to enhance understanding of cultural diversity. Yalcin (2013) argues that movie films have a wide variety of discourse that demonstrates how language is used

in many different circumstances. In other words, the setting of the conversation makes the contextual elements of language, such as the participants' status, age, and sex, the speaker's emotions and intended audience, and the speaker's relationship to the hearer, clear to the person watching.

2.6 Gap in the Literature

The literature has demonstrated that many studies conducted in various contexts to study the integration of foreign cultural content when teaching English as a foreign or second language. The studies also looked at this theme from different perspectives and directions such as the influence of teaching foreign cultural content on reading comprehension skills and challenges EFL/ESL teachers face when teaching foreign culture. It has been also noticed from the literature that few studies have been carried out in the Libyan education context to investigate this research topic. Hence, it is significant to do research to investigate the integration of cultural content when teaching English as a foreign language in general and reading comprehension in particular.

Accordingly, from this point, the researcher designed the current study to find out (1) the extent to which EFL teachers at Libyan universities integrate EFL cultural content when teaching Reading Comprehension and (2) the difficulties faced by EFL teachers at Libyan universities when teaching EFL culture in reading comprehension classes. The scope of the study is dedicated to university EFL teachers who have already taught reading comprehension at Libyan universities.

2.7 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed the literature related to the concept of culture and its significance in language teaching. It also highlighted the key points related to culture teaching such as

communicative competence and surface and deep culture. In addition, it presented the literature review related to the importance of cultural background in reading comprehension as well as the challenges that face language teachers when they integrate foreign culture in their teaching of reading comprehension.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to investigate Libyan EFL teachers' integration of culture when teaching reading comprehension. This chapter provides a description of the research methodology and design employed to address the research questions. This chapter presents the methodological framework of the study, including (1) methodological structure of the study, (2) data collection procedures and instruments, (3) population and samples, (4) the respondents, (5) the setting(s) of the study (6) ethical considerations and (7) a summary.

3.1 Research Methodology and Design

For the sake of the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher used a quantitative research method. Quantitative research refers to a set of techniques used to study social, psychological and economic phenomena by collecting numeric data (David & Hatchuel, 2014). It aims to explore the size of associations and the links between the research entities. It is employed to test theories by deriving hypotheses from them. Moreover, this method is fundamentally based on the researcher's interpretation of the studied phenomenon (Ngiam and Khor, 2019). The sample used in this type of research method is usually large. Moreover, it uses sampling and questionnaire design to measure characteristics of the population being studied. One of the main objectives of this method is to make generalizations based on the researcher` results and findings so as to generalize it to other situations (Lichtman, 2011). The quantitative research method involves using "data collection procedures that result in numerical data which are then analyzed mainly by statistical methods" (Shank and Brown, 2007, p. 24).

Moreover, this approach has several advantages: it is focused, systematic and tightly controlled; it has accurate measurements, and it provides reliable data that can be generalized to other contexts (Khaid, et al., 2012).

Consequently, the researcher selected this research method in order to find out the relationship or/and correlation between target entities as well as the quantity of associations between target entities. This, in return, allowed the researcher to answer the main research questions in a clear manner and to accomplish the objectives of the study (Creswell, 2005). In addition, it ensured the authenticity of the current study and, thereby, it was worthwhile and contributed to the research area, last but not least, this method ensured answering the research questions effectively. The researcher used a quantitative data-collection tool; "questionnaire", to

explore the respondents' integration of EFL culture when teaching English in the classroom as well as the challenges they encountered. The gathered data was analyzed by SPSS, version 26 to transform numerical data into usable statistics to describe and interpret research problems.

3.2 Data Collection Instrument

To obtain a credible amount of data, a questionnaire with a Likert scale was used to investigate university EFL teachers' integration of foreign language culture when teaching reading comprehension. Questionnaire is "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers" (Dornyei, 2007, p. 102). The researcher used the questionnaire as it is an effective way of gathering quantifiable data from a large sample. The researcher designed the questionnaire based on the literature review. The questionnaire was properly constructed, and its questions were designed effectively.

The researcher used correct scaling of questions and appropriate format that reflect the target data accurately (Ropa & Rani, 2012). The questionnaire consists of 20 close-ended questions.

The Likert scale was used in which respondents determined their level of agreement to the questionnaire statements in four points: (1) Always; (2) Sometimes; (3) Rarely; (4) Never. This scale (see table 1) was used to "enhance the questionnaire responses to be clear for respondents" (Bell and Waters, 2014, P. 35).

Table 1: Likert Scale

Answer	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Degree	1	2	3	4

3.3 Pilot Study

According to Hassan et al., (2006), the pilot study is one of the essential stages in a research process. The purpose of the pilot study is to examine the feasibility of the study protocol and to help the researcher become familiar with data collection protocol (Bell and Waters 2014). Therefore, for the sake of measuring the validity and reliability (internal consistency) of the data collection instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot study in which 12 questionnaires were distributed , which represents 15% of the target sample, to the respondents. Moreover, the questionnaire questions were shown to two different professors whose feedback was quiet helpful. Then, the obtained results from the respondents were analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), using the Terminal comparison method and Cronbach's Alpha. See appendix for pilot study analysis.

3.3.1 Validity of Data Collection Tool

The construct validity of the date collection instrument (questionnaire) was measured as the validity in quantitative research is implied in "construct validity" Golafshani (2003). The researcher mainly aimed to test whether the questionnaire as a data collection tool measures what the researcher intends to measure. Therefore, the researcher used the *"Pearson's correlation coefficient"* to measure the validity of the data collection tool.

3.3.2 Reliability of Data Collection Instrument

Measuring reliability of the data collection tool is essential to ensuring that the data collection tool is consistent over time and accurately represents the total sample of the study. The data collection tool is reliable when its results are the same under similar conditions (Joppe,

2000). Accordingly, for the sake of the reliability of data collection tool, the researcher employed "Cronbach Alpha Test" to measure the internal consistency of questionnaire statements.

$$\alpha) = \frac{N}{N-1}(1-\frac{\sum\alpha 2}{\alpha 2t})$$

In so that (a) = consistency sign whereas (n) = number of questionnaire statements

3.4 Sampling and Population

Sampling is the process of selecting members or subjects from a larger population (Merriam, 1998). The researcher used random sample technique which means selecting the population randomly in a manner that each individual has the same probability of being selected (Agresti, 1990; Creswell, 2005). For the individuals to have equal chances to being selected, a complete list of the population must be obtained.

Then, the researcher randomly selects from that list (Noor et al., 2022). This sampling method is used by many official organizations around the world such as the American Community Survey (ACS) and many other national survey polling organizations around the world.

Furthermore, in order for the researcher to ensure a representative statistical sample in empirical research, the sample size was specified based on the formula of determining sample size for research proposed by Krejcie and Morgen (1970). The population of this study was 100 university EFL teachers, so that, according to Morgan and Krejcie, the sample is approximately 80 respondents. According to the literature, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formulas are still used by

empirical research (Adnan and Tasir, 2014; Esen and Müfit 2017) and it is considered one of the most used formulas to determine the representative study sample.

After the population and sample size was determined, the respondents were selected randomly by using a sample frame. The respondents in the study were 80 EFL Libyan university teachers whose ages ranged between 30 and 60 years. Most of the respondents were females as female staff in English Departments outnumbers males. The respondents were both MA and PhD holders who already taught reading comprehension.Their teaching experience varied from new appointed to many years of service.

3.5 Procedures of Data Collection

Prior to distributing the questionnaire, the researcher provided the respondents with a brief explanation about the content of the questionnaire. The researcher used both English and Arabic to clarify the questionnaire content to avoid any misunderstanding of questionnaire statements.

The questionnaire was filled in by 80 university EFL teachers (either MA or PhD holders) who teach English as a foreign language at the University of Zawia, the University of Sabratha and University of Tripoli. There are nine English language departments in both universities of Sabratha and Zawia as well as language centers which all were participated in the study. Some of the respondents took 5 to 10 minutes to fill in the questionnaire and then they returned the copies to the researcher.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles in social research can be defined as the establishing of a trusting relationship between the sample and the researcher. For the sake of the establishment of trust, it is essential that communication is carefully planned and managed, risks are minimized, and

benefits are maximized (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, the researcher took into consideration a number of ethical issues during the study. The researcher met the heads of English departments to take permission to meet the respondents. Afterwards, the researcher treated all gathered data confidentially and did not share the personal details of the respondents. Moreover, the researchers made sure that research questions were clear and objective.

3.7 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter covered the methodology of the research, including the research design which was a quantitative research method, mainly aimed to explore the size of associations and the links between the research entities. It also included the data collection tool, where questionnaire with a Likert scale was used to investigate university EFL teachers' integration of foreign language culture when teaching reading comprehension. Moreover, sampling and population, pilot study, validity of data collection tool and the ethical issues were covered in this chapter.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses and reports the data obtained from the questionnaires. SPSS software program was used to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire. Statistical analysis of the questionnaire data with a brief explanation is included as well.

4.1 Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher used a quantitative descriptive research design in order to address answers to the research questions. She used a questionnaire as a data collection tool to gather information regarding the EFL teachers' integration of EFL culture content when teaching Reading Comprehension and challenges they faced when doing this integration. The

questionnaire was designed according to the Likert scale (see table 1) in which respondents can determine their level of agreement to the questionnaire statements in four points: (1) always; (2) sometimes; (3) rarely (4) never.

Table 1 : Likert Scale

Answer	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Degree	1	2	3	4

In addition, the level of agreement on Likert Scale was specified as follows:

Table 2: weighted average values of the Levels of Agreement on Likert Scale

Scale Weight	Level of Agreement	Weighted Average
1	Always	From 3.25 to 4
2	Sometimes	From 2.5 to 3.24
3	Rarely	From 1.75 to 2.49
4	Never	From 1 to 1.74

4.2.1 Reliability of the Data Collection Tool (Questionnaire)

The data collection tool is said to have reliability (consistency) when it yields the same results on repeated trials under similar conditions. The researcher used Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to measure the consistency/reliability of the questionnaire.

The value of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is between 0-1 and this coefficient reveals the correlation between the respondents' answers in the questionnaire. When the value of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is < 0.6, this indicates that there is a weak correlation between the respondents' answers. However, if the value of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient varies between 0.7 and 0.8, this indicates that the correlation between the respondents' answers is acceptable and reliable. When the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is > 0.8, the correlation between the respondents' answers becomes more reliable (John 2012).

Table: 3 Reliability of Questionnaire

Statement	No. variables	Reliability
Data of variables	20	0.917

According to the data in table 3, the value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire statements as a whole is (0.917) which is > (0.60). That is, the questionnaire has a very high stability coefficient if it is applied several times sunder similar conditions. Accordingly, a number of 108 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and then the researcher began to analyze the obtained data as follows:

4.2.2 Statistical Analysis of Questionnaire Data

First, the researcher complied and encoded the data from the questionnaire. Afterwards, the data was analyzed by "Statistical Package for Social Science" (SPSS), version 26.

In order to describe and address the research questions effectively and properly, the researcher determined all the appropriate statistical measures and tests based on the following criteria:

4.3 Exploration of Data

Data exploration, also known as exploratory data analysis (EDA), provides a set of simple tools to achieve a basic understanding of the data obtained from the survey.

4.3.1 Normality of Distribution

The distribution of study normality means that the study sample is drawn from a normally distributed population. As the study sample has more than 50 respondents, the researcher used Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to identify the distribution of data as follows:

Table 4: Tests of Normality

Statement	Statistic	Degree of freedom	Sig

41

Data of variables	0.109	80	0.020

The result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test in Table 4 shows that P-value ≤ 0.05; this means that the sample was drawn from a normally distributed population.

4.3.2 Measurement Level

The obtained data was measured by Likert Scale which is used to "enhance the questionnaire responses to be clear for respondents" (Bell and Waters, 2014, P. 35) and ensure the application of valid and reliable scientific measurements or/and tests.

4.3.3 Homogeneity

Homoscedasticity refers to the extent to which the study respondents are selected based on similar traits. In this study, all the respondents were from the same population (EFL university teachers who have already taught Reading Comprehension).

4.3.4 Measurement Tools of Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics convert the gathered data into values and shapes that are used to describe various variables under specific conditions and situations. The Descriptive Statistics measures employed in the current study are as follows:

4.3.4.1 Percentage and Frequencies

Percentage and Frequencies were used to identify the proportional distribution for study samples according to particular properties.

4.3.4.2 Arithmetic mean

It was used to describe (1) the extent to which the EFL teachers at Libyan universities integrate EFL cultural content when teaching Reading Comprehension and (2) challenges they face when teaching Reading Comprehension.

4.3.4.3 Standard Deviation

The Standard Deviation (SD) was used in the current study to measure the amount of variation of the samples. Low standard deviation indicates that the values tend to be close to the mean of the samples, while a high standard deviation indicates that the values are spread out over a wider range (Bland & Altman, 1996).

4.4 Analysis and Reporting of Questionnaire Data

The researcher used 10 statements in the questionnaire so as to gauge the extent to which the respondents integrate EFL cultural content when teaching Reading Comprehension. Table (5) shows the arithmetical mean, standard deviations, descending order and percentage of approval and the level of agreement by respondents to the related questionnaire statements.

No	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	Std. Deviation	Approval percentage	Ranking	direction
1	I focus on teaching idiomatic expressions.	18 %22.5	44 %55	10 %12.5	8 %10	2. 90	0.865	%72.5	8	Sometimes
2	I focus on teaching proverbs.	16 %20	40 %50	22 %27.5	2 %2.5	2.87	0.752	%72	9	Sometimes
3	I use cross-cultural comparison to introduce the target culture.	40 %50	26 %32.5	10 %12.5	4 %5	3.27	0.871	%82	4	Always
4	I use audio-visual materials to promote students' cultural awareness.	16 %20	36 %45	18 %22.5	10 %12.5	2.72	0.927	%68	10	Sometimes
5	I use role-play activities to teach students about the target culture.	34 %42.5	24 %30	14 %17.5	8 %10	3.05	1.005	%76	6	Sometimes
6	I use authentic reading materials. (Newspapers, magazines or internet articles).	44 %55	24 %30	10 %12.5	2 %2.5	3.37	0.801	%84	1	Always
7	I use realia (posters/pictures or maps).	18 %22.5	46 %57.5	10 %12.5	6 %7.5	2.95	0.809	%74	7	Sometimes
8	I focus students' attention on cultural loaded vocabulary.	33 %41.3	37 %46.3	10 %12.5	- -	3.28	0.678	%82	2	Always
9	I ask students to practice extensive reading after class.	40 %50	28 %35	4 %5	8 %10	3.25	0.948	%81	5	Always
10	I ask students to discover the cultural aspects of the target culture.	38 %47.5	28 %35	12 %15	2 %2.5	3.27	0.810	%82	3	Always
	Total					3.09	0.791	%77		Sometimes

Table 5: Description of the extent to which EFL teachers at Libyan universities integrate EFL cultural content when teaching Reading Comprehension

According to the above results in table (5), the mean of the variable *"the extent to which EFL teachers at Libyan universities integrate EFL cultural content when teaching Reading Comprehension"* is (3.09) and the percentage of agreement to the statements in the questionnaire is (77%). That is, the study respondents sometimes, not always, integrate the cultural content when teaching Reading Comprehension in classroom. The technique used by respondents to integrate EFL cultural content (from most used to the least used) is as follows:

1. Statement 6 "*I use authentic reading materials, (Newspapers, magazines or internet articles)*" had the highest frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with Arithmetic mean (3.37) and agreement percentage (84%).

2. Statement 8 "*I focus students' attention on cultural loaded vocabulary*" came the second in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (3.28) and agreement percentage (82%).

3. Statement 10 "*I ask students to discover the cultural aspects of the target culture*" had the third frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (3.27) and agreement percentage (82%).

4. Statement 3, *"I use cross-cultural comparison to introduce the target culture",* came the fourth in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (3.27) and agreement percentage (82%).

5. Statement 9, *"I ask students to practice extensive reading after class",* came the fifth in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (3.25) and agreement percentage (81%).

6. Statement 5, *"I use role-play activities to teach students about the target culture"*, came the sixth in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (3.05) and agreement percentage (76%).

7. Statement 7, *"I use realia (posters/pictures or maps)"*, came the seventh in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (2.95) and agreement percentage (74%).

8. Statement 1, *"I focus on teaching idiomatic expressions"*, came the eighth in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (2.90) and agreement percentage (72.5%).

9. Statement 2, *"I focus on teaching proverbs"*, came the ninth in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (2.87) and agreement percentage (72%).

10. Statement 4 "*I use audio-visual materials to promote students' cultural awareness*" was the last in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (2.72) and agreement percentage (68%).

Accordingly, the overall arithmetic mean (3.09) and the standard deviation (0.791) evidently approve that the respondents sometimes integrate EFL cultural content when teaching Reading Comprehension in classroom. Furthermore, it is seen that the most used strategy by the respondents is strategy 6 followed by strategy 8 and least used strategies are strategies 4 and 2 (see table 6).

4.4.1. Describing difficulties faced by EFL teachers at Libyan universities when teaching Reading Comprehension.

The researcher also used 10 statements in the questionnaire so as to difficulties faced by EFL teachers at Libyan universities when teaching Reading Comprehension. Table (5) shows the arithmetical mean, standard deviations, descending order and percentage of approval and the level of agreement by respondents to the related questionnaire statements.

Table 6: Description of difficulties faced by EFL teachers at Libyan universities when teaching EFL

No	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	Std. Deviation	Approval percentage	Ranking	direction
11	Finding cultural materials to teach is challenging.	20 / %25	46 / %57.5	12 / %15	2 / %2.5	3.05	0.709	%76	3	Sometimes
12	It is difficult to adapt cultural content to students' own cultural values.	14 / %17.5	44 / %55	16 / %20	6 / %7.5	2.82	0.807	%70.5	4	Sometimes
13	It is difficult to adapt cultural content to student's level of language.	10 / %12.5	44 / %55	16 / %20	10 / %12.5	2.67	0.853	%67	6	Sometimes
14	Limited reading class time makes it challenging to develop students` cultural awareness.	34 / %42.5	36 / %45	6 / %7.5	4 / %5	3.25	0.803	%81	2	Always
15	Students are not interested in learning about the target culture.	10 / %12.5	30 / %37.5	28 / %35	12 / %15	2.47	0.899	%62	8	Rarely
16	It is difficult to initiate discussions on the target culture.	10 / %12.5	36 / %45	24 / %30	10 / %12.5	2.57	0.868	%64	7	Sometimes
17	Discussing beliefs & attitudes of the target culture community may cause me some problems.	12 / %15	40 / %50	20 / %25	8 / %10	2.70	0.847	%67.5	5	Sometimes
18	I received cultural training during or after attending English language teaching program.	16 / %20	14 / %17.5	18 / %22.5	32 / %40	2.17	1.1667	%54	10	Rarely
19	I've been to an English-speaking country and experienced its culture.	24 / %30	14 / %17.5	14 / %17.5	28 / %35	2.42	1.250	%60.5	9	Rarely
20	I expose myself to the culture of native speakers (media, reading, literature, seminars, etc.).	44 / %55	22 / %27.5	12 / %15	2 / %2.5	3.35	0.828	%84	1	Always
	Total					2.75	0.837	%69		Sometimes

According to table (6), the mean for the variable *"difficulties faced by EFL teachers at Libyan universities when teaching EFL culture in reading comprehension classes"* is (2.75) and the percentage of approval to the related questionnaire statements is (69%). That is, the respondents sometimes encounter difficulties when integrating the EFL cultural content in reading comprehension classes. The technique used by respondents to integrate EFL cultural content (from most used to the least used) are as follows:

1. Statement 20, "*I expose myself to the culture of native speakers (media, reading, literature, seminars, etc.)*", was the first in the frequency approval rate with arithmetic mean (3.35) and approval percentage (84%).

2. Statement 14, "*Limited reading class time makes it challenging to develop students` cultural awareness*", was the second in the frequency approval rate with arithmetic mean (3.25) and approval percentage (81%).

3. Statement 11, *"Finding cultural materials to teach is challenging",* came the third in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (3.05) and agreement percentage (76%).

4. Statement 12, *"It is difficult to adapt cultural content to students' own cultural values",* came the fourth in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (2.82) and agreement percentage (70.5%).

5. Statement 17, *"Discussing beliefs & attitudes of the target culture community may cause me some problems"*, was the fifth in the frequency approval rate with arithmetic mean (2.70) and approval percentage (67.5%).

6. Statement 13, *"It is difficult to adapt cultural content to student's level of language"*, came the sixth in the frequency usage rate of cultural content integration strategies with arithmetic mean (2.67) and agreement percentage (67%).

7. Statement 16, *"It is difficult to initiate discussions on the target culture"*, came the seventh in the frequency approval rate with arithmetic mean (2.57) and approval percentage (64%).

8. Statement 15, *"Students are not interested in learning about the target culture"*, was the eighth in the frequency approval rate with arithmetic mean (2.47) and approval percentage (62%).

9. Statement 19, *"I've been to an English-speaking country and experienced its culture"*, came the ninth in the frequency approval rate with arithmetic mean (2.42) and approval percentage (60.5%).

10. Statement 18, "*I received cultural training during or after attending English language teaching program*", was the last in the frequency approval rate with arithmetic mean (2.17) and approval percentage (54%).

As can be seen from table (6), EFL teachers at Libyan universities sometimes experience difficulties when integrating EFL cultural content in reading comprehension classes.

4.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter discussed and analysed the data obtained from the questionnaire using SPSS program. It also presented the results obtained in numeric data with a brief explanation.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

Foreign language teaching unquestionably embraces foreign culture teaching and learning cross-cultural communication knowledge and skills (Wang, 2008). This undoubtedly, in return, helps FL learners understand the links between language and culture as well as cultural differences (Liton & Al Madanat, 2013). Accordingly, the current study has aimed to investigate Libyan university EFL teachers` integration of EFL culture in their teaching of reading comprehension. It also sought to explore the challenges that they experienced when incorporating the foreign cultural content. This chapter discusses the results obtained from the questionnaire as well as the conclusion of the whole study.

5.1 Integration of Foreign Culture in Reading Comprehension Teaching by Libyan University EFL Teachers

The results obtained from the questionnaire revealed that Libyan EFL teachers, do sometimes, integrate cultural content when teaching reading comprehension. The results showed that the Libyan EFL teachers integrate EFL cultural content in teaching reading comprehension using different techniques. This result is in line with the literature review which showed that EFL teachers integrate cultural content in their teaching of English in general, and in reading comprehension, specifically (Altarriba & Forsythe, 1993; Benrabha, 2015; Bensalah & Gueroudoji 2020; Enes & Mufti 2017; Erten & Razi 2009; Ibrahim el et, 2013; Ghorbandordinejad, & Bayat 2014; Gurkan 2012; Khalifat & Reddy 2022; Lu 2018; Razavi & Gilakjani 2020).

Moreover, the data revealed that Libyan EFL university teachers use authentic materials (newspapers, magazines, or internet articles) as a mean of integrating culture in their teaching. This is consistent with the studies of (Lee, 1999; Seelye, 1993; Taniverdi, 2008). This could be attributed to the easy access to the unlimited reading materials online as the internet is the preferred source of authentic materials for teachers. This finding challenges the notion proposed by Rahel (2017) that the paucity of authentic materials was a challenge for university teachers when integrating cultural content.

Participants also reported using role-play activities in their teaching as a mean of teaching learners about culture. This result reflects that of Boakye (2021) which demonstrated that using role-play activities has a positive effect on improving reading fluency and raising learners` cultural awareness as well.

Furthermore, as revealed from the questionnaire, participants sometimes use audio-visual materials to enhance students' cultural awareness Taniverdi (2008), supports such result, the media is an excellent resource for learning about "new" areas and improving pupils' cultural competence. TV newscasts and talk shows can provide students with the necessary linguistic and cultural authenticity to become culturally competent. Adding more, asking the students to practice extensive reading after class is highly applied. According to Yang (2017), it is important to encourage students to read English language novels and magazines due to the fact that it would educate them about the history, habits, and customs of other cultures, which would create cultural awareness as well as enhance their reading comprehension skills.

Contrary to expectations, Libyan EFL university teachers do not focus on proverbs and idioms although these expressions are considered as a cultural barrier that hinders students from fully comprehending a text (Liu, 2014).

5.2 Challenges Faced by Libyan University EFL Teachers When Integrating Foreign Culture

According to the findings of the study, Libyan university teachers do face some difficulties when incorporating culture in their reading comprehension teaching. The data of this study is consistent with the findings of the literature (Altaeb, 2021; Liu, 2014; Mohammed, 2014; Ramadan et al., 2019; Yang, 2017). The result clearly confirmed some of the challenges found in the literature namely, textbooks, curriculum design, cultural differences, and local laws. Challenges faced by the teachers can be attributed to their lack of cultural training as Libyan EFL teachers do not have cultural training before becoming foreign language teachers.

The respondents reported that limited reading class time is considered as the biggest challenge that does not allow Libyan EFL university teachers to focus on teaching culture. This result supports those made by Gonen & Saglam (2012) and Hong (2008) who reported that teachers do not discuss cultural elements due to the demanding curriculum and lack of time. This was expected as it is a challenge for teachers to focus on both the curriculum and cultural aspects as well. Moreover, students could discourage teachers as they just want to focus on the language as reported in the literature by Altaeb (2021) and Tran (2016).

Surprisingly, a good percentage of participants reported that they have not been to an English-speaking country which means that they did not have the chance to experience the target culture in real life. This is considered as a challenge for teachers as their own experience of the target culture is not complete. However, 84% of Libyan EFL university teachers reported that they expose themselves to the culture of native speakers through watching movies, attending seminars, reading literature, etc. In other words, Libyan university EFL teacher's exposure to the culture is good and is not considered as a challenge or an obstacle.

According to the literature, there was a little research investigated the integration of cultural content in teaching reading comprehension in the Libyan education context. Moreover, the researcher did not find any studies conducted in Libya which investigated whether EFL university teachers integrate cultural content when teaching reading comprehension as well as the effect of cultural integration on learners' reading comprehension skills.

This study also highlighted some key behaviors practiced by EFL teachers in the classroom. However, although using visual-audio media plays a key role in developing communication and reading comprehension skills (Atmaja, 2018; Ismaili, 2013), the data of this study revealed that the respondents do not use audio-visual materials as teaching aids when teaching cultural content in reading comprehension classes. This result is in line with the study made by Zeat (2022) which concluded that Libyan university teachers do not employ audiobooks in their teaching of reading comprehension. This sheds light on the fact that Libyan EFL teachers are still reluctant to use technology in their teaching although technology has become an integral part of teaching/learning process in higher education institutions.

The data also revealed that most of the participants did not have any cultural training. This could explain why some of them avoid culturally loaded vocabulary and activities in their reading comprehension classes as the lack of cultural experience and training make the cultural content too deep and complex for the teachers to carry out (Hong, 2008). Remarkably and impressively, the results of the study showed that most of the Libyan university EFL teachers are opene to learning about the foreign culture by keeping up through watching movies, exchanging with native speakers online and surfing English websites, for example. This would predict a change in teachers' future behavior regarding cultural incorporation in Libyan EFL classroom.

5.3 Conclusion of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out to what extent Libyan EFL teachers incorporate foreign culture in their teaching of reading comprehension. Moreover, the study aimed at investigating the challenges faced by them when integrating foreign culture in EFL classroom. The researcher used quantitative research to collect data about the research problem from a group of Libyan EFL university EFL teachers who have been teaching English at Zawia University, Sabrata University and Tripoli University. The results revealed that Libyan university EFL teachers integrate culture in their teaching by using certain techniques such as presenting authentic material, role-play activities and encouraging students to practice extensive reading after class time in order to develop their cultural awareness and their reading fluency. However, the obtained data also revealed some challenges that hinder Libyan teachers to fully integrate culture in their teaching. Libyan EFL teachers` lack of cultural training, the challenge of focusing on teaching both culture and language during the class time due to the limited class time, moreover, finding suitable cultural materials for Libyan students` own cultural values are considered some of the major challenges.

5.4 Implications and Recommendations

The results of this study have important implications for foreign culture integration in Libyan universities for both teachers and students:

1- It is recommended to engage EFL teachers in culture teaching trainings that would help them incorporate cultural awareness into their classroom materials.

2- Sending EFL teachers abroad to experience real-life situations.

3- English language teachers are supposed to use classrooms as an opportunity to inform their students about other cultures and help them understand that cultures are equally important and we can learn good things from them.

4- Incorporating cultural awareness into EFL curriculum, so that teachers find well-structured activities to share with their students.

5- Raise the students' awareness of the importance of cultural curriculum and how it improves their language learning. .

6- Train the students on culturally loaded reading materials and activities inside the classroom.

7- Students should focus on educating themselves about other cultures even outside the classroom.

8- Students should be willing to have knowledge about different cultures in order to achieve the best outcomes from the learning process.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Although the quantitative approach used in the study provided precise measurement of the extent Libyan EFL university teachers integrate culture into their teaching, it could have missed some of the challenges those teachers face.

5.6 Suggestion for Further Research

The findings indicate that Libyan EFL university teachers encounter difficulties when trying to incorporate foreign culture into their language teaching. However, additional research is necessary to explore these challenges more thoroughly and to find out the reasons behind them. One suggestion is to investigate how local laws and social pressure impact foreign language teachers` ability to fully integrate foreign culture into their teaching. Another proposition is to highlight the importance of teaching culture in foreign language classroom and how it impacts on

the students overall learning of foreign language. Last but not least, there is no adequate research in the field of foreign language culture teaching in both schools and higher education institutions in Libya. Therefore, this field requires more investigations to look at the possible difficulties and opportunities to teach EFL culture in Libyan EFL classroom.

5.7 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the discussion of the results obtained from the data. It discussed the results of the two research questions and linked the data obtained with the reviewed literature. In addition, it included the conclusion of the whole study as well as the implications and recommendations. Suggestions for further research and limitation of the study were also included.

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Appendix A
Teachers` Questionnaire

Dear instructors,

This questionnaire aims to investigate Libyan EFL teachers' integration of culture in reading comprehension. You are kindly invited to complete this questionnaire. Be sure that your responses will be kept confidential and your data will be used for research purposes only. The questionnaire approximatelly takes five minutes. There is no right or wrong answer.

Culture is " that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." (Edward Taylor).

Please put a (√) in the appropriate box.

No	Statements	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1.	I focus on teaching idiomatic expressions.				
2.	I focus on teaching proverbs.				
3.	I use cross-cultural comparison to introduce the target culture.				
4.	I use audio-visual materials to promote students' cultural awareness.				
5.	I use role-play activities to teach students about the target culture.				
6.	I use authentic reading materials. (newspapers articles, company websites, takeout menus,etc.).				
7.	I use realia (posters/pictures or maps).				
8.	I focus students' attention on cultural loaded vocabulary.				
9.	I ask students to practice extensive reading after class.				
10.	I ask students to discover the cultural aspects of the target culture.				
11	Finding cultural materials to teach				

No	Statements	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	is challenging.				
12	It is difficult to adapt cultural content to students' own cultural values.				
13	It is difficult to adapt cultural content to students' level of language.				
14	Limited reading class time makes it challenging to develop students` cultural awareness.				
15	Students are not interested in learning about the target culture.				
16	It is difficult to initiate discussions on the target culture.				
17	Discussing beliefs of the target culture community may cause me some problems.				
18	I received cultural training during or after attending English language teaching program.				
19	I've been to an English-speaking country and experienced its culture.				
20	I expose myself to the culture of native speakers (media, reading literature, seminars, etc.).				

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix B
Pilot Study Analysis

No.	Variables	N	R	P-Value
1	I focus on teaching idiomatic expressions.	12	1. 00**	0.000
2	I focus on teaching proverbs.	12	1. 00**	0.000
3	I use cross-cultural comparison to introduce the target culture.	12	0.896**	0.000
4	I use audio-visual materials to promote students' cultural awareness.	12	1. 00**	0.000
5	I use role-play activities to teach students about the target culture.	12	0.847**	0.001
6	I use authentic reading materials. (News Paper, magazines or internet articles).	12	0.695*	0.012
7	I use realia (posters/pictures or maps).	12	1. 00**	0.000
8	I focus students' attention on cultural loaded vocabulary.	12	0.847**	0.001
9	I ask students to practice extensive reading after class.	12	0.896**	0.000
10	I ask students to discover the cultural aspects of the target culture.	12	0.905**	0.000
11	Finding cultural materials to teach is challenging.	12	1. 00**	0.000
12	It is difficult to adapt cultural content to students' own cultural values.	12	1. 00**	0.000
13	It is difficult to adapt cultural content to student's level of language.	12	1. 00**	0.000
14	Limited reading class time makes it challenging to develop students` cultural awareness.	12	0.847**	0.001
15	Students are not interested in learning about the target culture.	12	0.896**	0.000
16	It is difficult to initiate discussions on the target culture.	12	0.503	0.095
17	Discussing beliefs & attitudes of the target culture community may cause me some problems.	12	1. 00**	0.000
18	I received cultural training during or after attending English language teaching program.	12	0.632*	0.028
19	I've been to an English-speaking country and experienced its culture.	12	0.905**	0.000
20	I expose myself to the culture of native speakers (media, reading, literature, seminars, etc.).	12	0.695*	0.012

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).