

Investigating the Challenges in Teaching Civilization: Teachers' Perceptions at Badji Mokhtar University-Annaba

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Received: 16 / 10 / 2024

Accepted: 30 / 05 / 2025

Published: 15 / 07 / 2025

Abstract

Civilization is a module based on history, dates, and events. Over the past years, at Badji Mokhtar University, it has been observed that the majority of Master's students prefer the 'Language Sciences' option solely to avoid the 'Literature and Civilization' option. In addition, Civilization teachers consistently complain about their students' lack of interest. This stimulated our interest in investigating the types of challenges encountered by Civilization teachers. A questionnaire was administered to Civilization teachers at Badji Mokhtar University–Annaba, and seven teachers responded. The results showed that the nature of the module itself is challenging, as teachers affirmed that the content is difficult, lengthy, and contains complex terminology. Moreover, some challenges are related to students' attitudes and motivation, while others concern the teaching approaches and strategies used to deliver the module's content. Therefore, it is necessary to raise Civilization teachers' awareness of these challenges, as well as the importance of modifying their teaching approaches.

Keywords: Civilization, challenges, teaching approaches, teaching strategies

ملخص

إنّ "الحضارة" وحدة دراسية تعتمد على التاريخ والأحداث. وعلى مدى السنوات الماضية، لوحظ في جامعة باجي مختار أن غالبية طلاب الماجستير يفضلون خيار "علوم اللغة" لسبب وحيد، وهو تجنب خيار "الأدب والحضارة". بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يشكو أساتذة الحضارة باستمرار من قلة اهتمام طلابهم. وقد أثار هذا اهتمامنا للتحقيق في أنواع التحديات التي يواجهها أساتذة هذه الوحدة. تم توزيع استبيان على أساتذة الحضارة في جامعة باجي مختار - عنابة، وقد أجاب عليه سبعة أساتذة. أظهرت النتائج أن طبيعة الوحدة نفسها تُعدّ تحديًا، حيث أكد الأساتذة أن المحتوى صعب، وطويل، ويحتوي على مصطلحات معقدة. إلى جانب ذلك، هناك تحديات تتعلق بمواقف الطلاب ودوافعهم، وأخرى ترتبط بأساليب واستراتيجيات تدريس محتوى هذه الوحدة. لذلك، من الضروري رفع وعي أساتذة الحضارة بهذه التحديات، إلى جانب التأكيد على أهمية تعديل منهجهم التدريسي. **كلمات مفتاحية:** الحضارة، التحديات، مناهج التدريس، استراتيجيات التدريس.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70091/Atras/vol06no02.10>

Introduction

With the shift in language teaching from linguistic competence (Chomsky, 1965) to communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), intercultural communicative competence has been at the centre of interest (Byram, 1997). The focus was no longer on the idealised knowledge that the native speaker has about his language, but on the appropriate use of language by the speaker while considering the context and the culture. Indeed, Kramsch (2015) affirms that language and culture are intertwined and interrelated. Lee (2009) pointed to the Big “C” and small “c” domains of culture. The Big “C” culture involves aspects such as “arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of the target speech society” (p. 78); they refer to the visible part of the target culture. However, the small “c” represents the invisible part of culture, “deeper beliefs accounting for the socio-cultural values and norms” (Lee, 2009, p.78).

Moving to intercultural competence, Byram et al. (2002) explain it as the “ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their individuality (p.10). They clarify that intercultural communicative competence entails certain knowledge, attitudes and skills.

Certain subjects at the university allow students to discover other cultures, such as English culture through British/American literature or civilization subjects. The present paper focuses on the civilization subject. At the global level, Rampen (2017) advanced that teaching EFL culture faces challenges as the limited allotted time, the lengthy content, the teacher’s readiness, background knowledge and cultural awakening to teaching the culture, and the lack of culture-based language textbooks.

In learning English as a foreign language at the university level in Algeria, students from the first year of license are introduced to the British/ American Civilization. It is commonly known that language is culture, and if the learner does not know the culture, s/he will never use the language effectively and appropriately. Furthermore, “Culture and Civilization enhance students’ social skills and civic feelings by recording all experiences and expertise of human beings to overcome challenges and obstacles throughout different periods in human history” (Raouti, 2024, p. 35).

Indeed, the ‘Civilization’ module is about history, events, dates and places. Students are exposed to periods that they have never been to, places they have never visited, people they did not know, and even names difficult to utter. It was observed that civilization teachers are almost all the time unsatisfied with their students’ level of interest and motivation toward their sessions (Raouti, 2024). Moreover, they show dissatisfaction with the lengthy and boring lessons of civilization (Baghdadi et al., 2022). Consequently, we find teachers complaining since whatever they do as an effort, the results are nearly the same: “Students do not like the module of civilization”.

Another observable problem is the great number of students subscribed to the “language sciences” option in comparison with the small number of students in the “Literature and civilization” option at the level of master studies in the Department of English at Badji Mokhtar University-Annaba. This prompted us to explore the types of challenges encountered by the civilization teachers while teaching the content of this module.

As a result, this study aims to investigate the following research question and hypothesis:

- What pedagogical, motivational, and content-specific challenges do Civilization teachers at Badji Mokhtar University face in fostering student engagement?"
- The civilization teachers encounter different challenges related to the nature of the module, students' attitudes and motivation, in addition to the teaching approach and strategies.

Therefore, this article aims at developing a vision about the civilization module by considering the subject matter itself, the learners and the teacher. It also aims at raising teachers' awareness of the types of difficulties that hinder the effective teaching/learning of civilization.

Literature Review

Objectives Teaching Civilization

Civilization course is an integral part of the curriculum to be taught to license students over the three years at all the departments of English in Algeria. The course of civilization has certain objectives. For instance, Atamena and Aboubou (2018) clarified, "It is evident to note that teaching English civilization aims at not only enhancing language skills but also awakening curiosity to discover and delve deeper into the minutiae of the target language" (p.322). Similarly, Seddiki (2018) added,

In many departments of English, the course of civilization is theoretically meant to develop the learners' cultural and linguistic skills. Learners are supposed to acquire English and explore its culture, dealing with a range of topics and tasks using a blend of teaching practices. (p.57)

Thus, the civilization course aims at developing students' linguistic and cultural skills through diversified teaching procedures with the main focus on raising students' motivation to discover the intricacies of the English Language. Furthermore, Touche-Kharouni (2020) saw that learning American and British civilizations in the departments of English in Algerian Universities has three main objectives: 1) Learning the language in context, 2) raising students' cultural learning and 3) enhancing students' critical thinking. Then, teaching civilization is not excluded from enhancing cultural and linguistic skills, but also developing students' critical thinking skills. However, Raouti (2024) highlighted that learning civilization is a very difficult subject for EFL learners. She explains further that the module of civilization has three main objectives:

- 1) Enhancing students' level in English
- 2) Improving their knowledge of Civilization
- 3) Developing their academic skills.

Therefore, the civilization course aims to promote learners' linguistic, cultural, and academic skills (reading, writing, research, communication, and thinking). It also aims at raising learners' interest in EFL cultures- American and British- through the contextualization of language learning.

Challenges in Teaching Civilization

In Algeria, researchers tackled the challenges of teaching civilization from different angles. Atamena and Aboubou (2018) advanced that American and British civilization is an important part of EFL learning at the university; however, learning/teaching this course is challenging for both teachers and students (p.322). They further pinpoint that students of English as a foreign language are not satisfied, claiming that they face comprehension difficulties related to civilization concepts in addition to troubles in understanding the general meaning of the course content.

Moreover, Raouti (2024) saw that the failure of the module of civilization in Higher Education is due to certain factors related to the subject matter and the lack of students' background knowledge in civilization. Likewise, Seddiki (2018) noted the following challenges associated with the British civilization module:

- a) The content is limited to historical events.
- b) This content leads to monotonous lessons.
- c) This content does not raise students' motivation.
- d) This session does not offer chances for learners to develop language skills.
- e) Lack of students' cooperation and their inability to do activities.
- f) Lack of students' engagement.
- g) Teachers keep applying the same procedures and activities while diversity is required.
- h) The objectives of the module lack specificity; they are too general.
- i) Lack of good planning of class activities.
- j) Learners' reluctance is due to their poor vocabulary repertoire, grammar practice, and writing competence.
- k) Teachers' unawareness of the appropriate teaching style of civilization.

In her turn, Touche-Kharouni (2020) mentioned mainly the teaching materials and declared that the civilization teachers use traditional tools as handouts, chalk, and board; However, "multimedia technologies are not commonly used for teaching culture while film is generally absent" (p.153). She also admits that the traditional civilization sessions do not consider students' motivation, attitudes, and learning styles as a digital generation. Therefore, there is a need for teacher training on multimedia use in teaching civilization, in addition to the importance of providing technological tools in Algerian universities. However, no study has been found on the challenges of teaching civilization in the department of English- Badji Mokhtar University, Annaba, while mainly considering the pedagogical aspects, students' motivation and the content of the civilization module.

Approaches and Strategies in Teaching Civilization

Louahla (2017) highlighted different approaches to teaching civilization as follows:

- a) **Postholing vs Coverage (Breadth vs Depth):** the first focuses on providing a general overview of historical events, while the second refers to selected events in history. It is necessary to focus on specific events so the students will not feel lost in the details.

- b) **Memorization vs Analysis:** While teaching civilization, some teachers urge their students to memorize events, dates, names, and places. Others focus on analyzing historical events with their students for better retention and comprehension. However, a balance between the two is needed, as no analysis could be done without memorizing events.
- c) **Multimedia:** Integrating technology in the civilization session could alter students' attitudes and motivation. They could have access to texts, videos, audio, and other sources that would improve their knowledge of civilization. Using these tools in the classroom will be very helpful for the teacher.

In addition, Louhala (2017) pertained to the major teaching strategies used in teaching civilization as follows:

- a) **Meaning:** The teacher should focus on meaning for effective assimilation and comprehension of events and history.
- b) **Conceptual frameworks:** This refers to “mental structures, cognitive frameworks, core concepts, mental models, scaffolding, schemas or big ideas” (p.193). For example, the theme of power includes oppressor, oppressed, money, greed, social classes, and conflict. This can be assured through:
 - 1) **Questions:** Teachers interested in boosting comprehension would use questions to direct their teaching and raise learners' motivation and critical thinking.
 - 2) **Timelines:** “A conceptual framework that represents a chronological summary of history in visual form” (Louahla, 2017, p. 193). Civilization teachers need to use a timeline on the board to explain the continuity or change in events.
 - 3) **Graphic organizers:** This is a visual representation of the lesson content. It helps in gathering the main ideas in one visual form.
 - 4) **Maps:** They are important to visualize places in the students' minds.
- c) **Chronological Narratives:** “History textbooks are one type of historical narrative, which may describe a single event or tell us the story of a larger span of time” (p. 194)
- d) **Thinking strategies:** These strategies involve students in analyzing events. The most used ones in civilization are 1) comparing and contrasting cultures, 2) Continuity and change over time, and 3) cause and effect relationships.
- e) **Teaching activities:** They help enhance learners' comprehension of the content of civilization. For better assimilation, the teacher must diversify the types of activities such as reading, writing, research, analysis, role-playing, etc.

Consequently, if civilization teachers are aware of these approaches and strategies, their classrooms will be vivid with diversified activities; there will be no room for boredom or lack of interest. These strategies provide opportunities to tackle lessons in different ways and put an end to students' negative attitudes and lack of motivation.

Methods

Participants

Ten teachers represent the whole population of civilization teachers at the Department of Letters and English Language -Badji Mokhtar University -Annaba. Seven civilization teachers answered the questionnaire. These teachers have different experiences in teaching the

course of civilization at the level of license. The participants represent the majority of teachers of civilisation at the license level.

Research Instruments

To investigate teachers' challenges in teaching civilization, a quantitative study has been carried out using a questionnaire as a research tool in the Department of English at Badji Mokhtar University- Annaba.

Research Procedures

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and sent to the participants via Google Forms through email. The teachers were very cooperative in answering the questionnaire. They were informed that the questionnaire was anonymous and confidential.

Description of the Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire involves six sections. The first section, 'General Information', includes the degree and years of experience in teaching. The second section, 'Module-related Challenges', contains questions about whether the nature of the module of civilization is a source of challenge; they have to explain by referring to three options: the difficulty of the content, the lengthy content, or the terminology (They may select more than one). Section three, 'Students-related Challenges', deals with teachers' perceptions of students' attitudes and motivation to study civilization, their historical/political background knowledge about the British/American Civilization, students' attendance of the civilization session, the appropriacy of the timetable, the difference between the mother culture and the American /British cultures.

Section four, 'Teaching approach-related Challenges', encompasses questions about the provision of the syllabus by the beginning of the year, involving students in researching the lesson before the session, the use of technological devices in presenting the lessons and the types of these devices, focusing on memorization or analysis, general historical overview or selected historical events, the kind of activities they involve students in, interaction in the classroom, involving students in mini-projects, using timelines, graphic organizers, or maps. Section five, 'Other Challenges', deals with the mode of teaching online or on-site, challenges faced in both modes and teachers' strategies to motivate their students to learn civilization. The last section, 'Suggestions', deals with an open-ended question on how best to teach civilization.

Results

Out of the seven teachers who answered the questionnaire, 71.4% were MAA (Maître Assistant A), 14.3% MCB (Maître de conference B) and 14.3% MAB (Maître Assistant B). Their teaching experiences differ from 3 years (1 teacher), 5 years (2 teachers), 10 years (3 teachers) and 22 years (1 teacher).

In the section on the Subject-matter challenges, it was found that 71.4% of the teachers of civilization affirmed that the nature of the module itself represents a source of challenge, as shown in the following Figure:

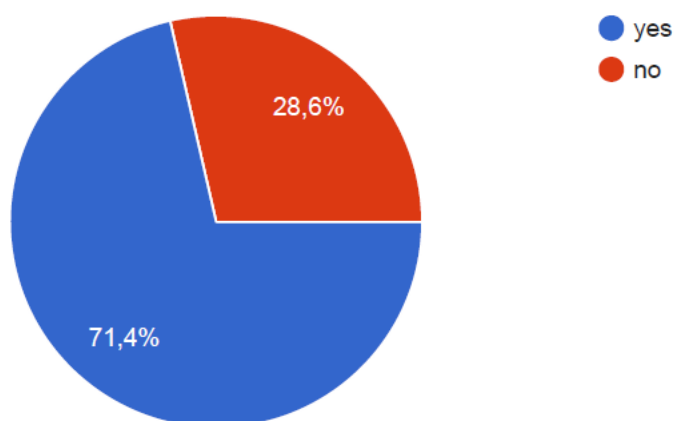


Figure 1. The subject matter as a source of challenge

Those who affirmed explained by providing multiple answers as follows:

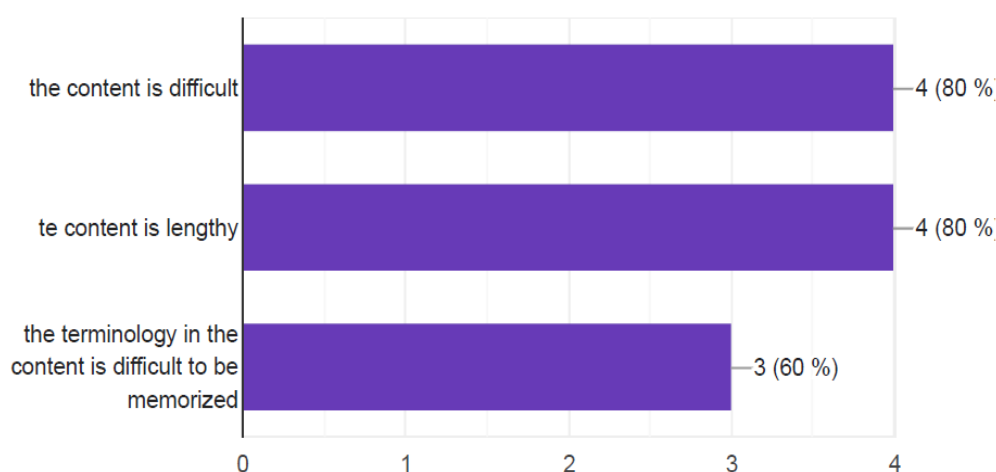


Figure 2. The types of challenges related to the subject matter

As demonstrated, 80% found that the content was difficult, 80% noticed that the content was lengthy, and 60% saw that the terminology of the content was difficult to memorize. These teachers show a high level of awareness related to the content-related challenges in the civilization module. The question to be raised here is why they did nothing to make the content easier and shorter, with some strategies to memorize the difficult terminology.

In the section on ‘Students’ related challenges’, 57.1% of the teachers confirmed that their students are motivated to study civilization while 42.9% did not. Then, an undeniable percentage of the students (42.9%) did not like civilization. Besides, all the teachers (100%) affirmed that their students lack historical/political background knowledge related to the American/British civilization. This can explain the lack of students’ motivation; these students have no previous information about the American/British civilization. Hence, the civilization module represents the “unknown” for them; as a result, they did not like it.

In addition, 85.7% affirmed that their students were programmed by previous EFL students that the civilization course is heavy and difficult, while 14.3% did not think so. Hence, the vast majority have negative attitudes toward civilization because of the negative effect of

the previous EFL students' perceptions. Considering students' attendance at the civilization session, teachers' answers were as follows (Figure 3):

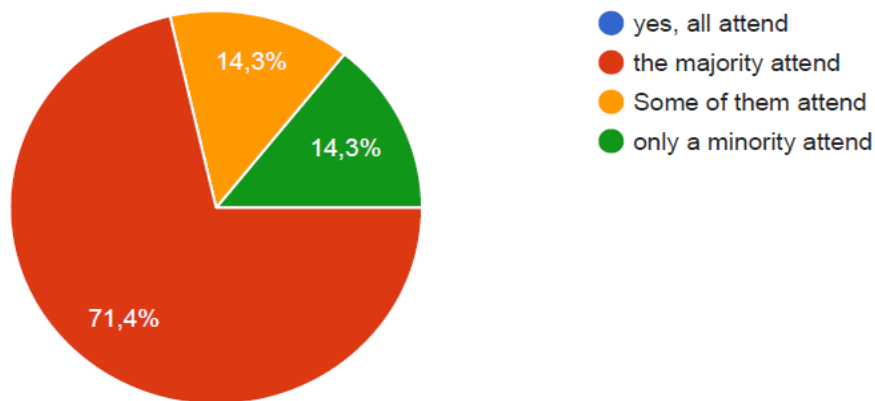


Figure 3. Teachers' perceptions of Students' attendance in Civilization

No one teacher opted for all, the great majority (71.4%) opted for the majority of the students, 14.3% only a minority of students attended, and another 14.3% selected some of them. This can imply that the teacher himself has certain effects on the students to attend the civilization session otherwise, we find the same results if only the nature of the module is challenging.

71.4% affirmed that their students found the timetable schedule of the civilization session appropriate, while 28.6% did not. Then, the timetable did not represent a challenge. However, all the teachers (100%) affirmed that their students found differences between their own culture and the American/British culture. Then, the differences between the cultures can be the source of challenges for the students. Here, the teacher should prepare the students for the differences between the cultures in a gradual way by comparing and contrasting cultures using different sources and tools.

Considering the teaching challenges, all the teachers confirmed that they provided the syllabus for the course of civilization by the beginning of the year. Then, students can develop a general idea about the content of the course from the first session. 85.7% affirmed that they involve their students in conducting research before the session, while 14.3% did not.

The following figure demonstrates teachers' use of technology in teaching civilization:

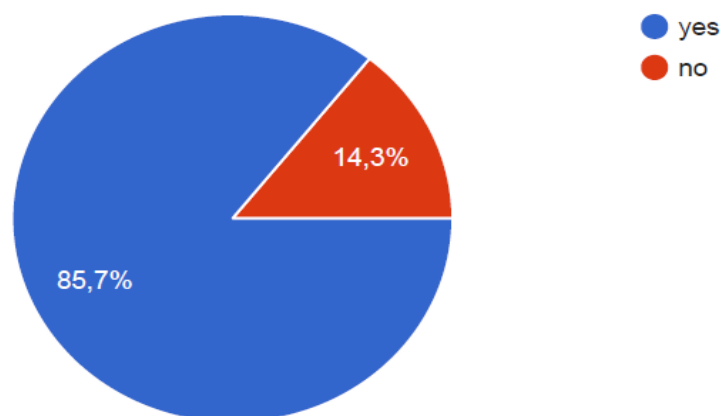


Figure 4. Teachers' use of technology

85.7% agreed that they used technological devices while 14.3% did not. The most used devices are data-show (83.3%), computers (66.7%), and smartphones (66.7%). While teaching, 85.7% of the teachers focus on the analysis of the lesson, while 14.3% focus on the memorization of the lesson. In addition, 85.7% focus on a general historical overview, while 14.3% on selected historical events. However, it is important to focus on selected events rather than a general overview so that the students do not lose concentration and find themselves lost in details.

While teaching, 85.7% involved their students in discussion; however, 14.3% did not. In involving students in mini-projects, 71.4% affirmed they did, while 28.6% did not, as shown in the following figure:

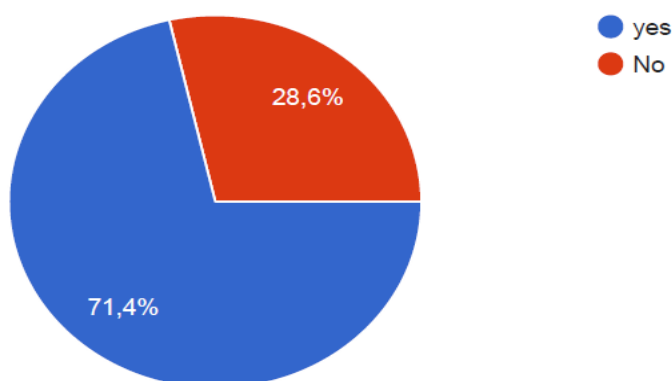


Figure 5. Teachers's involvement of students in mini project work

In answering the question on the use of conceptual frameworks as teaching strategies, 85.7% affirmed they use a timeline (Chronological summary of history in visual form), 14.3% use maps, and none of the teachers use graphic organizers (mind mapping). However, it is necessary to apply all the previously mentioned strategies depending on the needs of the lesson. Graphic organizers are important in summarizing the lesson. They help confirm the comprehension of the lesson. In referring to other possible types of challenges, 71.4% affirm that their session is on-site, while 28.6% are online. However, in the two modes of teaching, teachers faced challenges.

In face-to-face teaching, teachers advanced the following reasons (reported as written by the teachers):

- **Difficulty in assimilating the content**
- The **inability** of students to think through Anglo-Saxon culture, as well as the **pre-existing disinterest** of students in issues related to politics, public policies, etc
- Students are **not able** to keep a constant **focus on the chronological order** of presented historical events, which requires teachers to repeat the same information.
- **The module itself**, students **hate** learning this module, so you feel **upset** when you start introducing each lesson.
- **Difficulty of assimilation**
- None. I prefer teaching Civilization face-to-face.
- **Weak and poor student prerequisites, motivation**

Then, face-to-face challenges can be concluded as follows: comprehension problems, thinking through another culture, attention, and concentration problems, students' attitudes affecting the teacher's attitudes towards the lesson, and students' poor background knowledge.

The other teachers advance the following challenges in online teaching:

- **Attendance**
- Students' **attendance** and credibility.
- **Attendance**
- **Unstable Internet connection; total absence of motivation** and access from students; Most students **don't have the necessary devices and Internet connection**, etc.
- **Presence, network connection.**

Hence, in online learning, the major challenges are students' attendance, internet connection, the absence of students' motivation, and the lack of technological devices.

In asking teachers how they would motivate their students, they advanced:

- Sending them **many forms of files, videos,**
- It is mainly by **persuading them** of the importance of having a sufficiently important background on the political, social, economic, and educational aspects of the life of the people of the target language to have a better command of the language.
- I teach history by **storytelling** to help my students understand the chain of historical events instead of memorizing them.
- Through the use of **technological materials**, the data shown in the PPT presentation will be useful for students. Another method, the most preferable for students, is **explaining the handouts** to memorize such events.
- **Other types of files. Videos**, etc
- The fact that the module is based on historical events and politics makes it different from the other modules. I captivate the students' attention by **projecting images and videos** that are related to the lesson via a **data-show**.
- **Using technology, projection, maps, and visuals.**

To raise their learners' motivation, the teachers propose using diversified types of files: video, PPT (PowerPoint presentations), data show, images, and visuals in addition to teaching through storytelling and explaining the lesson handout. Nevertheless, none of these teachers referred to explaining the objectives of the lessons and including students in conducting

research on the difficult terms before the session to develop their background knowledge. Besides, the interactive classroom is the key to motivation, while a silent classroom is a sign of boredom and a lack of knowledge.

In the suggestions section on how to best teach the civilization module, teachers provide the following:

- **On-site** and using **ICT** tools.
- Improving the teaching of civilization could be achieved by **diversifying activities and methods of delivering lessons**. This may involve the use of **videos, documentaries, and teamwork**. This could also include the conduct of investigative, analytical, and **well-rewarded assignments**.
- Telling history by **storytelling** is the best way to learn and understand the different and long historical events.
- Through **interaction inside the classroom**, motivate students to **read materials** before the class starts
- **Attendance and using ICT** tools
- by incorporating **modern techniques, data-show projection**

The teachers pinpoint the significance of onsite teaching in contrast with online teaching. They see that improving the teaching of civilization is based on diversifying the activities and teaching using videos, ICTs, documentaries, and storytelling. In addition, it is important to apply different student groupings for group work, not just focus on individual work. Besides, the focus will be more on interaction in the classroom, in addition to motivating students to read authentic materials.

Discussion

To answer the research question: “What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching Civilization during the license period?”. A questionnaire was used to test the following hypothesis: “The civilization teachers encounter different types of challenges related to the nature of the module, students ‘attitudes and motivation, in addition to the teaching approach and strategies’”. Through the analysis of the findings of the questionnaire, the hypothesis was confirmed.

First, civilization teachers encounter challenges related to **the nature of the subject matter** itself as affirmed. In addition, **the content of the module is difficult** (80%), **lengthy lessons** (80%), and **difficult terminology** (60%). Second, civilization teachers face challenges related to the students, as 42.9% of the teachers confirmed that their students are **not motivated** to learn civilization. In addition, 85.7% of them found that their students have developed **negative attitudes** because they were pre-programmed by previous EFL students that civilization is a complicated and difficult course. Besides, all the teachers affirmed that their students **lacked historical/political knowledge** about the American/British Civilization. Furthermore, all the teachers agree that **the differences between the mother culture and target cultures** (American/ British) are also sources of challenges for the students. All these results confirmed literature findings as advanced by Rampen (2017), Atamena and Aboubou (2018), Raouti (2024), Seddiki (2018) and Baghdadi, Cheriet and Ladjini (2022)

Third, about challenges related to the teaching approach, all the teachers chose one thinking strategy where it is more effective to use the three strategies (Comparing and contrasting cultures, thinking about continuity and change, and cause and effect relationships). Applying these strategies will develop learners’ critical thinking skills, as invoked previously

by Louhala (2017), instead of being merely receivers of information; consequently, they will interact more in the classroom. However, concerning the PDP part, teachers' answers seem perfect; however, when we consider the types of challenges they raised in the onsite and the online mode, we find that even in face-to-face situations, they struggle to motivate their students without success. This raised a question: "Did these teachers apply the PDP (re-during-post) stages in their sessions?"

Pedagogical Implications

In the discussion section, dealing with the challenges related to the subject matter of the course of civilization, all the teachers show high awareness that the content is difficult, lengthy, and with difficult terminology. These challenges could be avoided if the teachers applied a method that eases the difficulty of the content. First, in the pre-session stage, the teachers could provide online links to movies, newspapers, documentaries, and handouts to be consulted/checked by the students at home before the session. They can also ask them to answer questions individually/in pairs/groups, and this would direct their watching or readings. In other words, the civilization teachers can finish the lesson with certain questions, and then send some files to be watched and analyzed to answer the questions.

During the teaching stage, the teacher should start by checking the homework and then discuss the answers to the last session's questions as a warm-up to the lesson. This should be done through interaction, mostly among the students themselves. The teacher should be the facilitator and no longer the source of knowledge. By the end of the session, the post-teaching stage, the teacher concludes the main points and asks the students to provide an oral or written summary. Here, the teacher can apply graphic organizers (mind-mapping) to prepare a summary of the lesson with the guidance of the students. In other sessions, the teacher can ask them to provide their graphic organizers in the last 10 minutes of the lesson or as homework. The session should always end with homework and research about the next lesson.

Therefore, in considering the teaching approach challenges, if the teacher applies these steps through applying the PDP teaching (pre-during-post), the problem related to the difficulty of the content will be reduced and even vanish. Focusing on the length, the teacher could make the content shorter by only selecting the important events; "Do not include all the details, but select the main ones". Teachers should remember that "less is more". With too many details, the students will feel lost. It is also possible to start with a clear outline of the lesson, which will help the comprehension processes and the assimilation of information, in addition to attention and concentration. The teachers can help learners with memorization strategies, especially the mnemonic strategies (Rhymes, loci, chaining, keyword, image-name technique, etc) to remember difficult names, places, and numerous dates.

But how to deal with difficult terminology? In the pre-stage, the teacher could provide the difficult terms to be checked by the students using the dictionary at home or doing internet research. Once in the classroom, students present their definitions; then, the teacher provides his clarifications with examples. After that, the students will be ready for the lesson with a certain ease and readiness.

Consequently, the problems of difficult, lengthy content and terminology will be solved. Moreover, if the teachers apply the four conceptual frameworks (Themes, timelines, maps, and graphic organizers) this will facilitate the assimilation process. Teachers should also train their students to use all of them for preparation and revision purposes. In addition, it is crucial in the civilization session to include the thinking strategies: comparing and contrasting cultures to

develop an awareness of the similarities and differences between cultures; continuity and change over time- to analyze the flow of events and how related they were; cause and effect- to develop the reasoning skills concerning sources and results of events.

In dealing with students' related challenges, along the PDP stages, learners will be intrinsically motivated to learn civilization. In addition, they will enthusiastically interact with the teacher and their classmates. Besides, the problem of background knowledge will be solved as they prepare at home and use what they prepared in the warm-up.

Moreover, the suggested approach to teaching civilization will solve the subject matter, students and teaching methods challenges. It is also important to consider the effective use of Internet files, either videos, audio or even articles or newspapers, before the session, and if necessary, during the session (only short, significant sequences of movies or readings). These tools should be wisely selected to guarantee the success of the lesson. Furthermore, teachers need good training in selecting and using ICTS with the civilization content.

Recommendations

The teachers of civilization should keep these motivation keys to effective sessions:

- a) "Keep them busy" inside and outside the classroom.
- b) "Let them use what they know" through interaction, discussion, and debates.
- c) "Less is more" concise and precise content to grasp the main information.
- d) "Responsibilize them for their learning" through research and homework.
- e) "Make the objectives CLEAR" (for the whole module and every lesson)
- f) "A good reader is a critical thinker" Ask them to read to develop the ability to analyze. They can develop an analytical mind only through selected readings.
- g) "Involve them more"
- h) "Using ICT is indispensable" to facilitate visualization and comprehension.

Limitations of the study

The findings cannot be generalized due to the number of participants, as out of eleven teachers, only seven answered the questionnaire. Nevertheless, it provides insights for future studies.

Conclusion

The study showed that civilization teachers struggle with challenges related to the content of the course itself, their students, and their teaching approaches/strategies. To motivate students to learn civilization, they need to see the significance of what they do: "Why do they have to study this lesson? What advantages will they have if they prepare the lesson? Teachers should raise their interest and keep them involved in civilization outside and inside the classroom through different student groupings. Besides, the civilization teachers insisted on the importance of onsite sessions. However, despite teachers' awareness of the types of challenges, they persist! However, there is always a glimpse of light if the teachers insist on raising their students' interest, and the best ways are ICT, PDP, storytelling and role-playing/ simulation. In addition, teachers should be aware that students have different learning styles: visual/auditory and kinaesthetic. Hence, it is important to present the information via different modes. To conclude, the teacher of civilization has a heavy load to find interesting and motivating sources so that the students enjoy their sessions. They can start by answering these reflection questions: "Do I like teaching civilization? And do I like the way I am teaching it?"

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Declaration of AI Refined

This document has benefited from the application of AI-driven tools, including Grammarly and Scholar AI Chat, to refine its linguistic aspects. These tools were utilised to correct grammar and spelling and improve the overall writing style. It is acknowledged that the use of these technologies may introduce certain AI-generated linguistic patterns. However, the core intellectual content, data interpretation, and conclusions presented remain the sole work of the authors.

Statement of Absence of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the research, findings, or recommendations presented in this paper. All conclusions drawn are independent and unbiased.

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Cite as

Ghaouar, N. (2025). Investigating Challenges in Teaching Civilization: Teachers' Perceptions at Badji Mokhtar University-Annaba . *Atras Journal*, 6 (2), 153-167