Teaching More than English: Exploring Possibilities for Critical
Intercultural Pedagogy in Algerian EFL Contexts

by

Abir Drissat

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching and Applied
Linguistics

Centre for Applied Linguistics
University of Warwick
January 2022
Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research Sediments

1.2 Interculturality and English Language Education in Algeria

1.3 The Research Gap and Purpose of the Study

1.4 Algeria: A Glance at History

1.4.1 Colonised Algeria: The Ethnic Divide

1.4.2 Languages in Algeria

1.5 An Outline of the Thesis

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Underpinnings

2.1 Critical Intercultural Pedagogy

2.1.1 Language Learning and Teaching from an Intercultural Perspective

2.1.2 The Critical Turn in Language Teaching and Learning

2.1.3 Critical Pedagogy

2.1.3.1 CP and Problem Posing

2.1.3.2 CP and Dialogue

2.1.3.3 CP and the Promotion of Critical Consciousness

2.1.3.4 CP and the Role of the Teacher

2.1.3.5 Problematising CP’s Quest for Social Action

2.1.3.6 Critiques of Critical Pedagogy

2.2 Dialogic Learning and Intercultural Pedagogy

2.2.1 Mikhail Bakhtin’s Dialogism (1986)

2.2.1.1 Heteroglossia

2.2.1.2 Polyphony

2.2.2 Mercer’s Types of Talk
Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Methods ........................................ 57

3.0 Introduction ................................................................................................. 57
3.1 Research Questions ..................................................................................... 57
3.2 Paradigmatic Position .................................................................................. 58
3.3 Methodological Approach .......................................................................... 59
  3.3.1 Case Study .............................................................................................. 61
3.4 Learning Materials and Teaching Approach ............................................. 62
  3.4.1 Learning Materials .................................................................................. 62
    3.4.1.1 Problem Posing Approach ................................................................. 63
    3.4.1.2 Critical Reflection ............................................................................. 63
    3.4.1.3 Dialogue .......................................................................................... 64
  3.4.2 The Teaching Approach .......................................................................... 64
3.5 Data Collection ............................................................................................. 68
  3.5.1 The Research Site ................................................................................... 68
  3.5.2 Recruiting the Research Participants ...................................................... 69
3.6 Data collection Methods ............................................................................. 71
  3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews ................................................................... 71
  3.6.2 Audio Recordings of Group Discussions ............................................... 72
  3.6.3 Students’ Reflective Journals ................................................................ 72
  3.6.4 Supplementary Field Notes .................................................................... 74
  3.6.5 Challenges Faced in Data Collection ..................................................... 74
3.7 Data Analysis ............................................................................................... 76
3.8 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations .............................................. 79
  3.8.1 Trustworthiness ....................................................................................... 79
    3.8.1.1 Credibility ....................................................................................... 79
    3.8.1.2 Transferability ................................................................................ 80
    3.8.1.3 Dependability ................................................................................ 81
    3.8.1.4 Confirmability ............................................................................... 81
  3.8.2 Ethical Considerations ........................................................................... 81
6.1 Overview of Tasks .......................................................... 154

6.1.1 Task 1: Eliciting and Challenging Starting-point Perceptions of Different Ethnic Groups (The Poster Activity) .......................................................... 155
   Extract 6.1 Perceptions of Chaouis (Team Beta) ...................................... 157
   Extract 6.2 Perceptions of Chaouis (Team Alpha) ..................................... 162
   Extract 6.3 Perceptions of Kabyles (Team Alpha) ..................................... 165
   Extract 6.4 Perceptions of Kabyles (Team Beta) ...................................... 169
   Extract 6.5 Perceptions of Arabs (Team Sigma) ....................................... 171
   Extract 6.6 Perceptions of Beni Mzabs (Team Sigma) ............................... 174

6.1.2 Task 2: Provoking Dissonance Through Multimodality ......................... 177
   Extract 6.7 Resisting to Learn ............................................................ 180
   Extract 6.8 Dissecting the Social Construction of Stereotypes: The Case of Oranis 183
   Extract 6.9 Thinking Critically about the Social Transmission of Stereotypes 186
   Extract 6.10 Re-Constructing Previous Stereotypes: The Case of Kabyle People 189

6.1.3 Task 3: Dissecting the Ideological Dimension of Stereotypes Within a Critical Decolonial Perspective ................................................................. 191
   Extract 6.11 Tracing the Ideological Roots of Stereotyping ....................... 193
   Extract 6.12 Keeping the Dialogue Going: Should We Believe in Stereotypes? 195
   Extract 6.13 Developing a Critical Voice: Stereotypes as a Device for Political Control 197

6.1.4. Task 4: Re-Visiting Assumptions: The ‘Just Because’ (JB) Sheet ............ 200
   Extract 1.14 Reflective Discussion with Alia .......................................... 201

6.2 Summary .............................................................................. 204

Chapter Seven: Discussion ................................................................ 207

7.0 Introduction .......................................................................... 207

7.1 How Do Students View the Self and Imagined Other? .......................... 208
   7.1.1. The Self as Othered and Alienated: Pushing Against Regional and Religious Stereotyping .............................................................. 208
   7.1.2 The Other as Idealised and Appealing ............................................. 210
   7.1.3 The Imagined Ethnic Other ............................................................ 212

7.2 How is Critical Consciousness Developed Through Dialogue? ............. 213
   7.2.1 How Do Students Construct More Complex Understandings of Identity? ................................................................. 213
   7.2.2 How Do Students Engage with Stereotypes, and What Does This Reveal about Their Critical Consciousness? ............................................... 216
      7.2.2.1 Naming Stereotypes: Sites of Negotiation and Difficult Dialogue .................................................................................. 217
      7.2.2.2 Adopting an Introspective Stance Towards Ethnic Stereotypes: Attempting to do Critical Dialogue .............................................. 219
      7.2.2.3 Deconstructing Colonial History: Recognising Stereotypes as Ideologies of Oppression ......................................................... 222
   7.2.3 In What Other Ways Can Critical Consciousness Manifest Itself in Dialogue? .............................................................. 224
      7.2.3.1 Critical Consciousness: Resistance and Finding Voice .................. 224
      7.2.3.2 Critical Consciousness: Critiquing Dominant Discourse ............ 225

7.3 How Does the Teacher Contribute to the Promotion of Critical Consciousness? 226
7.3.1 Negotiating Authority through Student-Generated Critical Contents: Giving Voice............................................ 226

Extract 7.1 Negotiating Syllabus.................................................................................................................. 227
Extract 7.2 Sharing Anecdotal Realities of Race and Colour: Racial conscientization...................................... 229

7.3.2 Scaffolding Reflection.......................................................................................................................... 230

7.3.3 Creating Safety Nets.......................................................................................................................... 233

7.4 Summary .................................................................................................................................................. 235

Chapter Eight: Conclusion.............................................................................................................................. 237

8.0 Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 237

8.1 Main findings ......................................................................................................................................... 237

8.1.1 Research Question 1: How Do Students View the Self and Imagined Other? ........................................ 238

8.1.2 Research Question 2: How is Critical Consciousness Developed Through Dialogue?........................... 238

8.1.2.1 How Do Students Construct More Complex Understandings of Identity? ........................................ 239

8.1.2.2 How Do Students Critically Engage with Stereotypes of Self and Imagined Other? ........................... 240

8.1.2.3 In What Other Ways Can Critical Consciousness Manifest Itself in Dialogue? ................................. 241

8.1.3 Research Question 3: How Does the Teacher Contribute to The Promotion of Critical Consciousness in The Classroom?............................................................................................................. 243

8.2 Pedagogical Implications ......................................................................................................................... 244

8.3 Limitations of the Study .......................................................................................................................... 247

8.4 Contributions of the Study ....................................................................................................................... 250

8.5 Directions for Future Research ................................................................................................................. 251

8.6 Teacher Reflections and Concluding Remarks ........................................................................................ 253

References.................................................................................................................................................... 258

APPENDICES .................................................................................................................................................. 288

Appendix A – The Personal and Social Identity Wheel (s).............................................................................. 288
Appendix B – Reading Text 1: Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination....................................................... 290
Appendix C – Reading Text 2: Religious Conflicts in Algeria........................................................................... 291
Appendix D – Consent Form .......................................................................................................................... 292
Appendix E – Participant Information Sheet .................................................................................................. 293
Appendix F – Interview Questions ................................................................................................................ 298
Appendix G – Samples of Student Interviews................................................................................................ 299
Appendix H – Permission to Conduct Research.............................................................................................. 301
Appendix I – Ethical Approval ........................................................................................................................ 302
Appendix J – Initial Content Analysis (Sample of the Coding process)............................................................ 309
Appendix K – The Poster Activity (Lesson Two- Ethnic Stereotypes) – Students’ Worksheets ................. 313
Acknowledgements

Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds

It took a long time for this dissertation to make its way from my computer to yours. I started my journey about four and a half years ago, and both myself and everyone I knew expected it to be finished much sooner. Well, as I discovered, completing a PhD is anything from predictable.

There were times throughout this journey when I had the cinched sense that this work would never see light. The fact that this thesis has materialised owes a great deal to the many people who provided support along the way. First, I wish to thank Dr Troy McConachy, my advisor, mentor, and above all, strong ally. Troy must be thanked at the outset for his amazing patience and support throughout this journey. Few other supervisors would have put up with my continual apologies and missed deadlines. Or reading the countless versions of my chapters and ever so gently pointing out flaws and places of ambiguity. As might be imagined, he did and still continues to inspire me with his scholarly integrity, his excitement for interculturality and critical approaches, as well as his personal kindness. Working with him has been a real gain.

My gratitude also extends to Dr Annamaria Pinter, my second supervisor, whose critical insights helped enrich the content of this study. Like Troy, she was always willing to offer advice, guidance, and support whenever necessary. Equally, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the following scholars who helped expand my horizons of thinking and knowledge: Dr Ema Ushioda, Dr Mostefa Meddour and Dr Bushra Ahmed Khurram.

Before collecting my data, I had the unusual good fortune to meet a group of wonderful young adults who accepted me into their world and provided me with a wonderful first-time teaching
experience. Though anonymously, I wish to thank my students for giving me faith and passion for telling their experiences with critical learning. Your brilliance, kind hearts and cheerfulness inspired me much in this journey.

The debt I have incurred for my circle of strong women has been immense. To Tehreem, Leila, Soumia, Amina, and Randa, I say thank you for giving me a sense of belonging away from home. The time we spent together, from sharing laughter and cries to cosy Costa conversations and long-distance zoom writing sessions, kept me going forward in this lengthy process of ‘PhDying’. You guys came along the end, in the most thoughtful and loving ways, to give me the much-needed energy to forge ahead. I wouldn’t have chosen any other people to accompany me on this learning voyage.

On a personal level, my gratitude goes to my family and close friends who never wavered to remember me with their duas and support during some of the gut-wrenching challenges I faced in this process. To Souad, Ikram, Siham, Brahim and Ahmed, I say thank you. A special round of applause also goes to my uncle and best friend, Hocine, I don’t know how I would have been able to do this without your love and support.

Abir Drissat
UK, 2022
Dedication

To the memory of my beloved Grandmother, who did not live to see this dissertation underway.

To Mum, Dad, and Selma,

My heart is so full of you, I can hardly call it my own.

(Quote by Liana Radulescu)
Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted in any form for another award or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge, no material previously published or written by another party has been used without due acknowledgement.
ABSTRACT

This interpretive and exploratory study looks at an eight-week pedagogical intervention carried out by the researcher which sought to respond to calls for more context-based pedagogical practices which challenge essentialist assumptions about culture and identity categories through reflexive and critical thinking (McConachy, 2018; Liddicoat, 2019; Baker, 2017; Holliday, 2018; Devin & Clark, 2014). Drawing on the theoretical contributions of Mezirow (1978), Bakhtin (1986) and Freire (1993), the study specifically aims to understand the ways in which a group of eight EFL Algerian students developed critical consciousness in relation to constructs of culture, identity, stereotypes, and ethnicity through dialogic classroom interaction. Analysis of audio-recorded classroom interactions, semi-structured interviews, and teacher/student reflective journals, provide insights into the students’ views of these key constructs and how these were challenged, defended, and questioned in accordance with the dynamic trajectories of classroom dialogue. In sites of contention and difficult dialogue, students questioned social myths, reflected on their accuracy, and (re)read these as part of wider ideological structures that function to legitimise processes of oppression and inequality. The teacher’s role in cultivating spaces for critical learning was also found important in this study. Specifically, the findings have shown that factors such as negotiating authority, scaffolding reflection, and providing brave spaces were all conducive to the promotion of critical consciousness in the classroom. The thesis argues that the work of stereotype deconstruction is necessary, even vital in order to de-stereotype and decolonise the learner’s mind, through raising a type of consciousness that challenges the borders which surround normative assumptions of self and other and undermines the diversity of identities. The findings of this study add to a limited but growing body of research investigating the inclusion of critical intercultural pedagogies in ELT settings.
List of Tables and Abbreviations

Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ELT: English Language Teaching
FLT: Foreign Language Teaching
FL: Foreign Language
CC: Critical Consciousness
CCA: Critical Cultural Awareness
CT: Critical Thinking
UK: United Kingdom
USA: United States of America

Tables

Table 3.1: Overview of Course Tasks and Activities
Table 3.2: Participants
Table 3.3: Summary of Data Collected
Table 5.1: Summary of Learning Units, Lesson 2
Table 6.1: Pedagogical Model for Task 2

Figures

Figure 5.1. Students Completing their Personal and Identity Wheel (s) (Lesson 1)
Figure 5.2. The Label Card Activity- Card Holder-Farah (Lesson 1)
Figure 6.1. Kabyles
Figure 6.2. Beni-Mzabs
Figure 6.3. Oranis
Figure 6.4. Students Reading the Text on Religious Conflicts in Algeria (Lesson 2)
Chapter One: Introduction

Still today, ‘Algeria’ – signifier, object, and place – is associated with devastation and upheaval, while the long-term effects of its colonial history are repeatedly disavowed. This is a consequence of a coloniality that strove to stop time, compress space, and erase memory for all its members.

Karima Lazali, 2021

More than ever, educational institutions are facing the challenge of helping prepare younger generations for a globally interconnected world. The phenomenon of pluralistic societies presents opportunities as well as challenges for the educational sector which finds itself in a constant quest for relevant patterns that foster peace and co-existence. With the trend toward globalisation and social mobility, personal contact is increased across national borders; consequently, one’s cultural belonging is emphasised as an attempt to manage change within ‘dissolved’ geographical boundaries (Rosen et al, 2000). This becomes easier with technology and access to social media platforms. Oftentimes, when two people talk to each other, they tend to recognise one another as belonging to a specific social group, religion, country, or nation. Not only would this have an influence on what they say to each other, but also on how they fixate particular identities to one another. For one thing, such a process of identification comes with an accompanying risk of stereotyping, othering, and ethnocentrism (Hewstone and Giles, 1986; Bennett & Castiglioni, 2004; Brewer, 1986), as well as a tendency to depersonalise individuals, reducing them from complex and inclusive characters to representatives of a given social or national category. As such, more and more divisions, dichotomies, and categorical systems are created. Today, it would be hard to deny the promising role of intercultural education in cultivating a sphere of critical, engaged, and inclusive societies. Foreign language education can play a significant role in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes young
people need to interact interculturally and act in more sensitive and less stereotypical ways (Byram, 1997, 2008; Guilherme, 2002; Feng, 2009). This chapter has two main, interrelated purposes. The first is to give an overview of the research sediments and status of EFL and intercultural learning in Algeria. It then moves to provide details about the research gap and objectives of this study. Related to this purpose is a second one, exhibiting the historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts of the country and presenting a general outline of the thesis. It is hoped that the content of this chapter would give the reader a closer glamp on the need for critical intercultural learning and consciousness in a post-colonial country like Algeria.

1.1 Research Sediments

The key impetus for this research is linked to my learning, questions, and more specifically previous reflections as an EFL learner. For as long as I can remember, I have always been dissatisfied with the structuralist approach to culture teaching that pervaded during my language learning experiences as an undergraduate student. At the time, language learning took place in decontextualised spaces separate from the lives of students, with a focus on the acquisition of surface-level cultural content, including facts about inner-circle countries, and instructions about what to say to or how to behave around native speakers. Inevitably, this created a cultural taxidermy in my head, which led me to think of British and American cultures as fixed entities and think less of the intricate and hybrid identities of its members. This limited view of intercultural teaching has been critiqued on multiple fronts of research in Algerian tertiary contexts; nevertheless, traditional approaches remain widespread, and there is little done to cultivate a sphere of intercultural complexity and negotiation of difference in these contexts (Bouslama & Benaissi, 2018; Amziane & Selama, 2020).

How can we make our engagement with culture more critical? This was the driving question behind my dissertation proposal in the early year of 2017. In the course of my research, I saw a need for an empirical endeavour that would aim to address this very real question. In the
literature, I have surrounded myself with the works of Byram (1997, 2021), Dasli & Diaz (2017); Liddicoat (2017, 2019); McConachy (2018); Guilherme (2002); Holliday (2011, 2018) and many others. Through their work, I have come to realise that the practice of culture teaching may be freed from the tasks associated with a mere transmission of factual knowledge. In fact, as these scholars rightly argue, where intercultural learning is tied to an explicit comparison between cultures and languages, it may continue to promote fixed notions of cultural identities (McConachy, 2018). Against this backdrop, they argue for the need to help learners reflect on the situatedness of culture and communication and problematise monolithic realities that fixate constructions of self and other. Doing so would help develop critical beings who are able to interact interculturally in today’s increasingly globalised world.

As well as acknowledging the pressing need for a culturally, and ethnically less alienated society in present-day Algeria, I argue for a modern and critical intercultural approach to language education in Algeria. Today, maybe more than ever before, the need for critical pedagogical approaches in the Algerian educational sector upsurges. Fifty-eight years of independence and Algeria is still a country that did not heal from the practices of racialisation, post-racial categorisation, and regimes of otherness. On the contrary, speeches and disputes of ethnic intolerance and otherization seem to be ever more recurrent and ubiquitous. As Gee (1999) would argue, people do not just use these societal discourses and disputes at the level of language only, rather, they use them to construct beliefs, maintain oppressive social structures, normalise assumptions and reformulate uneven power relations across diverse ethnic, class, and gendered lines. In this notion lies the power of language, and so does the potential for critical intercultural learning.
1.2 Interculturality and English Language Education in Algeria

The educational landscape in Algeria has witnessed substantial reforms in recent years. The requirements for keeping pace with a globalized economic and technological era highlighted the pressing need to develop the English language with the hope to keep up with the demands of globalization, and thus, promote and maintain economical profits, political positioning, and mobility of people across different geographical and digital communities. In light of this, a national English curriculum has been distributed among Algerian schools and universities with the primary aim of supporting students’ core communicative strands. As a corollary of this, the status of English has gained competes with that of French and other national languages. In view of the culture-language nexus and because ‘language education inevitably [esteems] language as the entry point to cultures’ (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 24), intercultural learning has been integrated within the framework of language learning. EFL curricula were beginning to cultivate interculturality, placing an emphasis on facilitating students’ awareness and skills that ‘permit a better understanding of the target culture, of the world and the FL learner's own culture’ (Khenoune, 2013, p. 26). Despite this widespread conviction in the significance of the intercultural dimension to language and the teachers’ positive disposition towards developing students’ intercultural resources, existing empirical studies on ICC in Algeria report growing criticism towards current approaches to intercultural pedagogy. Overall, these criticisms point to the exclusive representation of Anglophone cultures in EFL curricula, the overemphasis on developing students’ linguistic competence and the scarcity of learning activities that foster critical intercultural learning and consciousness (Douidi, 2021; Rabehi, 2021; Amziane & Selama, 2020). I shall give more details on these studies in chapter two (section 2.3.1).

1.3 The Research Gap and Purpose of the Study

It has been widely recognised that culture teaching/learning constitutes an essential element in foreign language education (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). However, it seems that the
inclusion of culture in the Algerian EFL classroom has been heavily reliant on the ‘uncritical’ imparting of Anglophone cultural knowledge (Rabehi, 2021; Douidi, 2021). This is based on the assumption that a focus on the acquisition of foreign cultural knowledge can increase the learners’ intercultural knowledge. Thus, we may speak of the role of pedagogy in this case as that of introducing ‘a pre-established canon of texts’ on the target culture (Dasli, 2011, p.23).

Two important issues to be flagged here. First, this approach to FL learning/teaching is strongly tied to a nationalist perspective which presumes an underlying homogenous structure of culture and promotes stereotypes (Holliday, 2018; Fang & Baker, 2018). Second, in view of the fact that English has become a global language (Baker, 2009, 2011, 2015), English language should not be viewed as the exclusive property of Anglophone populations (Fang & Ren, 2018; Syrbe & Rose, 2016). Alternatively, learners need to be sensitised on the dynamic, fluid and complex relationship between language and culture especially in contemporary contexts of globalisation and mobility (Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Liddicoat, 2005). A crucial tenet also relates to the need for developing learners’ reflexive awareness of self and other, particularly by capitalising on the learners’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds as a resource for learning (McConachy, 2018; Liddicoat, 2019; Guilherme, 2002; Holliday, 2018; Devin and Clark, 2014).

Given the scarcity of studies in language education which tackle the development of criticality through classroom discourse, both on an international and local Algerian level, this study sought to investigate how eight EFL students develop the construct of critical consciousness through dialogue and interaction. Specifically, it aimed to understand how students develop more nuanced understandings of culture and identity as complex and intersecting, as well as how they attempt to identify and critically examine which default ways of thinking they had constructed of self and other. With these broad objectives in mind, this study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:
RQ1: How do students view the self and imagined other?

RQ2: How is critical consciousness developed through dialogue?
   • How do students construct more complex understandings of identity?
   • How do students critically engage with stereotypes of self and imagined other?
   • In what other ways can critical consciousness manifest itself in dialogue?

RQ3: How does the teacher contribute to the promotion of critical consciousness in the classroom?

In order to explore and answer these research questions, it is necessary to establish the philosophical and methodological approach of the study; these will be discussed in the methodology chapter (See Chapter 3, sections 3.2 and 3.3).

1.4 Algeria: A Glance at History

For the people who have lived through it, the reality of Algeria’s history has been a complex one. Retained by the ravages of colonialism, destabilising tensions, and a quest for identity, contemporary Algeria still finds itself in need of conciliation and a return to ethnic harmony. In many ways, Algeria is an enviable, multi-ethnic country. With a total area of 2,381,741 square kilometres, the country retains a rich pluralism of languages and ethnic compartmentalization. With such a rich mosaic, one would think that the situation in Algeria is conducive to a ‘melting pot’, yet, from the mid-1990s onward, ethnic diversity and national unity still constitute major challenges.

1.4.1 Colonised Algeria: The Ethnic Divide

The regency of Algiers, as it was called prior to 1830, was part of the Ottoman empire. During this period, the Turkish presence in Algeria was able to extend its military, economic and political growth making the regency of Algiers the centre of its Mediterranean power. At about the time France invaded Algeria, the area was home for the indigenous people of Berber tribes, who have also witnessed several invasions, including the Arab conquest. Following the Muslim
The conquest of the Maghreb, most Berber tribes accepted Islam as a religion, however, it wasn’t until five hundred years later that the Berber language has been rivalled by Arabic (Hamza, 2007, p. 14). France colonized Algeria from the early 1830s to 1962, bringing an end to a nearly 400 years of Ottoman rule. When France colonised Algeria, it was not only an exploitation of Algerian land, but also an annexation of the social and traditional structures of society (Benrabah, 1999; Chaker, 1998). Perhaps what distinguishes Algeria’s colonial experience from any other neighbouring countries is the fact that it was declared part of metropolitan France rather than a colony. In all possible positions of power, France’s expansionist plan sought to monopolise the educational, agricultural, and religious systems in Algeria. These actions were shadowed by a large-scale colonial policy to ‘civilise’ the mass population. Driven by the ideology of mission civilisatrice, the aim was to impose Francophone secular culture and eradicate the Islamic identity. Very much rooted in the construction of indigenous identity, social and tribal formations at the time, Islam constituted the main obstacle for a full geopolitical integration of a colonial government. Wider identities of the mass population were constructed based on regional or religious memberships, rather than national criteria. For that, the policies of colonial rule frequently sought ways to create ethnic, racial, and religious fissures within Algeria’s indigenous population, among which were the Turks, Arabs, Jews, and Berbers (Kabyles). The elimination of native language, religion and regional identities was, thus, seen as vital for the country's annexation (Ruedy, 1992).

As part of their ethnic division policy, French colonists formed an ethnic boundary between the Berber and Arab communities in the region. This division created a binary opposition in which the Berbers were seen as industrious, independent, and hence more superior, whereas the Arabs were perceived as backward and essentially inferior to their Berber neighbours. For at least the first fifty years of colonial rule, the Kabyles were perceived as eminently assimilable to the French European culture (Lorcin & Roberts, 1995). These representations succeeded in
the production of what later became known as the ‘Kabyle Myth’. As a racial strategy, the myth often pointed to the Berber’s willingness to embrace French sects and contributed to the gradual creation of a modern and less religious Kabyle identity. Through their scholarly writing, the French military ethnographers also reinforced these ideological constructs in ways that suited their colonial visions. At the core of these worldviews, was the belief that the Berber tribal identity was separate from the wider Muslim and Arab nation. These colonial French narratives of the Berbers would profoundly affect Algerian society by breeding attitudes of distrust and raising questions about the national role of Berberist anti-colonial movements during the invasion. Consequently ‘Kabylie and its inhabitants would find themselves at the heart of Algeria’s socio-political and cultural problems, both past and present’ (Weitzman, 2011, p.41).

1.4.2 Languages in Algeria

The linguistic scene which characterises Algeria’s landscape today was largely shaped by the concepts of colonialism, decolonisation, and national identity. By the time Algeria gained its independence, a large Arabization policy took effect in the years between 1962- mid-1990s to regain Algeria’s identification as an Arab country. During the colonial period, Arabic was denied any legitimacy or official status. Against this backdrop, Algerian political leaders saw a need to re-introduce Arabic into the linguistic context as part of the need to revive national and religious cohesion (Benrabah, 2013). This understanding of Arab-ness argues, Benrabah (ibid) constituted ‘the core of Algerian nationalism...the language question stood high on the agenda of the national movement and drew its strength from its status as a bond between Islam and nationalism’ (p.58). One of the implications of this policy was reflected in the educational system which reproduced nationalist narratives of a distinct Algerian identity organised around the one language, Arabic, one religion, Islam and one nation construct (Benmayouf, 2009; Roberts, 2003). In the current linguistic scene, Modern Standard Arabic remains the official language of the country, Tamazight (the language of the Berbers) is also recognized as an
official language following some escalating tensions, yet its use has not fully been given the kind of symbolic recognition any official language would have. French on the other hand also continues to be used as the official language of administration, judicial and school systems as well as social life. As part of embracing globalisation, English has also been integrated into the linguistic repertoire of Algeria; as the second foreign language, it continues to pervade gradually in the country, in educational schools, tertiary levels and informal settings. In these past few years, Benrabah (2014) and Belmihoub (2015) note that English is starting to compete with French due to the younger generations’ discontent with French and their increasing interest in learning English.

1.5 An Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 2 of this thesis outlines the theoretical underpinnings of the research. I present a post-modernist perspective on culture and identity and discuss how these understandings provide me with ways of conceptualising the critical turn towards language and culture pedagogy. In this same chapter, I introduce the theories of critical pedagogy, dialogism, and transformative learning, presenting the main principles and concepts of each theory and highlighting its special relevance for this study. Here, I also discuss the nature of stereotypes, its construction and transmission in society, as well as the need to address learner stereotypes in the FL classroom.

In chapter 3, I present a discussion on the qualitative case study methodology I carried out in this project. I also discuss my ontological and epistemological assumptions and their influence on the various techniques of data collection I used in this study. A discussion follows on the ethical considerations and measures taken to contribute to the study’s trustworthiness and validity. My teaching approach, design of the study, and pedagogical decisions are also discussed.
In chapter 4, I present the first group of data emanating from the students’ pre-course interviews. Through this chapter, I attempt to report on the students’ perceptions of culture, intercultural encounters and assumptions of self and imagined other.

In chapter 5, I analyse the ways students (critically) engage with notions of identity, culture, and cultural stereotypes. I explore the ways students responded to the task sets, using dialogue to construct, shape and reshape new understandings of cultural hybridity and difference.

In chapter 6, I analyse the students’ critical engagement with ethnic stereotypes. This chapter highlights, how through dialogue, students were able to reflect critically on the social, historical, and ideological embeddedness of stereotypes. In addition, the discussion in this chapter also adds insights into the messy and non-linear nature of critical consciousness. It also asks readers to reimagine critical learning from a dialogic perspective, allowing for the students’ voices to emerge and meaning-making to take place.

In chapter 7, I engage in a discussion of the major findings of this dissertation work. By drawing on data from the students’ interviews, class interactions and reflective journals, I attempt to explain my findings in light of the theoretical framework adopted in this study to understand the multifaceted nature of critical consciousness and its enactment in the natural setting of the classroom.

In chapter 8, I provide the conclusion of this present study and my short self-reflexive analysis, which examines my role as a teacher/researcher. I also present the limitations of this study as well as implications that could be taken in FL classrooms.
Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Underpinnings

2.0 Introduction

This study adopts a critical perspective to FL education. It is built on three main premises. First, it views language and communication as a joint meaning-making activity that is embedded in broader cultural and historical relations (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Second, it views culture as multiple, co-constructed and emergent (Drummond, 2018). Third, it views learning as dialogically constructed (Bakhtin, 1986). In this thesis, I take the position that dominant approaches to culture teaching from a nationalist perspective entail a risk of entrenching stereotypes. In close conjunction with this view, I argue for a critical intercultural view of pedagogy which substitutes the traditional imparting of fact-based knowledge and practices with a critical, dialogical, and more reflexive approach to language and culture teaching/learning.

In this chapter, I review the relevant literature in an effort to locate my study within a wider theoretical framework. While some theoretical constructs were developed early through my initial exposure to literature, others made more sense alongside my engagement with the fieldwork and data analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to therefore explain the theoretical perspectives that have informed my conceptualisation of the study. To elaborate, this study involves the implementation of critical intercultural pedagogy in an Algerian EFL classroom, informed by the educational trilogy of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1993), dialogic theory (Bakhtin, 1986), and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978). This pedagogy aimed to develop critical consciousness, particularly in relation to identity-related constructs such as culture, gender, ethnicity, and to help students identify and challenge stereotypes and deconstruct status quo discourses and ideologies.

This chapter has three main sections. Section one aims to delineate the theoretical conception of critical intercultural pedagogy that underpins the thesis. It starts with the intercultural turn
in language learning/teaching and then traces the shift towards critical intercultural pedagogy, taking as its starting point critiques on the presentation of language/culture from an essentialist perspective and the dominance of native speakerism ideology. In this section, I also address critical intercultural pedagogy from a CP point of view to illustrate how modern language education can be used to liberate consciousness from the grip of established ideologies (Freire, 1993). Section two introduces the theories of learning which guided the enactment of pedagogy and the analysis of learning in this study (i.e., dialogism and transformative learning). These theoretical notions are so vast that I selectively focus on concepts that are of most relevance to my study, these include the Bakhtinian notions of heteroglossia and polyphony in dialogue (1986), as well as Mezirow’s (1991) concept of disorienting dilemma. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a review of relevant studies on intercultural learning in Algeria as well as previous empirical studies that focus on CP classroom practices and pedagogies for critical intercultural learning.

A Note for the Reader

As part of this study, I allude to particular national, ethnic, or religious groups, such as British, Muslim or Kabyle, with the intention of stimulating critique to the pre-established discourses that homogenise diverse groups in terms of their belonging. While I recognise that using these references may create a false or limited sense of cultural homogeneity, I should note that I only use these terms as a set of discursive constructions as no other alternatives were rhetorically available.

2.1 Critical Intercultural Pedagogy

There seems to be a general consensus among scholars that language education should move towards a critical approach to language and culture (Dasli & Díaz, 2017; Díaz, 2013; Liddicoat, 2017; Pennycook, 2001). Such thinking draws from the argument that we live in an increasingly diverse world which requires us, both language educators and learners, to develop
awareness on the diversity of cultures and variability of language use (Holliday, 2011). In these next few sections, I shall expand on this perspective and argue for the need to develop critical intercultural pedagogies.

2.1.1 Language Learning and Teaching from an Intercultural Perspective

Within the field of modern foreign language education, language practitioners recognize the importance of language teaching and learning from an ‘intercultural perspective’ (Liddicoat, 2008; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). This recognition departs from the premise that foreign language learning should go beyond the acquisition of linguistic competence and include knowledge and interest towards the cultural contents of the foreign language. It is reasoned that a focus on cultural knowledge can increase the students’ understanding of the socio-cultural context in which the language learned is being used. Such thinking draws from the conceptualisation of language as more than a codified system of linguistic elements. Rather, language is seen as a dynamic meaning-making system that embodies knowledge, beliefs, ideologies, and behavioural expectations of a particular sociocultural context (Kramsch, 2009; Risager, 2007; Liddicoat, 2020). This perspective, thus, reinforces the stance that language should not be divorced from context, and that language and culture should be seen as two intertwined entities which are inherently dynamic and co-constructed in occurrences of meaning making (Liddicoat & Scarino, ibid; McConachy, 2018a; Zhu, 2019; Liddicoat, 2019).

With the intercultural turn, there has been a vast amount of literature theorised on how culture and language should be approached in the classroom. Among these various perspectives is the pursuit of sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980); intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997); the construction of a Third Place (Kramsch, 1993, 1998a, 1998b); and among others, the quest for intercultural citizenship (Guilherme, 2002; Byram, 2008, 2014). The core of these approaches builds on the indivisibility of language and culture and
focuses on nurturing the learners’ linguistic, sociocultural, and pragmatic competencies so they can build and maintain interaction in socially meaningful ways.

2.1.2 The Critical Turn in Language Teaching and Learning

Since the intercultural turn in foreign language teaching, one of the most significant aims in language education has been to think of ways that could contribute more strongly to the development of students’ critical and reflective skills in learning (Dasli & Díaz, 2017; Díaz, 2013; Liddicoat, 2017; Pennycook, 2001). In the literature, this has been referred to as the ‘critical’ or ‘reflexive turn’, which adopts a more complex reframing of culture that assumes the overlapping nature of people’s identity and belongings and rejects a unifying logic that promotes essentialist characterizations of self and other (Dervin & Clark, 2014; Holliday, 2011).

2.1.2.1 A New Emphasis on Non-Nativeness, Plurilingualism and Hybridity

Within this paradigm, there is a general recognition that the ways in which culture is understood for the purposes of language teaching and learning need to transcend the understanding (and often acquisition) of English native speaker’s behavioural practices and identities and avoid the categorisation of these as either related to the ‘foreign’ or ‘home’ culture and languages. In fact, several studies have problematised the dominance of Anglophone cultures present in ELT textbooks (Gray, 2010; Ren & Han, 2016). Other literature also highlights the lack of attention to the concept of world Englishes proposed by the ELF paradigm (Syrbe & Rose, 2016). The emphasis has now changed from seeing culture as a homogenous set of practices that represent a particular nation or state to seeing it as something that is in flux, fluid, and discursively constructed across communities that surpass national boundaries. By implication, such a perspective dismisses the underlying structuralist idea of culture as a set of fixed traits and proposes an alternative perception of it as fluid, dynamic and heterogeneous (Holliday, 2010; Baker, 2011; Díaz, 2013; Guilherme, 2002). According to Block (2012), this concept of
hybridization has especially become like an ‘antidote to essentialist binaries’ (p.59); it thus challenges the fixity of pre-established categories that homogenise diverse people.

Moreover, critics pointed out by researchers who investigate English as a lingua franca (ELF) also argue for the teaching of English as ‘a continually renewed, co-operatively modified, somewhat HYBRIDISED linguistic resource’ (Jenkins et al., 2011, p. 303) [caps in the original]. As these authors maintain, within the increasing processes of globalisation and fast-evolving cultural territories, people’s diversity is expanding, and individuals are finding themselves in need of a more dynamic type of interaction that allows them to communicate effectively across a myriad of transnational and multilingual contexts. On this argument, the teaching of foreign languages needs to rethink the nature of culture and language as contingent and variable; this also implies a need to think about the nation as one possible manifestation of culture, whose members are inherently pluricultural (Risager, 2007). Within this approach, McConachy (2018) posits that the relationship between language and culture can still be presented at the national level. It should, however, not be the only lens through which both of these constructs are presented in the classroom. Indeed, in the complex world in which we live, the interconnection of societies, cultures and languages is becoming increasingly hybrid, and so do the processes of identification and meaning-making. Therefore, when introduced to the culture which language is being taught, students need to engage with this complexity by reflecting on culture as a dynamic resource for meaning making and interpretation (Dervin, 2011; Liddicoat, 2017).

2.1.2.2 Problematizing an Essentialist Model of Culture

Interculturalists like Holliday (2018), Baker (2017), Fang & Baker (2018) argue that the presentation of culture from a nation-based perspective raises concerns about the problematic notion of essentialism. Holliday (2011, ibid) observes that there are questions arising from the presentation of culture as a monolithic construct, consisting of fixed traits and social practices
shared among members of a given (often national) group. This traditional view of culture treats the social world as a set of mutual entities that determine the character of its individual group members and fixate what they do or how they act in a specific context. Thus, members of a particular group fall into homogenous categories that classify them under a specific representative paradigm, be it national, ethnic, or regional (Holliday, ibid). In the educational terrain of EFL, culture teaching is frequently achieved through the introduction of cultural information about the visible practices and artefacts deemed to be shared by all the inhabitants of that particular nation. Byram (1997) and Gómez (2013) observe that, inside the language classroom, much of the cultural content relates to the ‘surface’ or ‘visible’ aspects of the Anglophone communities. Surface culture is understood as those attributes which are easily visible to observers in relation to a specific country’s celebrations, geographical sites, food, myths, or national symbols (Gómez, 2015). As Gounari (2020) puts it, the presentation of these elements in the FL syllabus is ‘still framed through a touristic gaze that fails to delve deep into the lives and experiences of different groups of speakers, their cultures, and histories’ (p.7). Phipps & Gonzalez (2004) discuss the problematic issues emerging from the presentation of culture as a unified construct. Their argument casts light on the contradictions found between the superficial knowledge that students receive about the foreign culture and the actual behaviours, practices, and complex identities of its individual members. In this respect, (Crisp & Hewstone, 2006) observe that due to rising social mobility and immigration, the social contexts in which people operate are growing increasingly complex. As a result, individuals express their self-concept in terms of multiple group belongings and memberships, whether these relate to ethnic, national, religious, or political categories. In this vein, Dasli (2011, p.25) asserts that:

Given the dynamic, fragmented, and fractured nature of social group and self-identity, national group labels can no longer determine cultural manifestations. Consequently, there is a
need for a much broader understanding of the notion of culture analogous to the range of differing, infinite or even contradicting characteristics stemming from the differentiated expressions of the Self.

Holliday et al (2010) criticise the nationalist view of culture for being ‘reductionist’ and ‘stereotypical’; they maintain that in the absence of a reflexive and analytical engagement with culture, there is a risk of constructing stereotypes or reinforcing existing ones. Indeed, much has been written about the transmission of stereotypes in culture/language textbooks or language use in general (Houghton, 2010; Houghton et al, 2013; Schmidt, 2007). Houghton et al (2013, p. 93) posit that stereotypes can act as ‘stumbling blocks’ (Diaz, 2013) undermining effective communication. Likewise, they argue against the cultural content taught in classrooms which can be ‘introduced for purely utilitarian purposes, causing the foreign culture presented to students to be fragmentary, anecdotal, and often stereotyped’ (p.115). By the same token, Holliday (2011); Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) and Liddicoat (2020) also argue for a de-essentialized view of culture; that which is not defined and constrained by physical territories and does not predominantly link learning with national and homogenous cultures. To continue to bank exclusively on nationalist notions of culture is to thus fall into the problematic issue of stereotypes.

Within the field of intercultural learning much has been written about the need for challenging stereotypes. Houghton (2010b) argues that learners should be made aware of their stereotypic thoughts and encouraged to identify those of others surrounding them. Other researchers also report on methods that could transform stereotypes from ‘stumbling blocks’ into exciting opportunities for learners to reflect, grow and develop as thinking beings who are able to take part in today’s globalised world. For instance, benefits of engaging learners in self-reflection upon their own pre-existing stereotypes of certain cultural groups are well evidenced in Skene’s
(2014) study who reported that young learners of French in Australia, upon being encouraged to critically analyse their images of French people by examining how others might stereotype a typical Australian person were quickly able to ward off their stereotypes on French people and develop increased intercultural awareness. Houghton et al (2013) also highlighted ways of eliciting and managing stereotypes in the classroom by developing critical cultural awareness. By the same token, Popovic (2004) explored methods for dealing with lexically encoded national stereotypes in the second language classroom by applying a linguistic analysis of English phrases and proverbs. On the importance of developing English language students’ reflexive skills, McConachy’s (2020) study also found that sharpening students’ skills of reflection and analysis can help develop their awareness on the role of cultural stereotypes in influencing their judgement and interpretation of pragmatic appropriateness in interaction. As one of its tasks, this study seeks to raise students’ critical consciousness as part of their engagement with stereotypes. Part of this learning has been the reflection on stereotypes as social and ideological constructs. This next section will therefore shed light on the nature, formation, and diffusion of stereotypes in society.

2.1.2.2.1 On Stereotypes and Stereotyping

Perhaps the plainest definition of stereotypes is the one generated by Lippmann as ‘pictures in our head’ (1922, p.4). In this sense, stereotypes are mental frames projected on the world to make sense of it. In contemporary social psychology, stereotypes are seen as indispensable to our need to categorise and simplify the complex world that we inhabit. According to Lippmann (ibid), human beings find it challenging to interpret a world that is complex, large and in a constant state of change; we, therefore, use categories to simplify reality. People use categories to classify and label racial, ethnic, political, or religious groups, genders, cities, age, as well as occupations, among other things. Once these categories are established, beliefs or expectations
about the attributes or behaviours of its members are fixated, reducing them to a particular disposition (Whitley & Kite, 2006).

Approaches to stereotypes from a sociological perspective regard stereotypes as fundamentally incorrect, illogical, and derogatory. This stems from the premise that stereotypes 1) attribute unqualified generalisations which fail to acknowledge diversity within a specific group; 2) perpetuate false beliefs about individuals without any tangible basis for judgement; 3) have behavioural consequences, in the sense that they could be used as justification for offensive behaviour towards members of a certain group (Adorno et al., 1950; Schneider, 2005). It is important, however, to be cognizant of the fact that stereotyping occurs as an automated process (Allport, 1954; Billig, 1985; Ehrlich, 1973; Hamilton, 1981; Tajfel, 1981). This is because stereotype activation is driven by a spontaneous activation of information in memory, especially in the presence of a symbolic member of the stereotyped group. It is, therefore, stimulus-driven and cannot be inhibited (Forbes et al, 2012). Stereotypes can be activated in response to various influences, these may include facial cues, everyday day talk, cultural jokes, or media.

On a general level, it is important to distinguish stereotyping from the way we use categories to simplify our world. These various types of collective groupings aid us in deciphering and making sense of our daily communication and relationships as social beings. In other words, they function as mental maps to help us navigate the world around us. Unlike stereotypes, they are not rigid, we can modify and update them according to our experiences and life circumstances (Pickering, 2015). Stereotypes, on the other hand, are a type of rigid generalisations assumed to be common among members of a given group. They assume absolute representations that routinely place or fixate other people, who they are, what they do, and what they represent (Katz & Braly, 1933). In the mind of its holder, a stereotype is treated as generally accepted, it erases individual differences and assumes an unchangeable
homogeneity. In many ways, this is similar to the idea of essentialism. In particular, essentialism entails the belief that all members of a specific category share an inherent biological or genetic essence that underlies many of their observable characteristics. Haslam (2017, p.5) explains that:

Essentialist beliefs about social groups are multifaceted. They involve beliefs that the group has inherent characteristics, that it is in some sense ‘natural’ or biologically based, that it is highly informative about its members, that all members of the group are fundamentally alike, and beliefs that membership in the group is discrete (either/or), immutable, and historically invariant.

2.1.2.2 Stereotypes, Essentialism and Prejudice

Theorists like, Bastian & Haslam (2006) have proposed that the stronger an individual’s essentialist categories, the more likely he or she is to resort to stereotypes when perceiving, approaching, or evaluating other people. To essentialise a category, then, is to infer that it has an unchanging, natural, and immutable nature that is highly informative of its defining features. One useful example is the belief that racial groups have a fixed underlying essence that defines who they are, their behaviours, values, and national boundaries (Holliday, 1999; Martin, Nakayama and Carbaugh, 2012) as opposed to thinking about race as an ‘arbitrary and malleable social-political construction’ (Tadmor et al, 2012, p.1). By Holliday’s reckoning (2011), essentialist beliefs about human groups are socially destructive and can carry ideologically laden assumptions that can engender stereotype endorsement, prejudice, racism, and also, perhaps sexism.

Indeed, contemporary perspectives which conceptualise stereotypes from a social dimension suggest that stereotypes play a fundamental role in promoting prejudice, discrimination,
racial, and intergroup conflict (Fiske, 1998; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). In some respects, stereotypes may result in prejudice, leading to conflicts between individuals of differing cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Prejudice has been traditionally defined as ‘an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group’ (Allport, 1954, p. 9). Historically mistreated groups, such as racial and ethnic minorities, continue to be victimised by stereotyping. As a corollary of this, they face significant challenges in their educational outcomes, job opportunities and socio-economic status. This is particularly the case with stereotypes about African Americans. For Plos & Williams (1995), the stereotypes perpetuated against African Americans in the USA primarily stem from the institution of slavery where ‘many Whites held stereotypes of Blacks as inferior, unevolved, and apelike’ (p.795). Another complicating factor concerns individual performance, which can also be affected by stereotypes. Steele & Aronson (1995) maintain that ‘members of negatively stereotyped groups progressively place less importance on their performance in the stereotyped domain’ (p.800). In an attempt to measure how students’ performances were influenced by awareness of racial stereotypes, Steele & Aronson (ibid) found that African American students yielded lower achievement scores, compared to their peers, when they were notified before taking the test of their racial group’s tendencies of poor attainments.

From a pedagogical perspective, it can be particularly useful to develop an understanding on the social and ideological nature of stereotypes. The more we know about the nature of stereotypes, its development, and sources, the more we can develop instructional tools to address them in the FL classroom and consequently foster students’ critical intercultural learning (Houghton et al, 2013).
2.1.2.2.3 Development and Diffusion of Stereotypes

The question of how stereotypes are constructed received little attention in the literature. This is because most of the research in the field has been focussing on the psychological and cognitive processes involved in the production of stereotypes (Haslam et al, 1997; Klein et al, 2008). In fact, one of the current strands of interest among scholars in this field is to investigate how stereotypes evolve? How they are maintained, and how can we possibly change them? (Collins & Clément, 2012; Mackie et al., 1996).

On a general level, there are two main approaches to the study of stereotype development and formation: cognitive and collective. On the one side, the cognitive approach assumes the development of stereotypes as individual cognitive schemas, whereas the collective approach considers them as social representations. I explain these two dominant conceptualisations in the sub-sections below.

2.1.2.2.3.1 Stereotypes as Cognitive Schemas

Schemas, also labelled as ‘protypes’ or ‘scripts’ have often been assumed to play a role in our perceptions and evaluations of self and other (Hudak, 1993; Valian, 1998). The term schema has been defined in different ways. However, in a broad sense, it was said to be an abstracted set of mental structures that incorporate knowledge and beliefs about social groups, roles, situations, events, sequences of events and expectations regarding certain aspects of the world. In other words, schemas are hypotheses that we use to make sense of the world around us; they aid us with emergent meaning and comprehension concerning the appropriate moral, or ideologically prescribed behaviours that one should perform in a specific situation, the traits that typically characterise a member of a specific race, gender, or ethnicity as well as the relationships that are known to exist among them (Fiske & Linville, 1980; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Blair, 2001). As such, they can be organisational, descriptive, or predictive (McCauley et al, 1980).
As vehicles for comprehension and storage of information, schemas can both be idiosyncratic, developed through the trajectory of individual experience, or collectively abstracted from people’s cultural and shared experiences (Rice, 1980). Sharifian (2014) reminds us that cultural schemas differ from those conceptualized in idiosyncratic experiences. Whereas, the content of schema can vary by individual, depending on his/her knowledge and experience in the world. Culturally derived schemata can be ‘to some extent shared, experiences’ and can thus ‘be represented in a heterogeneously distributed fashion across the minds of individuals’ (p. 224).

In reality, we develop our cultural schemas through circulated experience or knowledge that we encode from education, social context, disseminated media, and so forth. In most cases, schemas can do valuable work for us, making life more meaningful and understandable, but they can also lead us to making inaccurate and often derogatory generalisations of group traits and competences. Conceptually, at least, schemas have an evaluative role in processing social information, importantly, however, such normative function happens as a form of ‘fast’ thinking (Kahneman, 2011). In this vein, cognitive schemas can function as stereotypes which skew our perceptions and evaluations of others in a dysfunctional and rigid manner (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998).

2.1.2.2.3.2 Stereotypes as Cultural and Ideological Constructs

For theorists within the cultural approach, stereotypes do not just exist ‘in the head of the society’ perceivers, rather, they are ingrained in the fabric of society itself (Hewstone et al, 1996, p. 10). In this sense, the concept of stereotyping is broadened from a product of an individual cognitive process to a collective social phenomenon. Within this approach, it has been assumed that stereotypes constitute public information about particular groups that is accessible to all members of the wider society, thus they are products of culture and socialising. Augostinious & Walker (1998) view stereotypes as ‘cognitive, affective, and symbolic representations of social groups within society which are extensively shared, and which emerge
and proliferate within the particular social and political milieu of a given historical moment’ (p. 635).

Once established, stereotypes become widely accepted in society, affecting our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Bargh et al, 1996). Indeed, some particularly pernicious stereotypes can act as distancing mechanisms; a process which is also known as ‘othering’. Lister (2004) defines othering as a ‘process of differentiation and demarcation, by which a line is drawn between ’us’ and ’them’ – between the more and the less powerful – and through which social distance is established and maintained’ (p. 101). In this understanding of othering, power plays an indispensable role in the construction of self and other, and for the dominant group, the other is naturally ascribed to a ‘morally and/or intellectually inferior’ position (Schwalbe et al., 2000, p. 423). Such processes of discrimination not only reinforce group boundaries and assign subordinate characteristics to out-groups, but also establish a hierarchical categorisation which leads to the assumption that difference from the self or in-group entails a devaluing or subordinate position. Billig (1973) would describe this as ‘ingroup favouritism’ and ‘outgroup derogation’. In the context of this study, othering is perceived as a discursive tool of discrimination and exclusion used against individuals on the basis of their belongingness to an out-group. Hence, to speak of othering is then to speak about stereotyping in the sense that those who are othered are reduced and essentialised to a specific and often dehumanised category. Ethnic and/or cultural othering functions to discriminate one group from another based on a set of homogenous labels that ignore the complexities and variations within, between, and among individuals and groups. Subject to such a process of homogenisation, outgroups, albeit sometimes unintentionally, are singled out to reinforce and reproduce positions of dominance and subordination (Fine, 1994). Consequently, individuals who are treated as ‘other’ can often experience ‘patronizing attitudes’, marginalization, and decreased opportunities (Dervin, 2016).
According to Hinton (2020), stereotypes are intimately related to culture and ideology. As such, ‘a specific interpretation of the social world [and of the stereotypes constructed within] is an (ideological) construction in a context for a purpose and, as such, cannot be divorced from social action and social motives’ (p.147). Sociologists postulate that there are two competing conceptualisations of ideology. One is related to the broad vision of ideology as the sum of values, beliefs, assumptions, and expectations a person holds of the social world; in this case, ideology functions to generate collective understandings that shape people’s thoughts, actions, and interactions in society as a whole. From a narrow pejorative conception, ideology, however, is taken to refer to a:

> dominant world view [which] is seen as hegemonic ... it serves to distort perception through various mechanisms embodied in education, religion, the media and so on, in order to conceal the real nature of the relations of production underlying class differences (Harvey, 2012, para. 2)

The above conceptualisation is very similar to the one postulated by the Marxist tradition. Marx focused on the concept of dominant ideology. In his perception, ideology reflects a distorted system of thoughts that is used by the ruling class to justify and legitimise the existing economic and social order and keep them in positions of power. In this sense, ideology becomes a way to promote ‘false consciousness’, which is ‘a way of thinking that prevents people from perceiving the true nature of their social or economic situation’ (Zoonen, 2017, p.1). In this line of thought, we can no longer think of ideology and false consciousness as individual processes. Rather, as social constructions, which derive power and legitimacy, from the circulation of shared (false) understandings of the world. Here, it becomes tempting to think about stereotypes as ideological tools, which may serve to oppress, distance, justify, or maintain the existing status quo (Hoffman & Hurst, 1990). The media's exaggeration of Black criminality in the United States is a well-known example. In a study by Moeller (2007), it was
found that whites expressed greater fears of hostility and crime in the presence of African American people despite substantial variation in ethnic crime rates in the USA. Another example of stereotypical talk can also be traced in much of the colonial and post-colonial discourses. Blanchard (2019) maintains that stereotypes are as old as colonial domination, some of them even precede the great colonial waves of the sixteenth century.

In a general sense, the colonial discussion on stereotypes is largely associated with the hierarchical differences produced by colonial regimes to breed polarization. This notion is not too far from the idea of Orientalism presented in the works of Edward Said. In his book ‘Orientalism’, Said (1978) poses critiques to the cultural representations of the Orient in European and American artistic and literary works. He argues against the dichotomy which allegedly associates a perceived superiority of the Western world over its former colonies of the Orient. In this line of thought, Bleich (2005) observes that long after the physical demise of colonial empires, stereotypes, in countries like Britain and France, continue to prevail in the media landscapes; even sometimes, playing a role in influencing political decisions in the handling of ethnic pluralism and migration in the country. In this case, stereotypes act as a safeguard of the old hierarchical systems of representation, or better expressed, as the residues of ancient colonial legacies. Much more subtly, Pickering (2015) affirms that stereotypes do not only function to ‘legitimate and justify social inequalities by demonizing the poor and attributing their disadvantaged position in the social structure to their own failings, their lack of ambition and aspiration, rather than to the social and economic arrangements by which they are disadvantaged’, but also to diverge ‘attention from more profound social ills by providing an easily recognizable source of culpability and censure’ (p. 7). This is particularly the case with beliefs of African Americans as unintelligent, lazy, irresponsible, and prone to criminality which according to Taylor et al (2009) continue to legitimise racial hierarchies and promote disparities in education, employment opportunities and arrests of people of African descent.
2.1.2.3 On Reflection, Reflexivity, and Intercultural Learning

As previously mentioned, the expanded view of language and culture as dynamic entities has important consequences on how we envision intercultural learning. If culture is treated as a dynamic construct, then it can only be understood through a hermeneutic and critical perspective. This process, according to Liddicoat & Scarino (2013); McConachy (2018); McConachy & Liddicoat (2016), involves reflecting on one’s cultural positioning, problematising assumptions, and increasing one’s capacity to understand meaning as culturally contexted. According to Clegg, reflection ‘is now expected to form part of every student’s analytical learning-to-learn armoury’ (as cited in Ross, 2011). Dewey (1938) argued that people generally learn better when they reflect on their experiences; this happens especially because reflection is a meta-cognitive process that ‘functions to improve the quality of thought and action and the relationship between them’ (Ash & Clayton, 2009, p.27). Along the same lines, Jones & Shelton (2006, p. 53) describe reflection as:

The practice of intentionally bringing into conscious awareness one’s motivations, thoughts, beliefs…and expectations for the purpose of gaining insightful understanding as to their meaning, their connections to what is personally known, and in light of new experiences and information. Reflection makes possible the insights necessary to learn from experience and alter habitual behaviours.

According to Archer (2007), reflection takes place in the form of an ‘internal conversation in one’s thought processes’ (p. 6). It is a self-regulatory skill which functions to improve the quality of our current and/or future thought processes, actions, or relationships. Whereas reflexivity is ‘the capacity of an actor to construct practical understandings … of the location of self within a social system, to act accordingly (strategically and tactically), and to reflect further and refine understandings in response to events and … actions taken’ (Maclean et al., 2012, p.
Thus, someone who practices reflexivity is able to exercise deep questioning of the mental and/or social value structures that guide his/her actions, thoughts, and feelings in a particular situation. In this line of reasoning, reflexivity is more complex than reflection because it draws upon reflection to motivate future action (Bolton, 2009). This idea is central to Kolb’s (1984) cyclic process of experiential learning which implies that individuals learn primarily through having concrete experiences in the world, then they move to a reflective stage where they critically think and reflect on that experience through documentary writings, for example. The next step is to formulate abstract conceptualizations of what the experience meant to them and how it made them feel. This can be achieved through examining causality and challenging assumptions, which then results in newer ways of knowing. Afterwards, individuals enter an ‘active experimentation phase’ where they re-test their new knowledge of the world and improve future practices (Shumer, 1991).

Broadly speaking, most definitions of critical learning and interculturality harbour a reflexive view of learning. Blasco (2012) maintains that reflection ‘has gained prominence as scholars search for more holistic, transformative approaches to intercultural education which go beyond fact-based ‘content-competences’ and instead seek to train students to question their cultural assumptions’ (p. 475-476). Reflection in IE is often regarded as a productive tool that promotes and fosters understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity, especially since conflicts, stereotypes, misunderstandings, and feelings of frustration are likely to occur in cross-cultural encounters. Therefore, it is important to develop awareness on one’s internal states and reactions, as well reflect critically on the linguistic and cultural experiences one brings into the learning of another language/culture (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Liddicoat, 2017; McConachy, 2018).
2.1.2.4 The Political Dimension of Foreign Language/Culture Teaching and Learning

Some scholars argue that taking a critical approach to FLT needs to give attention to the wider sociocultural and political dynamics that reside in the speakers’ identities as well as the linguistic resources available to them (Hall, 1995; Shor, 1996; Giroux, 2011). Because of this social and political orientation, language education should thus have a commitment towards social justice and equality (Norton, 2004). One strong impetus is the idea that any system of education reflects the wider social, political, and ideological milieu in which it operates, and since unequal relations of power can exist in any of these contexts, then the classroom should provide a space for the disruption and deconstruction of oppressive issues, like racism, stereotypes, or prejudice. Kubota & Miller (2017) echo this view and argue that at least one of the forms of the critical in language education relates to ‘problematizing naturalized and normalized assumptions and practices; questioning power and inequality; focusing on broader social, ideological, and colonial milieus; problematizing gender, race, class, and sexuality; transcending fixed knowledge and seeking visions for change; and practicing self-reflexivity and praxis’ (p. 4). Byram (1997) approaches this issue through his multidimensional model of ‘intercultural communicative competence’, incorporating ‘critical cultural awareness’ (CCA).

At a more general level, Byram’s notion of CCA calls for a political engagement in the way FL is conceptualised and enacted in practice. Byram (ibid) argued that the social, political and ideological orientations of language should be introduced explicitly in the classroom through his notion of CCA defined as ‘an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in our own and other cultures and countries’ (p.53). In other words, CCA provides an opportunity for analysis, reflection, and critical questioning of the larger sociocultural perspectives (e.g., found in texts or media), products or practices that relate to the self (e.g., reflecting on the formation of values and beliefs) that reside in one’s own culture as well as the culture studied. Like Byram, Guilherme (2002) also
theorised a notion of critical cultural awareness as ‘a reflective, exploratory, dialogical, and active stance toward cultural knowledge and life that allows for dissonance, contradiction, and conflict as well as for consensus, concurrence, and transformation’ (p.219).

CCA, understood in Guilherme’s terms, differs from that of Byram’s in that it draws upon the concept of taking action. Criticality, thus, comprises ‘a cognitive and emotional endeavour that aims at individual and collective emancipation, social justice, and political commitment’ (Guilherme, ibid). Herein, it is difficult not to notice the overlap that exists between the ideological nature of foreign language pedagogy and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1993). In fact, much of Byram (ibid) and Guilherme (2002)’s work on criticality traces back to the historical and philosophical roots of critical theory and critical pedagogy (CP). This view is very similar to what Freire back in the 1993s, referred to as ‘critical consciousness’ (CC). For Freire, critical consciousness takes place when learners learn how to name and question relations of power and privilege that play out in their immediate context. But perhaps one of the ideas that is present in Freire’s philosophy of critical pedagogy is his vision for social action and human agency. In this sense, it traces a goal of developing collective consciousness that can unlock possibilities for social change and critique. With this recognition, CP can be thought of as a framework that emphasises the need to raise critical consciousness and engage in dialogue with others, or as a model for a more general aim of social and political action. In the context of this study, I adopt a broad approach to CP as a pedagogy of liberation. One which calls for the need to liberate the classroom from banking concepts of education and seeks to unmask and problematise stereotype construction, legitimisation, and dissemination in society. Like Byram, Guilherme, and Freire, I align with the pedagogical notions of reflection, problem posing and dialogue to build students’ critical consciousness. How did my students develop a critical view on culture, identity, ethnicity, and stereotypes? The answer to this question made more sense
to me in light of Freire’s theory of critical pedagogy (1993). A concept that I shall explore in detail in the next section.

2.1.3 Critical Pedagogy

Critical Pedagogy is an educational philosophy that owes much of its roots to the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1993). In his book ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’, Freire called for an approach to learning that asks how and why knowledge is constructed the way it is, and how and why certain constructions of reality are presented as the ‘normal state of being’. The theory of CP is largely based on three fundamental constructs, problem-posing, dialogue, and critical consciousness. These will be discussed next.

2.1.3.1 CP and Problem Posing

One core component of critical pedagogy has been the creation of a problem-posing model of education (Freire, 1993). According to Shor (1992), problem-posing contends the passivity cultivated by traditional education, which assumes learners as empty agents who passively consume knowledge from their teachers. For a critical pedagogue, such learning would merely strive to reinforce unequal relations of power in society. Freire (1993) believes that when students are taught a collective of decontextualised contents, they cannot engage in a process of reflection on the social problems that emanate from oppression and injustices. Viewed from this angle, education then becomes a means for reproducing these social injustices. In proposing a problem-posing pedagogy, Freire (ibid) emphasizes the need to create spaces that aim at empowering students to challenge, reflect, and denounce the oppressive features of hegemony, whilst also rejecting the reproduction of the dominant ideology. Freire’s point is that education needs to present problems for the students which are primarily connected to the struggles of their communities so that they can think, reflect, and act on them. Teachers, therefore, play a key role in CP as they are responsible for encouraging students’ participation
and reflection as well as meaning-making to facilitate the development of critical consciousness and critical thinking skills (Morgan, 1998).

2. 1.3.2 CP and Dialogue

CP asks educators to maximise opportunities for dialogue and discourse in the class. It is believed that through dialogue, the classroom can become a site where students’ consciousnesses meet to co-construct knowledge (Barnes, 1992). In this vein, Freire (1998) makes a particular contribution to our understanding of the relationship between classroom discourse and criticality suggesting that ‘only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue, there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education’ (p. 73). Support for this position also comes from Jennings & Da Matta who believed that Freire’s vision of praxis as dialogue ‘engages community members in critically unmasking invisible ideologies embedded in institutional structures and processes, thereby laying the groundwork for both new understandings and actions on a personal and social level’ (2009, p. 217). For Freire, this kind of dialogic learning not only invites students to actively participate in (re)shaping their understanding of reality but also to develop a voice. Hooks (1994) would define voice as a means to contribute one’s ideas in an open and non-discriminatory process via a dialogical exchange of ideas. Thus, dialogue functions to involve participants of varying social identities to share their existing knowledge, beliefs, and curiosity to develop new ways of seeing and perceiving issues of power, privilege, and oppression. CP’s core principles of problem posing dialogue and reflection are of great relevance to the pedagogical decisions I made in this intervention. This, I shall explain in chapter 3 (see section 3.4).
2. 1.3.3 CP and the Promotion of Critical Consciousness

At the heart of Freire’s educational theory is his concept of conscientization or critical consciousness. As suggested by Freire (1993), conscientization refers to a process through which individuals achieve a reflective awareness both of the socio-cultural reality in which they live and of their capacity to exert change in it. Freire’s construct of critical consciousness is at the heart of critical learning and literacy. For him, the ability to ‘read the world’ (1993, p.26) is an essential requirement for conscientization. Rather than embracing a mechanical definition of literacy, Freire called for the need to transform learners into knowing subjects, who can ‘read’ their world. In other words, ‘reading’ involves the recognition of the political and ideological nature of knowledge, both in terms of its production and dissemination. Such awareness is fundamentally linked to a transformation of social injustices, this is well evidenced when he states: ‘the essence of my ethico-political choice is my consciously taken option to intervene in the world’ (Freire, 1998, p. 122). In the educational literature, there are many definitions of CC as knowledge, awareness, and dispositions, but little are those which define it as action (Sleeter et al, 2004; Houser, 2008). In spite of this heterogeneity, Giroux (1985), maintains that the objective of CP remains unified ‘by a mutual respect forged in criticism and the need to struggle against all forms of domination’ (p. xxiv). In the literature, there exists a number of studies which address the development of CC, or in other words, the challenging of oppression in its various manifestations, such as race and gender discrimination (Biggs-El, 2012; Brown et al, 2014), age (Estes & Portacolone, 2009), special needs (Löfgren-Mårtenson, 2012), or social class (Markovich & Rapoport, 2013). In agreement with Giroux, there appears to be a consensus in the current literature that CP confronts all forms of oppression (Lee & Givens, 2012; Vassallo, 2012).

For some researchers, CC is conceptualised as a cognitive state which emerges from the rigorous examination of the social, political, and cultural structures that serve to maintain and
reproduce existing inequality in one’s context (Diemer & Li, 2011; Mustakova-Possardt 1998). This heightened awareness occurs when one becomes cognizant of the assumptions that shape his/her perceptions of reality, as well as his/her role in making decisions that either maintain or alter that reality (Carlson et al. 2006). A person who has developed CC, for example, will critically examine ideologies that shape his/her reality; he/she will be able to question these assumptions and view any related inequalities as structural problems. Houser & Overton (2001) correlate this view, writing that CC is an act of ‘searching beneath and beyond our existing assumptions’ (p.612), whereas Watts et al (2011) suggest that CC can manifest itself through a process of identifying reality and causality, that is developing an awareness of ‘cause-and-effect relationships between ongoing social forces and current social circumstances’ (p. 52).

For Garcia et al (2009), CC is concerned with an ‘ability to recognize and challenge oppressive and dehumanizing political, economic, and social systems’ (p.20). Thus, for these scholars, the understanding of oppression and inequities, critique of social problems, as well as the awareness of one’s ability to transform his/her conditions in a way that re-adjusts social imbalances are the only requirements needed to evoke CC.

According to Chronister et al (2004), CC entails overcoming false consciousness, which Freire believed is a direct outcome of banking approaches. In simple terms, the state of false consciousness is characterised by the absence of a critical understanding of oneself, environment, and place in the world. Persons at this level are immersed in a one-dimensional oppressive present where they are unable to recognise inequality which legitimises the existing social structures. Hall (1988), however, maintains that the construct of false consciousness is problematic, mainly because it assumes a dichotomy between those who have true consciousness and those who don’t, which by result, suggests a degree of naivety inherently associated with them. Moreover, there is something also wrong with the assumption that students are deemed in a state of false consciousness and are at the behest of their critical
educators who are assumed to be in a more enlightened, critically aware state that is going to reveal systems of inequality and bring the learner to consciousness. According to Burbules & Berk (1999), this poses a risk of indoctrination due to the teachers’ influence on students’ independent thought.

On a societal level, CC, according to Watts & Abdul-Adil (1998) is the product of critical thinking (CT). Within the literature, there are different interpretations of critical thinking, which by virtue, reflect different perceptions of reality, the problems in it, as well as the kinds of questions asked, and solutions proposed. For the most part, the prevailing pedagogical conceptualisation of CT has to do with logic, that is, having a general thinking skill to evaluate the validity of information following an objective operation of thinking. In his essay ‘Critical Thinking: Why Is It So Hard to Teach?’, Willingham (2016) sets out to answer what is critical thinking; he notes that CT is about ‘seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms young ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, deducing, and inferring conclusions from available facts, solving problems, and so forth’ (p.1). From a learning perspective, Brown (1998) argues against the uncritical inculcation of knowledge and ideas in class. Instead, he maintains that students should be given the time, opportunity, and tools to develop their consciousness by means of exploring questions and seeking answers to those questions by themselves. Brown’s view of education and critical thinking emphasises the need to be cognizant of the relationship between culture, language and thought. Regarding this relationship, he claims that ‘the distinctive feature of critical thinking is an explicit metacognitive awareness that there are problems about the relationship between language, thought and reality’ (ibid, p. 149). Balboa (1993), however, criticizes this view because it ‘reduce[s] the responsible participation of learners in highly significant ways’ (p.63). Instead, she argues for an alternative way of conceptualising CT that extends its scope to emancipation and justice. She acknowledges that this form of CT needs to examine the
language, traditions, and institutions in society, but it also needs to concentrate on ‘developing new practices which challenge the present beliefs and values by asking whose interests they serve and linking them to the social, political, and economic conditions that create social injustices’. Following, CT ‘becomes a means for socio-political praxis (i.e., informed committed action’ (p. 64).

This argument is in line with Freire's conceptualisation of CC which goes beyond an intellectual effort to include one's committed action to evoke transformation in society. Engagement for Freire requires dialogue and informed action. As discussed before, Freire underscores the importance of dialogue and problem posing, instead of traditional banking methods of education. Through this process, students move beyond a mere codification of knowledge and engage in co-constructed, critical dialogue to raise consciousness of social realities and propel participation in it. The goal of conscientization, therefore, is to enact praxis or action. Learners, then, ‘observe and reflect on the impact of their action, drawing on their evolving knowledge, self-efficacy and ability in order to revise their actions in a continuous cycle of learning and engagement’ (Magee & Pherali, 2019, p. 45). In this vein, Giroux (1988) argues that critical educators should encourage students to reflect on the relationship between knowledge, power, and social systems. Instead of implementing a curriculum that favours commercial and market-based learning (Pherali, 2016), teachers can focus on finding ‘cracks’ within the mainstream school contents and link these to the students’ immediate experiences and knowledge of the social world.

2.1.3.4 CP and the Role of the Teacher

CP recognises that students have minds of their own, the teacher’s role is thus to help them sharpen their thinking processes to develop critical consciousness. Shor & Freire (1987) argue that rather than presenting knowledge as neutral and depositing facts that support the status quo, knowledge should be co-created by students and teachers in the classroom. Viewed from
this perspective, the teacher participates in critical dialogue along with the students, by acting as an equal dialogic partner instead of an authoritarian (Dysthe et al, 2011). This notion aligns well with Giroux’s (1988) idea of ‘teachers as transformative intellectuals’ (p.125). Giroux attempted to reformulate the traditional view of teachers assumed by the Behaviourist paradigm in education in the 1980s, which treated them as active subjects of learning. In these pedagogic spaces, teachers become the sole speakers, thinkers, and decision-makers in the room, minimising the resourceful potential that can stem from the students’ active participation in learning. Indeed, as asserted by Rajagopalan (2003), in traditional classrooms, the teacher ‘has always been and will always be a threat to consolidated powers’ (p.111). According to Joldersma (1999), this model is rejected because knowledge is presented to students as static and unchangeable. Not only does this create a type of oppressive passivity in students, but also dehumanises the process of learning. Giroux (ibid) argued that instead of adhering to objectives decided by experts, not necessarily in touch with the students’ needs and interests, teachers can become mentors guiding learners as critical agents, utilising dialogue, and questioning knowledge uncritically transmitted by educational institutions. In Giroux’s terms, a transformative intellectual is the one who recognises his/her role as a facilitator of learning, empowers students’ personal discovery of knowledge through dialogue and encourages them to propose solutions to wider problems that are social and ideological in origin. In this sense, teachers become agents of reform by transforming their classrooms into democratic spaces that would later pave the way for critical consciousness and action for social change.

2.1.3.5 Problematising CP’s Quest for Social Action

In the Freirean logic, reflection translates into action, and action involves both a broad understanding of power and oppression in society, as well as individual and collective action to transform that reality. As Freire (1993) notes ‘while no one liberates himself by his own efforts alone, neither is he liberated by others’ (p.66). There exist various propositions and
nuanced differences regarding the operationalisation of action in reality. Yet for the most part, many scholars seem to believe that it is related to some type of socio-political consciousness that would empower people to work collectively in order to improve unfair institutional laws and practices (Diemer & Li 2011; Diemer et al. 2014; Watts et al. 2011). Several authors problematised CP’s ambitious quest for social change. Barry et al (1999), for example, argue that social action is a type of imposed agenda that is ‘devised by professionals for groups of participants. It has not evolved through the efforts of those it purports to empower’ (p.68-69). Likewise, McLaren (1998), one of the most prominent proponents of CP, observes that CP does not mount to challenge the prevailing social divisions which have an impact on the reproduction of injustices in society. In the educational realm, Tarlau (2014) observes that contemporary CP learning does not target activism, mainly because ‘isolated teachers and students in public school classrooms cannot transform society on their own or by staying in the confines of their classrooms’ (p. 390). Reiterating Tarlau’s (ibid) point, Shor also acknowledges that ‘often, all I can accomplish in any single course is a moment of transition from passivity or naiveté to some animations and critical awareness’ (1987, p. 34). Shor (ibid) hopes that this heightened awareness will have an impact on students’ actions outside the classroom. Nueumann (2011) also shares the belief that students ‘will pursue the critical path or at least adopt some amount of criticality into their daily life long after they have left the educator’ (p. 602). In this regard, proponents of modest pedagogies (Tinning, 2002) advocate for a less idealistic ‘counter education that does not promise collective emancipation’ (Gur-Ze’ev, 1998, p.517). As an alternative, they advocate for the use of rational discourse and emotional commitment to enact a change in the current practices and transform the existing reality. This is in line with Freire’s (2005) proposition for an entangled conception of CC as an embodied phenomenon, rather than a cognitive engagement.
Whilst referring to the Freirean emphasis on critique, disruption, and scrutiny of the deep-seated commonsensical and connection with the social context of students, I do not claim that the pedagogical approach implemented in this study aimed to enact a vision of social transformation. Although Freire’s philosophy of CP is inherently ‘action-oriented’, I believe that a similar aim would have been too ambitious for the scope and design of this study. For this reason, I align with a vision of CP that would at best modernise the field of critical education in Algerian EFL terrains, by implementing pedagogies of dialogue, reflection and problem posing.

2.1.3.6 Critiques of Critical Pedagogy

Critical approaches to language education, especially critical pedagogy, have been critiqued for a number of reasons. Thomson (2014, para. 5) maintains that a ‘major failure’ of CP is its lack of ‘definitional precision and transparency’. Knight & Pearl (2000) argue that the language and knowledge used in the conceptual framing of CP lack explicitness and clarity, making CP seem as if it’s ‘expressed in a secret code...that has its own brand of exclusiveness’ (as cited in Neumann, 2013, p. 132). This lack of clarity makes it stumbling for educators to identify which specific practices can be used to accomplish the promising goals of CP, especially notions of empowerment, liberation, and transformation. This lack of contribution to pedagogical practice, Sarroub & Quadros (2015) believe, makes the scope of CP more limiting, in the sense that teachers are left to decipher the opaque language of CP without being provided with the necessary tools, supporting materials, and concrete guidance that accommodate opportunities for goals like transformation and abolishment of marginalisation.

Adding to the tension around the language of CP, McArthur (2010) observes that a further limitation to CP as a model is its overemphasis on critiquing oppressive structures without delineating practices that could counter these issues in real life. Lin (2012) correlates this problem, writing that ‘critical work also needs to move away from doing just critique; it should
also provide examples of how teaching and learning can be done alternatively, i.e., from doing only critical deconstruction to doing critical construction’ (p.12). Indeed, in CP-oriented approaches, there seems to be an over-emphasis on teachers as agents of empowerment. Yet, as Bunn (2014) argued, educators themselves can feel pressured to accomplish this mission of empowerment with no concrete pedagogical guidance and/or models. At a more theoretical level, Gore (1993) also argues about the de-contextualised nature of CP and its neglect of the contingent nature of classroom life and students’ diverse backgrounds. In her critical analysis of what empowerment might entail in terms of its application, Gore (ibid) argues that the interpretation of empowerment could differ from one context to another, making it difficult to delineate. Whereas I share Lin, Bunn, and Gore’s (ibid) concerns about the difficulties inherent in the practical implementation of CP, I do not advocate for a one-size-fits-all guide for CP-related pedagogical practices. Like many educators out there, I believe more could be done to account for the fluid and multiple positionings of learners’ classed, gendered, ethnic identities and backgrounds. My feeling is that greater reflexivity could help in addressing these complexities. Perhaps more context-specific insights could help enrich our understanding of notions like equality, empowerment, and utopia, and how these might look like in real-life classrooms.

2.1.4 Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1978)

Particularly influential to the field of adult learning is Mezirow’s (1978) educational theory of transformative learning. Building on a constructivist interpretation of learning, Mezirow argued that the processes of reflection and critical dialogical discourse are central to a transformative pedagogy. For Mezirow, the process of transformation- that is the revision of one’s perspectives or worldviews, can take place through critical discourse and reflection on experience. To elaborate, Mezirow believed that an individual’s perceptions and expectations of the world are based on a set of assumptions primarily shaped by the processes of
socialisation and acculturation (Mezirow, 2000). These assumptions which he refers to as ‘meaning perspectives’ can be shaken by what he calls a disorienting dilemma. Taylor (1998) notes that the experience of a disorienting dilemma can occur through a personal crisis, like for example, the loss of a loved one, losing a job, or natural hazard or it can happen through something less serious like the exposure to differing ideas. According to Mezirow (ibid), responding to a disorienting experience can provide an impetus for critical reflection and reassessment of our taken-for-granted assumptions, especially if these were uncritically assimilated during our childhood or youth experiences. Within such a perspective, perspective transformation is therefore primarily a matter of becoming:

- critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrating perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167)

In this line of thought, the role of the teacher is that of a facilitator who is involved with the students in the process of meaning making, decision-making, evaluation, and other learning responsibilities in the classroom (Mezirow et al, 2009). Furthermore, Mezirow et al (2009) strongly believe that teachers who want to experience with transformative learning should initially go through a process of self-reflection on their own assumptions and beliefs about why they would want to use transformative learning. This view is also shared by Taylor (1994) who further added that oftentimes this reflective act needs to collaborate with action and discourse bridging, therefore, perspective transformation with individual and institutional change. In this vein, Freire (2000) expresses a similar view and frames transformative learning on a societal level that could potentially lead to social justice and action. For Mezirow, however, social
action does not necessarily have to be an attainable goal for transformative learning. In fact, in response to criticism that his theory undermines the importance of social action, Mezirow argued that the latter is ‘crucial but it is not the only goal of adult education’ (Mezirow, 1989, p.172). Relatedly, he disputed that there are several factors which can constrain the potential for collective change; these could include ‘lack of information, situational constraints, psychological hang-ups, or absence of required skills’ (ibid). On this point, perspective transformation becomes a process that may not extend beyond the individual. In fact, Mezirow maintains that the social dimension of transformative learning resides in its ability to create the conditions that could later pave the way for emancipatory action. That is to say, the move toward an informed, objective, and more inclusive frame of reference, already fosters the conditions and abilities necessary to effect change (Mezirow, 2003).

In the first section of this chapter, I have presented insights about the intercultural dimension of language education and posed critiques against the simplified transmission of cultural knowledge from an essentialist, nation-bound perspective. This narrow perspective, I argued would maximise the risk of stereotypes. On this argument, I have suggested that a critical perspective on intercultural learning and pedagogy must be embraced; this alternative perspective should look at language and culture from a complex and dynamic viewpoint and seek to promote more learner-centred classrooms that promote participation and provide opportunities for reflection and dialogue. I shall now move to a discussion on the relevance of dialogic pedagogy in the promotion of critical consciousness and critical intercultural learning.

2.2 Dialogic Learning and Intercultural Pedagogy

In this study, I adopt the theoretical perspectives of Bakhtin (1986) to situate the development of critical consciousness within a broad social constructivist approach. To elaborate, I argue that dialogue has the potential to create a sphere of shared interaction in which knowledge is co-produced between the teacher and students as they engage in joint problem-solving. In these
shared spaces, students draw from their inner-cognitive and affective resources to reflect on meanings, which can in turn contribute to a greater degree of personal involvement and intercultural development (Fenner, 2001) as well as critical reasoning (Fung & Howe, 2014). Dialogic and experiential approaches and studies to intercultural learning are highlighted in the literature (Byram et al., 2002; Fenner, 2001; Sercu et al., 2005; Heggernes, 2021), however, scarcely are those which provide contextualised pedagogic attempts to showcase the development of critical intercultural learning through discourse, especially in the Algerian context (Doudi, 2021). Thus, the aim of this study is to build upon and extend on this existing body of knowledge to demonstrate the promotion of critical intercultural learning through classroom interaction. I now turn to discuss Bakhtin’s view of dialogue and its relevance in promoting critical learning.

2.2.1 Mikhail Bakhtin’s Dialogism (1986)

In the Bakhtinian notion of dialogue, there is a recognition of learning as socially constructed through the interplay or exchange of ideas between two or more influences. In this vein, Bakhtin develops two main processes that characterise the nature of dialogue, namely heteroglossia, which assumes the notion of meaning as dependent on the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which it emerges; and polyphony, which places emphasis on the multiplicity of voices engaged in dialogue (Baxter, 2010).

2.2.1.1 Heteroglossia

Bakhtin (1986) offers many reflections about his view of language as a socio-verbal phenomenon; this he refers to through his concept of ‘heteroglossia’, which not only recognises the diversity of language use but also its socio-ideological nature. He thus embraces the fluid and dynamic nature of people’s understandings of the world and language use in it (Bakhtin, ibid). Moreover, the notion of dialogue in Bakhtin’s thinking involves a collection of interrelated utterances which carry the traces of other social and historical meanings. This
implies that every time an utterance is added to the dialogue, it carries with it other socio-historical viewpoints that help to reshape the kind of consciousness produced in the talk. It follows that dialogue is intersubjective in nature and this intersubjectivity comes into play when thinking becomes influenced by this multiplicity of perspectives (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010). Bakhtin’s view of language has considerable implications in the context of language education and intercultural learning. To elaborate, his view on the social diversity of communicative practices within a given speech community permits a shift away from the largely reductionist model of the native speaker in language learning. This is in accordance with rising arguments against the simplistic and mono-cultural transmission of language and culture, which largely disguises the multifaceted nature of individual reality and leads to the perpetuation of essentialist notions (Holliday, 2018; Fang & Baker, 2018).

2.2.1.2 Polyphony

The main premise of Bakhtin’s concept of polyphony is that dialogue involves more than an uncritical exchange of ideas; rather, it represents a complex process of communication where participants are mentally engaged with the ideas of others, actively incorporating, amending, or rejecting what is being added to the dialogue. In Bakhtin’s view, it is this multiple and possibly conflicting nature of interaction that makes the dialogue messy but critical, in this respect, he observes that ‘our thought itself-philosophical, scientific, and artistic-is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought, and this cannot but be reflected in the forms that verbally express our thought as well’ (Bakhtin, 1986, p 92). This process departs from a state of intersubjective understanding, which broadly refers to the meanings co-created by people interacting with each other. Bakhtin (1986) believed that our consciousness of the world is always constructed in relation to and in dialogue with others. It draws on the ecological, historical, and cultural meanings associated with each word, phrase or utterance that is expressed by other voices in dialogue, which in turn, seek to transform or
add to our thinking repertoires. Bakhtin refers to this process as polyphony or many-voicedness (Vice, 1997), which is essential for our ideological consciousness, as he remarks ‘consciousness awakens to independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourses surrounding it’ (1981, P.345). In this vein, Crossley (1996) maintains that it is through intersubjectivity or shared thought that we come to generate our identities and agency.

In this line of thought, we can, therefore, think of dialogue as a critical and problem-solving approach to learning, in the sense that it does not only involve conflicting exchanges but also pushes students to probe the reasons for it. Reflective processes emerge during dialogue with diverse others, allowing new understandings to arise, existing frames of reference to be questioned and more permeable and flexible ways of interpreting the world to take place (Alexander, 2008; Boyd & Markarian, 2011). Specifically, the ‘give-and-take’ pattern of dialogue allows speakers to seek clarifications and express understanding, or disproval, which can have an enormous potential in achieving critical consciousness and reasoning (Fung & Howe, 2014; Mercer & Sams, 2006). Viewed from this perspective, there are clear implications for the process of dialogue as a collaborative and critical quest for knowledge in the field of critical intercultural learning. For example, dialogue can be used to create a collaborative and dynamic space for students to problematise attitudes and stereotypes which may present certain groups or cultures as being superior or inferior to others (Holliday, 2016).

Moreover, the two main notions of intercultural learning and dialogism are drawn from a focus on reciprocity. Intercultural education focuses on the promotion of interaction, dialogue, and reciprocal relationships (Vilà & Taveras, 2010). Along the same lines, dialogic pedagogy promotes reciprocity (Alexander, 2008) and challenges traditional forms of teacher-student relations, in which the teacher is the ‘all knowing’ and students’ minds are filled with any kind of input he/she suggests. As opposed to a ‘received’ cultural knowledge perspective in language learning (as argued earlier), activities within a dialogic approach take learners far
beyond the directive nature of instruction. Conversely, it creates a genuine opportunity for an ‘intersubjective space’ (Mercer & Littleton, 2007), which grants them agency and ability to make their voice heard (Kohonen et al., 2017). In a dialogic classroom, the teacher acts as a dialogic partner to his students rather than an authoritarian. They can both collaboratively exchange their points of view and discuss any ideas open to dispute (Hyatt, 2005). The teacher should also reduce the use of imperatives and obligating modalities, replacing words like must, and ought to, with expressions like I think, what if, because, and what, which would create more opportunities for knowledge expansion and thinking (Hyatt, ibid). Approval of this more collaboratively oriented approach to dialogue is also found in Mercer’s (2000) descriptions of group talk. These, I shall discuss in this next section.

2.2.2 Mercer’s Types of Talk

As previously discussed, research into classroom talk reports on the dialectical relationship between interaction and the development of thinking, however, the literature also demonstrates that there is little consensus regarding which form of interaction is most advantageous for this development (Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Kitchener, 2004; Rogoff, 1998). Mercer (2000) distinguishes between three types of talk, namely cumulative, disputational and exploratory talk. Mercer (ibid) considered cumulative discourse as a type of uncritical talk, where speakers build positively on each other’s ideas but don’t question them; thus, the interaction, in this case, is dominated by repetitions, confirmations, and accumulated knowledge. Disputational talk reflects dissonance, disagreements and discord as participants are tempted to compete against each other’s ideas. Mercer (ibid) maintains that this type of interaction is characterised by ‘an unwillingness to take on the other person’s point of view, and the consistent reassertion of one’s own’ (p.97). Driven by assertions, challenges, and counterarguments, disputational discourse impedes the elaboration of ideas and prevents participants from developing their knowledge and reasoning skills. In this competitive negotiation of knowledge, participants
usually take a defensive stance to protect their stance; this can cause tension and constrain cooperation that is more likely to allow for the questioning or revision of existing perspectives. The final category, exploratory talk, is one in which speakers engage critically but constructively with one another’s ideas. A central feature of exploratory talk is trust, support, and joint construction. That is, partners, develop their ideas in a supportive manner; they argue, and challenge one another’s dispositions but also offer statements, suggestions, and alternative hypotheses. Compared to the other two types of talk, Mercer’s exploratory talk is viewed as the most fruitful for developing join or collective reasoning (Atwood et al, 2010), but some argue that conflict is paramount to dialogic talk provided that it’s not too conflicting, harmful, or supercritical (Dale, 1993).

Mercer & Littleton (2007) describe exploratory talk as the ‘embodiment of critical thinking’ and posit that it is ‘essential for successful participation in ‘educated’ communities of discourse’ (p.66). Moreover, they also acknowledge that creating spaces for group discussions does not guarantee that students will develop their critical thinking, especially if these class talks are dominated by cumulative or competitive modes of discussion. To counter this, Mercer & Littleton (ibid) suggest that teachers use strategies like ‘actively welcoming and soliciting students’ ideas,’ ‘following up students’ responses and ‘refraining’ from making ‘evaluative feedback comments’ (p.35). According to these authors, using these techniques in class is likely to increase chances of useful group discussions.

2.2.3 Entanglements of Theories Used in this Study

This study’s theoretical framework converged together three theories to sensibly trace the promotion of critical consciousness in the language classroom, namely dialogism (Bakhtin, 1986), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1993), and transformative theory (Mezirow, 1978). To begin, all the aforementioned theories approach teaching for critical consciousness and share a clear commitment to the elements of dialogue, reflection and problem posing for the creation of
deeply engaged and participatory classrooms. Bakhtin’s (1986) theoretical ideas stress the educative potential of dialogue in the promotion of intersubjective understanding and active participation in the classroom. For Bakhtin, a dialogic model of talk invites students to think, question and challenge each other's contributions in a supportive way, which can then encourage reflexivity and allow for a variety of interpretations and meanings to be shared and negotiated. It is this dimension that many view as holding the potential for sharpening students’ critical thinking skills and maximising opportunities for more permeable and flexible interpretations of the world to take place (Alexander, 2008; Boyd & Markarian, 2011). In a similar vein, Freire’s (1993) learning theory also suggests that to develop CC, one must engage in active dialogue and reflection. As discussed before, Friere believed that knowledge does not exist in vacuum, and thus cannot be separated from the discursive practices and power relations that shape its existence and dissemination in society. A crucial step towards CC is to then raise and develop greater attention to the epistemological frames of reference that shape these social realities and equip students with analytical skills to be self-reflective and aware of unacknowledged assumptions that normalise and reinforce inequality and oppression in society. To create impetus for the examination of these perspectives, this study used Mezirow’s (1978) theoretical notion of ‘disorienting dilemma’ (DD) as a strategy to evoke dissonance and create space for critical scrutiny of stereotypic assumptions. As argued earlier, stereotypes are part of our assumptions of the social world. These assumptions which Mezirow refers to as ‘meaning perspectives’ can be reflected upon and potentially transformed via exposure to a disorienting dilemma. This is best realised through a critical- dialectical discourse, where learners attempt to ‘justify beliefs, either by rationally examining assumptions, often in response to intuitively becoming aware that something is wrong with the result of our thought or challenging its validity through discourse with others’ (Mezirow, 1995, p. 46) (see Chapter 6 for a discussion on how Mezirow’s view of DD is incorporated in the pedagogical model of
this study). The aim of these theories is to therefore make problematic what is taken for granted through encouraging reflexivity and peer dialogue to move learners towards higher levels of cultural awareness and diversity.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

This section now turns to present a review of empirical studies on intercultural learning in Algeria and previous work on critical pedagogy in various contexts. I start by discussing the representation of culture in FL contexts in Algeria, and then move on to discuss studies on classroom practices and critical pedagogies in the field of FLT and ELT.

2.3.1 Research on ICC in Algeria: A review of Previous Studies

Despite the enthusiastic endorsement of the intercultural approach in FLT in Algeria, the majority of studies reviewed conclude that language learning is associated to learning the cultures of the inner circle countries (UK/USA) or the students’ local cultures. In a qualitative inquiry investigating the representation of culture in EFL textbooks, Rabehi (2021) presented several critiques of the cultural content found in textbooks, citing problems associated with nationalism, essentialism, and lack of attention to the development of critical cultural awareness. Rabehi (ibid) also concluded that participating teachers still equate their FLT practices to the teaching of communicative competence. Rabehi’s conclusions were later corroborated in Douidi’s (2021) empirical investigation on the promotion of the intercultural in EFL textbooks. Importantly, Douidi (ibid) found that the cultural references found in curriculum content ‘carry simplistic and essentialist cultural representations’; additionally, ‘tasks are predominantly language focussed’ and even teachers were found to ‘contribute to reifying and perpetuating essentialism’ (p.195-196). In her study, Douidi (ibid) called for a more complex engagement with intercultural learning through dialogic pedagogy. This alternative perspective argues for a move toward a complex and reflective theorisation of
culture and identity, as well as the need to switch from traditional instructional discourse (rooted in communicative language models) toward more learner-centred methods of learning. Further insights can also be drawn from Amziane & Selama’s (2020) study on the implementation of ICC in English textbooks. The study (ibid) reported that the English textbooks examined ‘do not provide tasks, materials or activities which encourage the learners to question their beliefs on differences among cultures’ (p.1659). Another important finding was also highlighted in Bouslama & Benaissi’s study (2018) which investigated Algerian EFL teachers’ perceptions of culture and ICC. The findings showed that many teachers predominantly viewed culture teaching in terms of surface-level practices and factual knowledge of the nation. It was also found that disproportionate attention is given to the linguistic dimension of language over the intercultural one.

Shortcomings in teacher education, as well as teaching materials were also found to interrupt effective intercultural learning in Algerian EFL contexts. In an attempt to uncover EFL teachers’ attitudes towards various aspects of intercultural language learning in Algeria, Feratha (2014), found that teachers reported a ‘lack of appropriate knowledge and skills to successfully teach about the culture and improve students’ intercultural communicative skills’ (para. 4). In a similar vein, an exploration into EFL teachers’ perceptions on the role of culture instruction in intercultural learning revealed that 80% of participant teachers reported treating culture as a supplementary aspect to language learning. Culture is used to transmit factual knowledge about a particular country; no references to nurturing students’ positive attitudes or prompts to reflect on the cultural meanings of the local culture as well as the target one were made (Drissat, 2015). More importantly, the study also revealed that student participants held ethnocentric views whenever they were engaged in debates on foreign cultural practices and beliefs different from their own. This perspective has also been argued in Merrouch’s study (2006) which concluded that opportunities for intercultural exploration, comparison and
analysis are scarce considering shortcomings in teacher education, curriculum overload, teaching materials and emphasis on nurturing linguistic capacities at the expense of intercultural skills.

Further studies were conducted to measure the extent to which the teaching of languages in Algerian classrooms can contribute to learners’ intercultural competence. El Korso (n.d.), for example, was one of the few researchers to assess German language students’ intercultural competence in Algeria. In his study, he explained how cultural differences existing between the Algerian and German cultures could easily lead to the construction of stereotypes. By highlighting the difference between the German and Algerian ‘no’, he illustrates that ‘when [an] Algerian is invited by a German for a meal, a drink or to have something, he happens to say no out of politeness, even if [he] thinks the opposite, as [he] expects the offer to be made again and then agree. The Germans [however] are not used to repeating the offer and [as such they] take the Algerian’s ‘no’ as a definite answer’. EL Korso (ibid), explains how because of cultural misunderstandings like these, students were led to stereotype the entire German society as ‘harsh, rigid, and even cruel [simply] because they did not make the offer again’ (p. 264-265). In a similar line of inquiry, Mehdaoui (2015) implemented a thematic-based approach to teach modules of British culture for the espoused aim of developing interculturally competent users of the language. He found that results amounting from the experimental group revealed that students gained a deeper understanding of the ‘other’, whereas conventional methods of culture teaching with the control group revealed that students were actually led to stereotype Britain as ‘a country of monarchy, castles, quaint behaviour, aristocracy, and arrogant people’ (p.37).
2.3.2 Previous Studies on CP and Intercultural Education in the MENA Region

Most of the research reviewed on CP across the Middle East and North African regions revealed that the awareness and practice of CP in the field of English language education remains relatively scarce, especially in light of the domination of ‘rote learning’ and banking methods in education (Aliakbari & Allahmoradi, 2012; Ibrahim, 2012; Nasser & Abouchedid, 2007; Romanowski & Nasser, 2012). Furthermore, CP’s radical and openly poeticized goal for transformation makes it especially difficult to implement especially that ‘religion and tradition...govern the political, economic, social, legal, and educational aspects of society’ (Romanowski & Nasser, 2012, p.124).

Within the Algerian context, Berriche & Merrouche (2021) investigated Algerian language teachers’ awareness and attitudes towards the practice of CP. The findings revealed that teachers were not aware of CP mainly because of the constrains imposed by rigid curricula and regulations. The study also reported that banking models of education prevailed in these settings and the processes of teaching and learning did not encourage the exploration of the socio-cultural aspects which surround the learning and teaching of English language.

Similar findings were also reported in the cross-cultural study conducted by Mohamed & Malik (2014) which investigated the extent to which English teachers in countries, such as Sudan, Iran and Pakistan were aware of critical pedagogical practices in ELT. The qualitative data reported through the semi-structured interviews showed that because of the institutional system that favours mainstream pedagogy, ELT teachers were found to have minimal awareness of critical pedagogy. Likewise, spaces for the promotion for critical consciousness were relatively scarce because of the dominating nature of banking education. Mohamed & Malik (2014) concluded that one of the main reasons behind teachers’ lack of awareness on CP is that most teachers were ‘being commercialized into the mainstream pedagogy’ especially that most ‘language institutes around the world maintain a policy of uniformity of teaching methods with
a view to securing a better profit’ (p.24). Recently, Degenaro & Raddawi (2017) examined the application of CP in English writing and research classes at three private universities in the United Arab Emirates. Through interviews and surveys with course directors and language teachers, Degenaro & Raddawi (ibid) concluded that critical pedagogy should be introduced in English learning classrooms in UAE colleges, but there is a need to adapt the Freirean notions of CP in a way that meets the local culture and students’ experiences.

### 2.3.3 Previous Studies on CP and Intercultural Education in Other Contexts

Outside of MENA, Heggernes (2021) conducted an empirical study to investigate the impact of interaction and dialogue on developing Norwegian EFL students’ intercultural learning skills. Through the use of group discussions on picturebooks, Heggernes (ibid) found that dialogue helped enrich a variety of perspectives which allowed students to engage with the social, physical, and symbolic dimension of the texts. In this way, dialogue functioned as an effective tool for stimulating students’ critical thinking and intercultural capabilities. In her study, Heggernes (ibid) also highlighted the role of the teacher in facilitating this dialogical space, helping students to elaborate, justify and constructively build on each other’s ideas. Overall, the study recommended the use of student-centred, experiential, and dialogic activities in developing students’ critical intercultural capabilities.

Yulita (2012) adopted a critical pedagogical approach through the reading of literary texts to challenge gender stereotypes that Spanish language students upheld against Hispanics. The findings revealed that critical pedagogy helped students raise awareness on the essentialist assumptions they held about the Hispanic other. Specifically, through the examination of perceived asymmetrical power relations that dichotomises ‘us’ and ‘them’, students were able to deconstruct their stereotypes and increase awareness on the oppressive nature of stereotyping.
Another study which aimed to gain an understanding of intercultural competence teaching and learning as it occurs in the natural setting of the FL classroom was that by Georgiou (2010) in the context of higher education in Cyprus. Focussing both on the students’ development of intercultural skills as well as the impact of the teacher’s pedagogical practice on this process, the study adopted a qualitative action inquiry to support the implementation of a two-semester intercultural syllabus; data was collected through student interviews, essays, and teacher reflective diary. Drawing on insights from critical pedagogy, critical multiculturalism, and intercultural competence, the study which, primarily aimed to problematise monolithic constructions of otherness and move students towards cultural sensitivity, found that learner centred approaches and dialogical relations increased students’ agency to produce knowledge and promote deeper understandings of intercultural issues, demonstrated through greater levels of reflection on the multiplicity of cultural identities, awareness of oneself, and reduction of stereotypes and misconceptions. Moreover, Georgiou’s (ibid) reflection on her pedagogical practice involved the need for being more attentive to the students’ emotional needs during their intercultural learning, switching to a more learner-centred approach where students and teachers act as co-producers of knowledge, and building critical attentiveness to her own assumptions and biases when teaching for intercultural purposes.

2.3.4 Insights from the Previous Research

As discussed previously, the course design and teaching approach were developed in a way that challenged banking approaches to education (Friere, 1993) and incorporated a shift towards more engaging and empowering pedagogies of learning. This was based on three premises: a) that learning was to be reflective and ongoing; b) that teaching could not be overly structured or authoritarian as students needed to take a more active role in learning; c) that students were provided opportunities for interaction and critical dialogue. Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of Holliday (2005; 2011), Baker (2017) and Dervin (2011), I took a
non-essentialist view of culture which presumes that people and/or practices can no longer be defined along national lines. These discourses rest on the recognition of cultural complexity and foreground a cosmopolitan and transnational view of language and culture, taking into account the fluid and constantly changing nature of local practices and discourses (Garcia & Wei, 2014). These particular theoretical conceptualisations have helped shape my understanding of critical intercultural learning, encouraging me to move beyond a static transmission of cultural knowledge towards a more genuinely reflexive pedagogy. On a more practical level, the empirical studies of Yulita (2012), Houghton et al (2013) and Jennings et al (2010) were particularly influential. Through the use of consciousness-raising techniques, dialogue and self-reflection, these studies have empirically shown how stereotypes can be deconstructed through education. In practical terms, students demonstrated an ability to examine their own discourses of otherness and were able to move away from viewing cultures and practices in stereotypical ways. Furthermore, pedagogies of critical and transformative learning have also helped shape and reconceptualise my role and practices in the classroom (Friere, 1992; Mezirow, 1978; Giroux, 1988). Positioning myself as a transformative intellectual entailed a move away from lecture-based approaches towards more learner cantered-pedagogies. In other words, instead of passing on the knowledge I had to my students, I tried to engage them in active discovery, utilising dialogue, problematising knowledge and maximising opportunities for critical reflection and conscientization.

2.4 Summary

This research study draws on the principles of dialogic interaction and pedagogy to facilitate students’ critical engagement with issues of cultural identity and stereotypes for the development of critical consciousness (Freire, 1993). The review of the literature on how criticality can be developed in FLT highlights the need for a move away from the narrow one-nation-one-culture-one language model of teaching towards a more critically oriented approach
to culture as an active process of meaning-making. It has been argued that a particularly important goal of FLT is to help students develop into critical beings who can actively reflect on their changing identities and problematise their own assumptions (Byram, 1997; Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Baker, 2011; Pennycook, 2007; Risager, 2007). In the literature reviewed, there is also reference to the socio-political dimensions of language and its connection to pedagogy through Freire’s (ibid) work on critical pedagogy. Likewise, the discussion put forward in this chapter has underscored the importance of dialogic meaning making in relation to the promotion of conscientization, mainly drawing on the Bakhtinian notions of knowledge construction. The chapter concluded with a review of the main studies that focus on classroom practices and pedagogies for critical intercultural learning. All these insights are valuable for exploring how teachers can open spaces for critical consciousness through dialogue and interaction in Algerian EFL classrooms. In the following chapter, I shall move to discuss the research methodology, context and pedagogical model underpinning this study.
Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Methods

3.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to describe the methodological approach utilized in the present study. The chapter opens with the research questions that guided this study. It then moves to discuss the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this inquiry, grounding the study between the interpretative and critical tradition of qualitative research. This is followed by a rationale for employing a case study design. Subsequent sections describe the pedagogical model used in this intervention, detailing the process of material selection and teaching approaches employed in this study. The chapter then moves to provide details about the process of data collection, outlining the data sources and processes of analysis and interpretation. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and reflexivity measures in this study.

3.1 Research Questions

As stated previously, the overall aim of this research project was to investigate how eight EFL students develop the construct of critical consciousness through dialogue and interaction on issues of cultural identity and stereotypes. With this broad objective in mind, this study adopted a qualitative case study design to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do students view the self and imagined other?

RQ2: How is critical consciousness developed through dialogue?

- How do students construct more complex understandings of identity?
- How do students critically engage with stereotypes of self and imagined other?
- In what other ways can critical consciousness manifest itself in dialogue?

RQ3: How does the teacher contribute to the promotion of critical consciousness in the classroom?
3.2 Paradigmatic Position

Principally, it is the researcher’s philosophical underpinnings and nature of the study which determine the choice of paradigm. A paradigm represents the researcher’s assumptions and beliefs about social reality and the processes of knowing, i.e., what people know and how they know it (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). In general, there are three main approaches to educational research: positivism, interpretivism and critical theory. The positivist paradigm assumes that reality is static; knowledge can be predicted and, therefore, is absolute and value-free. It exists independently from social and historic contexts (Cohen et al., 2000). The interpretive paradigm, on the other hand, assumes that reality is subjective, multiple, and ever-changing. Interpretivists view that individuals shape their own realities through interaction (Bryman, 2015). As for the critical paradigm, reality is viewed as primarily shaped by political, ethnic, and cultural factors, whereas knowledge is ‘both socially constructed and influenced by power relations from within society’ (Scotland, 2012, p.13).

This study lies between the borders of interpretivism and critical theory. Reasons underpinning this choice stem from my own view of knowledge and reality as socially and historically constructed, changeable and permeated by unequal distribution of power and authority (Bryman, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Darder et al., 2009; Myers, 2009). Kincheloe & McLaren (2011) assert that a critical research paradigm seeks to liberate society from the sum of social structures, values and beliefs that perpetuate inequality by making these problems visible and open to critique. Therefore, it seeks to encourage a sphere of liberatory consciousness in society. On the other hand, an interpretivist paradigm would seek to provide a close examination of the phenomenon of interest via the meanings that people attach to it (Deetz, 1996).
This thesis is primarily concerned with the social reality that surrounds, contextualises, and to a certain degree structures the enactment of critical consciousness. And yet it is also committed to praxis in the sense that it involves a practical intervention in an Algerian higher educational context to evoke critical pedagogical practices. In this sense, my role as a critical interpretivist is to unmask and challenge the power structures that subjugate certain types of knowledge in society (as shared by my students) while also attempting to present an in-depth understanding on the kind of intersubjectivities students share with one another as they grapple with the complexities of identity and stereotypes (Cohen et al, 2011; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). That being said, I acknowledge that the created knowledge is contextually bound and subjective. That is because, as a teacher and researcher, I did not separate myself from the studied phenomenon. The process of syllabus design, teaching, analysis, and interpretation of data must have been contaminated with my personal, cultural, and historical background. As Grix (2004) would observe ‘researchers are inextricably part of the social reality being researched, i.e., they are not detached from the subject they are studying’ (p.83). Hence, the findings are subjective and contingent (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). To address this issue, the study employed a variety of data collection methods which would allow for the triangulation of data and reduction of bias and subjectivity.

3. 3 Methodological Approach

Epistemological and ontological orientations greatly shape and determine the researcher’s view of the world, as well as provide the basic principles of the methodological design of his/her study (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The interpretive approach to research is commonly known with its use of qualitative research especially in relation to educational settings and processes. Denzin & Lincoln (2005, p.3) explain that qualitative research:

Consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible... At this level, qualitative research involves
an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

In discussing the value of qualitative research, scholars maintain that qualitative inquiry lends itself to thick narrative descriptions, giving voice to the lived experiences of participants. In this sense, it attempts to explore the complexities of individuals’ lives and experiences in relation to the social and cultural context they occupy (Myers, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Maxwell, 2013). As previously described, the aim of this research was to study the promotion of critical consciousness in its natural classroom setting with a view of interpreting its development through interaction. Therefore, qualitative methodology was considered as the most appropriate approach in this study. More specifically, it provided me with a useful framework to better examine the development of critical consciousness through interaction while also allowing me to acknowledge the importance of context and the value of understanding students’ experiences as they question what has become normalised and unproblematic in their social and cultural milieus. Additionally, qualitative inquiry also allowed me a certain level of flexibility, especially in relation to the research questions which were gradually refined as I listened and read through the class discussions, interview transcripts and my reflective notes.

In line with this view, Holliday (2007, p.32) explains that:

Research questions can also change as the research moves on from the initial concept. Initial questions lead the researcher to investigate in a certain direction; but within this process there will be unforeseen discoveries which raise further or different questions. In some cases, the whole focus of the research may change.
3.3.1 Case Study

A case study approach was adopted to address the research questions of this study. Case study is defined by Stake (1995) as ‘the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its complexity within important circumstances’ (p.1). From this perspective, a case study is a comprehensive exploration of an individual case, paying close attention to its context. It involves multiple sources of data (Hamilton et al., 2013), and provides unique insights on the perceptions and concerns of the individual participants involved in the case (Simons, 1996). All of this aligns with my position as a researcher who seeks to answer a ‘how’ question on a phenomenon that occurs in specific context (Yin, 2014). This applies to this inquiry which seeks to examine how students develop critical consciousness through dialogic interactions.

Holistically speaking, there are a few different types of case studies that educational researchers might utilize. Stake (1995) has already made a comprehensive contribution regarding the various classifications of case studies. He identified three main types: intrinsic- a single case that aims to primarily understand the case under study; instrumental- also a single case which focus is to build a theory or redraw generalisations on a particular issue; a collective study explores differences between multiple cases for the purpose of replicating its findings. Under Stake’s (1995) classification, I perceive this inquiry as a single intrinsic case study, which aims to investigate the development of critical consciousness among this specific group of students, considering the particular cultural, social, and local context in which these meanings and new readings of the world are naturally constructed.
3.4 Learning Materials and Teaching Approach

3.4.1 Learning Materials

The course objectives and their attraction to students were both key factors that guided the selection of themes, tasks, and texts for the teaching materials and activities. In designing the course program, I worked with the assumption that a focus on critical reflection, problem posing, and interaction could open a space for students to engage with the complexity of identity, ethnicity, and stereotypes. These notions of engagement (i.e., critical reflection, problematisation and interaction) are germane to the promotion of critical consciousness (Freire, 1993). Furthermore, I took into consideration the importance of students’ immediate context. Therefore, I sought to select learning materials which responded to students’ ethnic, cultural, and historic backgrounds, thus maximising engagement, and interest in learning. Giroux (2003) would particularly agree with the pedagogical need for addressing the students’ identities and backgrounds rather than denying them. This can contribute to raising their awareness of the social issues surrounding them and learning how these connect to wider social and, often oppressive, systems of hegemony. Additionally, I also implemented a variety of texts, newspaper articles, documentary segments and photographs as primary resources for learning. Next, I move to present the pedagogical principles I adopted for the creation of this syllabus and broadly relate these to the foundational aspects of CP. I must, however, be candid and state that CP did not guide my initial design of the syllabus. In fact, it was not until I engaged with the analysis of my data and further readings that I came to realise that a lot of what I intuitively planned to do in my classroom, and later practised with my students resonated with the works of Freire (1993) and other critical pedagogues. To mention a few points, these included- the focus on critical reflection, problem posing, interaction and dialogue, sharing authority and the inclusion of students’ heritages and backgrounds.
3.4.1.1 Problem Posing Approach

Problem posing education which is transpired through dialogue is key to enabling students to become conscious of the problems embedded in their everyday life. To get that right, both educators and students need to take a critical and reflexive look at the knowledge and information presented to them. Through questioning, they start to investigate the root causes of a particular issue, further trying to uncover how it relates to the political, cultural, and historic context of its existence, as well as developing an understanding of the barriers and/or support networks that could evoke change. As Freire (2000) puts it ‘students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge’ (p. 81). In my attempt to design a problem posing syllabus, I held back from any traditional methods of teaching issues of culture, identity, and difference in ways that reproduce the status quo (i.e., the mere transmission of wholistically-shared cultural aspects and their impact on constructing homogenous identities and stereotypes). Alternatively, I attempted to raise awareness of stereotypes as ‘problems’ which are deeply embedded in social, cultural, and colonial systems of inequality and categorical thinking (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998), as well as its damaging effects. As discussed previously in chapter two (see section 2.1.4), through the use of disorienting dilemmas as dissonance strategies, I attempted to foster a climate for interrogating these notions by stimulating thought-provoking questions and dialogue. Herein, my hope was to evoke the students’ critical consciousness and get them to question ‘in whose interests, particular knowledges are constituted, legitimised and perpetuated’ (Lankshear et al, 1997, p. 43-44).

3.4.1.2 Critical Reflection

Reflection helps students to step back from the discussed situations and view them from different perspectives. It focuses on uncovering assumptions about our lived experiences, and
habits of mind. Critical reflection, on the other hand, calls into question the power dynamics
and wider structures that promote hegemonic practices or discourses in society (Brookfield,
2009). In class, students were encouraged to describe and identify assumptions that they may
have uncritically constructed of the other and then engage in a process of analysis on how these
dominant ideologies are embedded in webs of power that frame and sustain their existence. Put
differently, they try to question why things are the way they are, who created them, why and
how we came to accept them unquestioningly. As reflective strategies, post-task reflective tasks
and journal writings proved useful in this context, positioning learners as onlookers of their
own context, and encouraging them to develop new viewpoints and interpretations (Murphy &

3.4.1.3 Dialogue

Dialogic interactions with others are viewed as necessary for the development of new
perspectives (Alexander, 2008). Through dialogue, I attempted to transform the classroom into
a site where students can co-construct knowledge, allowing for the plurality of meanings to
emerge and developing new ways of seeing and perceiving in the world. In other words, I used
dialogue as a collaborative tool for involving students of varying backgrounds in a process of
critical reflection and consciousness-raising for the purposes of identifying, challenging, and
refraining from the status quo; a much-needed process for fostering conscientization (Freire,
2000).

3.4.2 The Teaching Approach

From a CP point of view, teaching from a critical perspective implies a redefinition of
students/teachers’ roles; that is to say that teachers who have been traditionally positioned as a
source of authority in the classroom need to share this responsibility with the students while
also remaining in charge of the engagement processes (Shor, 1992; Osborn, 2006). Inside the
classroom, my role was more prone to that of a facilitator. I was taking part in the process of
knowing in collaboration with learners. I shared authority with my students (e.g., negotiating the syllabus) but still provided some structure in the classroom. In this sense, the learning process was negotiated (Shor, 1992). In this vein, Jelavic & Salter (2014) view that a facilitator’s main role is to ‘contribute structure and process to interactions while encouraging others to lead the process’. In other words, it aims to ‘engage and empower individuals whilst offering support enabling them to define and achieve objectives’ (p.2). Importantly, I did not aim to make students believe in what I necessarily assumed, nor did I expect any instant learning as the ‘effect’ of teaching may not become apparent until it becomes relevant for the individual him/herself. The key task for me was to empower these students to ‘walk the path of unlearning’ (Yulita, 2012, p.4), to encourage them to make the basis of their judgment explicit by providing opportunities for engagement with stereotypes in terms of ‘recognition’, ‘reflecting on origin’ and allowing meaning construction through group work posters, discussions, and information sharing.

Furthermore, as a teacher/facilitator, I made efforts to intervene in resolving any disputes; questioning inactive students, especially if other participants were ‘exceedingly' dominating the conversation and redirecting the conversation in case irrelevant issues were brought to the table. One of the students asked if they ‘had' to speak even if they did not have anything to share, I explained that not finding anything to say is natural and completely acceptable, however, it is holding back what one feels the need to say out of fear may not be favourable. I also made sure to minimize error correction as much as possible so as not to diminish the students' motivation or disrupt the flow of talk. Considering the aims of this course, the content of the class recordings/interviews was what mattered the most and minimizing students’ concerns about their language level and proficiency was believed to help enrich meaningful data.
In my teaching, I viewed the classroom as a fertile space for open dialogue, communication, and collaborative inquiry. I made sure that students ask, as well as respond to, their own questions so that they can induce their own understanding of concepts and practice reflection on commonsensical beliefs.

Another foundational strategy was to select materials that ‘allow learners to articulate their own, somewhat unpredictable interpretation of a potentially problematic situation relevant to their life’ (Crookes, 2013, pp. 60-61). These materials included a selection of photographs, video clips, and texts that tapped into the students’ personal, local, and cultural knowledge which further helped increase curiosity, understanding, and engagement. Other strategies also involved facilitating activities for critical thinking, guiding inquiry, and designing space for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through presentations and role plays. The table below (3.1) outlines in detail the themes, activities, and objectives of each session.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Activities and Teaching Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
                        |                                    | b. Acquire more sensitivity by recognizing the diversity of identities in other participants.  
                        |                                    | c. To provide a comparison for exploring social identity and learning more about it from various perspectives.  
                        |                                    | d. Discuss and describe how elements such as background, ethnicity, gender, culture, and race have influenced their identity. | Personal Identity Wheel.  
                        |                                    |                                    | Social Identity Wheel         | Spectrum (reflective) Activity  
                        |                                    |                                    |                          | Class Discussions        |
                        |                                    | b. To help students recognize their own and other people's stereotypical beliefs.  
                        |                                    | c. Gain awareness of the negative consequences of stereotypes and prejudice. | Where do I come from activity?  
                        |                                    |                                    | Skimming and Scanning: Reading articles and summarizing.  
                        |                                    |                                    | Discussing Stereotypes/ prejudice and discrimination.  
                        |                                    |                                    | Create posters and analyse one's images of ‘othering’ in pairs/groups.  
                        |                                    |                                    | Analyse photographs, Complete the ‘Just because ’ worksheet. |                          |
| 08/11/2018 (Part 2)  |                                    |                                    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 29/11/2018.          | 3.Understanding Culture: The Iceberg Model | a. To identify the visible and invisible elements of a person’s culture.  
                        |                                    | b. To recognize how one's own culture can influence his/her behaviour and attitude. | Review and complete the iceberg handout.  
                        |                                    |                                    |                          | Discuss the hidden dimensions of culture. |                          |
4. Exploring Issues of Prejudice and Racism

a. To explore the historical treatment of racial minorities and women in the US.
b. To increase awareness of the parallels between discriminatory practices of the past and today.
c. To recognize the negative impact of racism, discrimination, and stereotypes on people's lives.

Defining the terms ‘prejudice’ and ‘Racism’.

Identity Star Activity (highlighting aspects of racism and racial minorities).

Watch a video that features voices of 12-year-olds talking about their experiences with race and racial identity.

Class Discussions.

5. Reconstruction of The Themes

a. To demonstrate and reflect on what students have learned during the course.

Students were asked to present their final projects to demonstrate how they reconstructed the themes they discussed in class.

Students prepared roleplays on stereotypes and racism.

Presentations about cultural relativism and some presented content on how they view the multiple nature of their cultural identity.

Final Session (Summary of Learning) 22/12/2018

Table 3.1 Overview of Course Tasks and Activities.

3. 5 Data Collection

Before I explain my data collection methods, it is essential that I provide a few details about the research site, contact with participants, data collection methods, and stages of my teaching intervention.

3.5.1 The Research Site

This study was conducted in a foreign language department located in a city of northeast Algeria (this will be referred to as department language northeast, DLN). This particular setting was chosen first, due to my ability to obtain quick access to the field, and second, because it was located in a city where I lived and studied, which made it a convenient option. This institution is part of a non-profit higher educational organisation that offers both general and academic English courses to EFL students. These study programs are designed to prepare
students pursue future career paths as EFL instructors in the middle or high school contexts, or in higher educational terrains.

3.5.2 Recruiting the Research Participants

One month before the start of the new term (September 2018), I got in touch with a former comrade of mine in DLN and asked for his help to establish contact with prospective student participants. The fact that my colleague was a member of staff in this department helped me get in touch with the MA students doing their degrees at the time. Deciding on this purposive sampling was made on the ground that this sample is likely to yield more meaningful data since participants were expected to have a good command of both writing and speaking skills, which would then help enrich data from the class discussions and journal entries.

At first, my colleague suggested names of students who he thought might be interested to take part in the study and by word of mouth, he motivated a couple of them to volunteer as participants. At this time, I provided my colleague with a ‘student credential sheet’ where prospective students can leave their contact details. In the beginning, the number of students willing to cooperate was not very promising. Nearly 12 students contacted me but after explaining the project procedures and duration, only 9 of them gave a positive reply. Excuses varied between ‘I have a busy timetable’ and ‘I cannot guarantee my regular attendance’, however, since this study was exploratory in nature aiming to understand the dynamic and negotiated reality of these students’ perceptions, a small group was considered preferable. With this in mind, nine students were considered adequate to carry on the study. Table 3.2 provides an overview of all nine participating students.
Obtaining consent to conduct research in DLN was also an important requirement for the successful completion of this study. To attain approval, I approached the departmental chair and arranged a meeting to elucidate the nature and goals of my study as well as the targeted learners needed. I also provided copies of ethical clearance, which I obtained from the research ethics board at Warwick University prior to the conduction of the fieldwork (see Appendix I). Having checked all necessary documents (i.e., Warwick ethical clearance, consent, and information sheets to be given to student participants, Appendices D and E), the chair welcomed my idea and granted me the good permission to conduct research at the university vicinity during all weekdays.

When meeting the students for the first time, I introduced myself and then went around and exchanged warm greetings with all of them. The students demonstrated a spectacular appetite for attending the course. Whether it was the course's unprecedented approach, the chair’s recommendation or most likely the fact that I was pursuing a doctoral degree overseas, I was extremely delighted to see how students were positively inclined towards participation in the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Regional Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farah</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Zian</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saba</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Souf</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zain</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Chaouï</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nayra</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ziban</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deena</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasmeen</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Participants.
course. During this meeting, I sought to explain in simple terms the purpose of my study and the entire program of the course, sometimes in our shared language of Arabic and others in English. I also handed them copies of consent and information forms and provided any needed clarifications. Afterwards, we sat down to review the timetables and come up with a suitable time for everyone, In the event, it proved difficult to arrange for the pre-course interviews, however, despite busy schedules, students were very willing to cooperate and agreed to initially start meeting on Saturday mornings. Fortunately, I managed to gain access to the university vicinity during weekends having been granted authorization from the university's security division.

3.6 Data collection Methods

In this case study, data collection remained qualitative using the methods of semi-structured interviews, audio recordings of classroom discussions, reflective journals, and my field notes. These methodological instruments not only helped to elucidate participants’ unique experiences, beliefs, and personal stories, but also added credibility to a case study methodology, thus, minimising any possible limitations or weaknesses to using a single method approach (Simons, 2009).

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Student participants were individually interviewed twice, once in the weeks prior to participation in the course and again at the end of the intervention. Interviews ranged from 20 to 35 minutes in length. The purpose of these interviews was to first, explore in more depth the variety and complexity of students’ understandings of culture; secondly, to elicit beliefs and expectations about how they interacted with diverse others and what sort of assumptions they have of the imagined other, and lastly to elicit students’ reflective data on the course overall and examine whether this experience had any impact on their critical thinking, self-awareness and/or cultural identity. To be more specific, I was interested in building a richer contextual
understanding of students’ backgrounds and experiences, something that can help me interpret other meanings that emerge in the data set (Simons, 2009).

Dingwell (1997), Fontana & Frey (2005) maintain that interviews are socially situated stories, negotiated between the researcher and his/her participants’ questions, probes, and responses. In a sense, this helps to promote dialogue and collaboration as well as minimise the hierarchical gap between researchers and respondents, but it can also pose issues of misrepresentation, minimising adequate depiction of the phenomenon being researched (Hertz, 1997). To appropriately address this issue, I attempted to restrain my role as an interviewer by, for example, allowing more space for my participants to voice their stories, minimising my interruptions, and paying attention to when my enthusiasm in conversation was shifting or disrupting what they were trying to say. Initially, 9 interviews were conducted. Afterwards, one student (Ziya) decided to withdraw because she was unable to attend on weekends; her decision was respected, and her interview data was deleted. Only the data collected from the remaining eight participants was considered in this research.

3.6.2 Audio Recordings of Group Discussions

In order to document episodes of classroom life, it was important to audio-record all occurring interactions in the classroom. I realised early in the data collection phase that much of the classroom activity can go unnoticed by the time it is analysed. Recording the students’ group talk provided a detailed exposure to these naturally occurring interactions and helped achieve a better understanding of the wider context in which to situate the emerging meanings. I transcribed all recordings of classroom talk noting any occurring interruptions and/or pauses.

3.6.3 Students’ Reflective Journals

Students’ reflective journals were used to supplement other sources of data and obtain further insights into the students’ learning experiences. In this non-threatening and personal space, students were encouraged to document their perceptions and experiences in class, including
any difficulties or insights they wanted to share about the tasks, materials, and interactions with others. The reflective journals were submitted on a weekly basis, aiming to continue the dialogic interaction beyond the classroom walls and helping students to become aware of their thoughts, positions, and feelings in relation to learning. The use of journals comprised a useful instructional tool for documenting my students’ personal voices and informing the impact of my practice on their learning process.

To help facilitate the process of journaling, I provided students with notebooks of various colours. I also explained that there were no right or wrong answers and that everything that they would say would be valued and kept confidential. Writing in these journals was not compulsory either; students were advised to write as many or as few entries as they wanted. When students submitted entries, I responded to their content with questions and requests for clarification or suggestions and then returned these for further expansion. Below are some examples of prompt questions I used with students after each session.

1. Think about what you learned today. How has this changed your way of thinking?
2. Did today’s lesson make you think about your own country/culture? How?
3. Have you gained any views that you have not had before? Or is there any new discovery?
4. If you had a chance to make a change, what would that change be? Do you think you might face some obstacles in making that sort of change?
5. Have you encountered any difficulties in today’s lesson? If yes, what were they?

My purpose in eliciting such feedback from the students was to gain an understanding of what students seemed to learn after each lesson. I illustrate the number of journal entries I received in Table 3.3.
3.6.4 Supplementary Field Notes

Supplementary contextual notes were a useful pedagogical instrument for building a holistic picture of the classroom context and its participating parties (Brodsky, 2008; Mulhall, 2003). At the time of teaching, the diary served as an aide-mémoire to my practice. In my diary book, I made notes on my immediate impressions and thoughts of relevant events, reflecting on whether certain tasks have been successful or not in encouraging students’ engagement and what sort of changes I needed to make to involve more students. As the course deliverer, I had very little time to take notes while engaging with the students, therefore, it was vital that I sit down after each session to document any backstage insights, questions, or suggestions that I thought were useful for improving the dialogic interaction within these sessions, as well as any impressions or observations I had witnessed with certain students in class. As a research tool, diaries are highly recommended in qualitative research (Sagor, 2004). Field notes can be used as major sources of data in self-reflective inquiry, helping to record the progression of events and gaining insight into one’s practice (Moon, 2006).

3.6.5 Challenges Faced in Data Collection

One of the main challenges I encountered in the collection of data was the students’ lack of interest in completing the journal entries and at times in attending the class, especially after the first two lessons. This explains the inconsistency in the journal and attendants’ number as well as lesson duration throughout the sessions (see, for example, lesson 3 which only lasted 37 mints). Despite several attempts to recall the students’ attention to this vital aspect of documenting their learning, as well as trying to negotiate alternative class schedules, I failed to receive any response. That being said, I had to respect their choices especially that they had limited availability in their timetable as the course delivery coincided with their winter exams. Table.3.3 features a summary of data collection methods, sample, and size.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
<th>Recording Time</th>
<th>Number of Journal Entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews (pre-course)</td>
<td>8 Students</td>
<td>4 hrs- 15 mins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>3-11-2018</td>
<td>Classroom recordings/ Journal Entries.</td>
<td>7 Students</td>
<td>1 hrs- 45 mins.</td>
<td>7 Journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>5/8-11-2018</td>
<td>Classroom recordings/ Journal Entries</td>
<td>8 Students</td>
<td>2 hrs- 29 mins.</td>
<td>7 Journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>29-11-2018</td>
<td>Classroom recordings</td>
<td>7 Students</td>
<td>37 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>10-12-2018</td>
<td>Classroom recordings/ Journal Entries</td>
<td>8 Students</td>
<td>1 hrs- 3 mins</td>
<td>3 Journals (</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Session</td>
<td>22-12-2018</td>
<td>posters/activity sheets/ Facebook data</td>
<td>6 Students</td>
<td>1hrs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Recap)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>1-5-05-2019</td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews (post-course)</td>
<td>8 students</td>
<td>2 hrs- 51 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 Summary of Data Collected.
3.7 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis began with transcribing all audio recordings from the students’ interviews and class discussions. Prior to the start of my teaching, I began listening to the pre-course interviews just to familiarise myself with its content. In transcribing the data, I adopted a denaturalised approach to transcription, placing more emphasis on the accuracy of speech content and meanings, rather than language form (Oliver et al, 2005). I did, however, use a general system of noting tonal emphasis with bold when these moves seemingly affected meaning. For example, when Deena said, ‘we are the society’ (see extract 5.1, section 5.2, Chapter 5), this phrase was said with intentional emphasis. As the researcher in the room, I was able to detect the rise of the tone at that moment and I had to keep note of it while listening to the recordings again. Both interviews and classroom talks were conducted in English, except for a few occasions where students used Arabic to express certain words or phrases; these were suitably translated during the transcription process. When reviewing the final transcripts, I sometimes omitted certain chunks of data such as greetings, side talks, and repetitions to make the transcripts more comfortable to read. The next step was to import these transcriptions to NVivo 12 (excluding the class discussions); the software proved to be a very useful tool for storing and arranging the data.

For the analysis of interviews and reflective journals, I employed a qualitative thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a flexible and useful method for identifying and reporting key patterns in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using NVivo, I read and reread the transcripts, making notes and memos of interesting bits of data, a process also known as coding (Braun & Clark, ibid). I coded both inductively, letting the data speak to me and allowing new categories to emerge, and deductively, identifying data that related to categories deduced from theory and research questions (Seidman, 2013; Patton, 2015). After the initial coding, the next step was to
identify patterns and group codes into potential themes and subthemes that could answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For the analysis of class discussions, I utilised techniques from qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis. Qualitative content analysis is a systematic technique for reducing written or oral text into concepts that describe the phenomenon under investigation. It is therefore a means for ‘data reduction and sense-making’ that transforms piles of ‘qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings’ (Patton, 2002, p.453). Content analysis looks at the substance of the talk, examining meanings and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular discussion. Though content analysis is quite a popular method in quantitative research, it is also commonly used in qualitative research (Silverman, 2001). Patton (ibid) maintains that researchers employing a qualitative content analysis can either follow an inductive approach where they identify themes and categories directly from the data without forcing it into a predetermined code (Braun & Clarke, 2006), or a deductive analysis where they generate concepts from theory or previous studies (Patton, ibid). In the context of this study, I used a mixture of both approaches to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, as explained below.

For this particular analysis, I engaged in a focussed process of analysis and interpretation to examine how critical consciousness looks like in talk? And how it is provoked, developed, or resisted in interaction. I spent hours going back and forth across the long transcripts of class talk, audio records and field notes to sketch any important notes. This allowed me to ‘stay close to my data’ (Pierre, 2011, p.621).

Examining the ensuing class interactions more carefully, I scanned my data in search of examples on how students (through interaction) unpacked, deconstructed, or sometimes reconstructed discourses which expressed essentialised and even derogatory views of others. By deconstruction, I mean ‘breaking stereotypes apart for analysis and reflection, with a view
to paving the way to reduce them’ (Yulita, 2012, p.50). Here, it is important to mention that my overall familiarity with the context of my study (Algeria) and the fact that I shared the same social, cultural, and linguistic background as my students provided me with the lens to identify what commonsensical or mainstream assumptions of self and other my students were referring to in their interactions. Thus, my status as a cultural insider (Ergun & Erdemir, 2010; Ramji, 2008), combined with my ‘fresh’ understandings on the fluid, dynamic and non-essentialist nature of culture and identity, allowed me to look more critically at aspects of my data which I would have otherwise overlooked or taken for granted.

In working through analysis, I was examining narratives in the lived world of these participants; not only trying to locate instances where they engage in naming, problematising and renaming these discourses but also determining what type of talk they were using (e.g., questioning, probing, resisting, eliciting, justifying, reconstructing, etc). In this respect, I took a strongly functional approach to discourse analysis, with the intention of coming to understand the purpose and function of my students’ dialogues, while also recognising the crucial place of context (Schiffrin, 1994). As Johnstone (2002, p.50) puts it:

> As people construct discourse, they draw on the resources provided by culture […] Each instance of discourse is another instance of the laying out of a grammatical pattern or expression of a belief, so each instance of discourse reinforces the patterns of language and the beliefs associated with the culture.

With this in mind, I aimed to incorporate contextual factors in the analysis. I did not study these classroom discourses in isolation, rather, I included some other non-linguistic features such as my students’ nationality, religion, age, and ethnicity. I did not, however, make assumptions about the relevance of these identity categories except where students themselves made them relevant in the talk. Additionally, my analytical task involved examining how students
constructed meanings and identities through talk. I likewise considered the role of tasks and the teacher (myself) in supporting or constraining possibilities for critical consciousness in class. In total, I identified 34 significant transcripts that make visible the dialogic work of problematising and discussing these socially constructed meanings. I attempted to preserve these discussions in their original order of occurrence to elucidate how knowledge was jointly constructed in the moment and across the different learning tasks (see Appendix J for a coding sample).

3.8 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

3.8.1 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research has been criticised by positivists for not addressing elements of validity and reliability in the same way that quantitative studies do (Shenton, 2004). However, qualitative researchers, according to Silverman (2001), might address issues of validity and reliability by using a set of techniques to ensure that the study findings are credible and trustworthy. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), there are four major factors which determine the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, these include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3.8.1.1 Credibility

Credibility has been defined as ‘the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings’ (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, 120). Credibility has been addressed in the present study as follows: (1) first, spending a prolonged time with participants in their native culture, observing various aspects of the context and establishing good rapport, whether with the target participants or the organisation where the study is taking place (Morrow, 2005). Both myself and the participants have been part of DLN for a substantial amount of time. Having been a former EFL student myself in this department for about five years, I have developed a familiarity with both the culture and teaching approaches used in this field. Furthermore, prior
to the collection of data, I made sure to build a good and trusting relationship with my students. We spent time getting to know each other either virtually via our Facebook group chat or during our face-to-face meetings. During this time, I opened up to them about some of my living experiences in the UK and they, too, were very eager to talk to me about their life experiences and future plans. In our first meeting, I offered every one of them a small gift bag that included a post-card with a thank you note, a keyring and a small diary and pen for them to use in the reflective tasks. Our relationship grew very well and was sustained for a period of time even after the intervention. This helped in the co-construction of knowledge (Patton, 2015); (2) using peer debriefing with other PhD colleagues which provided a useful aid to my reflective processes. Although most of these peer discussions were informally conducted via our study zoom sessions, they did sharpen my thinking on the process of data analysis; (3) Triangulation of methods for the collection of data was also used to help produce a more comprehensive set of findings. I attempted to strengthen my study by collecting data from different sources including, class discussions, semi-structured interviews, journal entries and contextual field notes.

3.8.1.2 Transferability

Transferability implies that the findings of the research can be transferred to other contexts that are beyond the scope of the study context (Jensen, 2008). The transferability is facilitated by the researcher through providing the reader with a rich description. This entails providing rich accounts of details that provide the reader with enough information to judge the possible transferability of findings to other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The current study is a case limited in time and place, which entails that generalisation of the findings is not possible. However, I attempted to make evident the context, setting and participants of this study as a way to help my readers identify similarities and judge the degree to which these findings could be transferable to other groups (Schwandt, 1997).
3.8.1.3 Dependability
Dependability is concerned with the researcher’s ability to ensure that the process of inquiry was logical and well-documented (Cohen et al, 2011). Dependability was assured in this research through a detailed description of the methodological approach utilised in this study as well as methods, research design and data collection procedures (Schwandt, 1997). Similarly, a discussion of the analytical process that resulted in the findings, the interpretations and the conclusions of the study was also put forward.

3.8.1.4 Confirmability
The goal of confirmability is to ‘ensure as far as possible that the work’s findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher’ (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). To some extent, confirmability refers to the neutrality of the data collected. The researcher has to certify that the collected data is consistent with the participants’ interpretations. To ensure confirmability, Guba (1981) suggests triangulation, arranging a confirmability audit trail, and practising reflexivity. Since researcher subjectivity occupies a central space in qualitative research, reporting on one’s predispositions, beliefs and assumptions can help towards the validity of research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Throughout this study, reflexivity was practised (see section 3.9 below), and so was transparency of the methodological approach, events, and reflections that characterised this study. A rationale for the theoretical constructs and data emerging from this study was also presented.

3.8.2 Ethical Considerations
In the context of this study, I strove to respect the dignity and rights of my participants by adhering to a number of ethical principles (Cohen et al, 2011). First, written consent (see Appendix D) was collected the very first time I met my students. As mentioned in section 3.5.2 above, I explained the purpose and stages of my study in detail; I gave them time to ask any questions or concerns with regards to being a participant in this research. It was important to
be as transparent as possible with regards to their rights to leave the project whenever they felt the need to. It was made clear that all their data would be eliminated if they wished so, and that no assessment at any level was required in this course. Additionally, permission for digital recording for the purposes of transcription was also requested and obtained prior to the start of every interview and/or class session. In fact, I was surprised to see that the students on many occasions offered help in setting the recording equipment.

To ensure confidentiality, all participants were made aware that privacy would be maintained through the use of pseudonyms; any specific details which may lead to a recognition of their identity would be altered or eliminated from the data. Respecting participants’ privacy also implied keeping the data in a secured place (Bryman, 2012). Followingly, all data has been securely kept away. For example, hard copy data such as interview notes and/or prints was kept away in a locked filing cabinet that can only be accessed by me. Similarly, electronic data was stored in a password-protected file space on my personal laptop and backed up in a password-protected external drive.

Boler & Zembylas (2003) posit that CP can have an emotional burden on students. As they encounter or share examples of discrimination and injustice, students may experience emotions of discomfort and frustration. To this end, I made sure to use strategies that could help surmount it, by, for example, emphasising the value of dialogue in working through one’s thoughts and emotions. I, likewise, encouraged reflection on these experiences, urging students to think about situations that they might disagree with, in addition to their own assumptions and biases. Showing compassion and understanding towards these experiences was also another important factor in helping students surmount any emotional unease.

One other consideration to ensure the safety of my participants was the flexibility of the teaching schedule. I made sure that the sessions/interviews I run with these students were in complete harmony with their preferred time of working; this was made to avoid any physical
harm such as tiredness or fatigue due to the extra time and effort they would put in this study. Additionally, I made sure to provide food and beverages during all sessions as a sign of hospitality and good appreciation for the students’ participation in the course.

This study was developed in conformity with the Ethical Guidelines for Research developed by the University of Warwick. Ethical permission was granted on 3/10/2018 (see Appendix I).

3.9 Reflexivity

In conducting qualitative research, the researcher’s social and political positioning will inevitably influence the research. As Guillemin & Gillam (2004) put ‘our choice of research design, the research methodology, and the theoretical framework that informs our research are governed by our values and reciprocally, help to shape these values’ (p.274). As such, investigators need to reflect on their positionality in research (Hatch, 2002). That means acknowledging how the researcher’s values, power and bias have had an impact on how knowledge was created, interpreted, and represented during all phases of the research. This includes aspects such as, the formulation of research questions, navigating access to the research field, the collection and analysis of data as well as the reporting of findings (Creswell, 2007; Hammersley & Traianou, 2012).

As the teacher-researcher in this dissertation work, I carried an essential role both in the teaching and fieldwork processes. This entire study has revolved around a number of activities that I was primarily responsible for. Inevitably, this has been influenced by the values and identities I brought to the site. First, the issue of power relationships with participants needs to be addressed. As the teacher-researcher in this class, it could be hypothesised that students may have perceived me as someone in a position of power. In qualitative research settings, hierarchical relations of power between researchers and participants can affect the integrity of research (Miller & Pessach, 2009). Unquestionably, there must have been occasions where
students thought I was more experienced than them, and hence was in a position of more knowledge and authority. For them, I was an older graduate student, an overseas doctoral researcher, I used a new approach to teaching, I often arrived with a computer, recording equipment and class schedule in my hands and most importantly had an active plan of research and teaching agenda. At this point ownership seemed to completely lie in my hands, and students were entirely dependent on my knowledge to navigate the classroom space. With the intention to lessen this effect, I endeavoured to enhance the rapport and trust I shared with the students; I never lost sight of the fact that they were donating their time and effort by participation, and for that, I took every opportunity to appreciate their involvement in the study. Furthermore, as I conducted my interviews, I avoided the role of the ‘interrogator’. Instead, I was very vigilant not to make my participants feel the more ‘dominant’ role I appeared to take (as the interviewer, I had to set the stage, control the setting, and initiate the questioning). As much as possible, I wanted to preserve and give voice to their tellings by adopting a conversational interviewing style and giving importance to their experiences. Reflexivity was also practised through maintaining a journaling habit throughout this research journey. My diary notes have helped increase my awareness of the research process itself, and any confusions that I felt in my teacher-researcher role. Additionally, I made effort to discuss my positionality in relation to this current endeavour. In other parts of this thesis (see Chapter one, section 1.1), I have clearly articulated how my values and experiences influenced my choice of working with this issue of developing critical consciousness. Likewise, constructive feedback on the part of my supervisors and PhD colleagues has also been tremendously helpful in constantly refreshing the lenses I used to make meaning of my participants’ experiences.

3.10 Summary

In this chapter, I have sought to explain the decisions which underpinned my choice of methodologies, research methods and pedagogies of teaching. I also engaged in delineating the
research site and introduced my readers to the process of data collection and analysis. As both the researcher and practitioner of this study, I have also cast light on the processes of rigour, positionality, and trustworthiness to ensure the quality of this project. Guided by the methodology discussed in this chapter, the next three chapters (4,5,6) will focus on the findings that emerged from the data in an attempt to present an understanding of the promotion of critical consciousness through dialogic interaction.
Chapter Four: Exploring Students’ Assumptions of Self and Imagined Other

4.0 Introduction

This first data chapter presents analysis of the pre-course interviews. In the early stages of my research (2017), I experienced a sense of ambiguity on the broader status quo of intercultural instruction and learning in Algeria. Given the scarcity of research in this area, I began my research journey with high uncertainty of whether intercultural learning was being integrated into the EFL classrooms and I lacked insights into the students’ previous experiences with intercultural contact. To this end, I conducted exploratory interviews to obtain a contextualised picture of the students’ understanding of culture in general, their previous and/or imagined intercultural encounters, as well as assumptions of self and imagined other. In this study, I use the term ‘self’ in its broadest sense to include the students’ own religious, national, regional, and gendered identities. I also borrow Yulita’s (2012) term of ‘imagined other’ to refer to any individual who is recognised by the students as belonging to a distinct ethnic, religious, or national identity. In its simplest meaning, the other is ‘not self’, but another being who exhibits attributes notably different from one’s own. Here it is important to note that identity is not looked at from the perspective of an ‘internal project of the self’ (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 7). It is rather linked to a perspective that focuses on the membership or identification with a particular group.

The analysis in this chapter examines what the students understand by the concept of ‘culture’ and their perceptions of previous and/or imagined intercultural encounters, specifically focussing on some of the ways they articulate how these experiences might have shaped their assumptions towards diverse others. The analysis also highlights how students view the imagined ‘British’ or ‘American’ other, as well as perceptions of native culture.
In presenting the findings emerging from the pre-course interviews, this chapter facilitates the understanding of the following five salient themes: 1) participants’ understandings of culture; 2) previous intercultural encounters; 3) imagined intercultural encounters; 4) the imagined British/ American other; 5) perceptions of native culture. These main themes and sub-themes will be presented in this chapter in a concise and coherent way (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 23).

**A Note for the Reader**

A stereotype is defined in this study as an essentialist representation of a certain group or category of people that is widely disseminated in society (Pickering, 2001). Stereotypical tendencies assume an underlying homogenous structure of people and fail to capture the dynamic and complex nature of identity. This study also adopts the view that stereotypes can be a form of oppression and inequality in society (Yulita, 2017).

**4.1 Students’ Understandings of Culture**

This theme is concerned with students’ perception of culture. I began by asking my students an open-ended question: ‘What is your understanding of the word culture? As previously mentioned in this thesis, culture is the main concept around which this study revolves; thus, it was crucial that I probe into the students’ view of culture since it is likely to influence their perceptions of social grouping, categories, and difference. It was evident from the students’ responses that there was no generally agreed view of culture- to some culture was an encompassing whole which included what people do and believe in; to others culture was an inseparable entity of religion, or otherwise identity. Most of those who answered had some kind of difficulty in expressing a coherent statement of their understanding of culture, and only one participant (Farah) provided a term that in her perspective reflected a lot about culture: ‘the global citizen’, yet, when prompted to explain more, Farah did not provide a clear response.
Principally, students viewed culture from two different perspectives: 1) culture as an all-encompassing entity; 2) culture as identity/religion. These sub-themes will be discussed below.

4.1.1 Culture as All-encompassing

The data suggests that some students expressed a view of culture as an inclusive entity which binds the overt aspects of food, dress, and visual art with the deeper and more implicit aspects of beliefs and lifestyle of its members. In this vein, participants Zain, Deena, Adam, and Alia advocated some similar views.

Zain: I think of culture in terms of traditions, food, ways of dancing, dress designs and even buildings.

Deena: I guess culture can be a lifestyle... culture can be a belief... culture can be habits... I mean like things that you do usually, I guess that's it.

Adam: Culture? let's say traditions, beliefs, the way of living. I don't have a specific definition for it, sorry!

Alia: For me, culture can be a way of living, it can be a sort of life routine, you can learn it and you can work on learning other people's culture, but you have to have your own culture that suits you.

These interpretations may reflect the anthropological and sociological readings of culture which underpin much of the cultural representations found in EFL textbooks and curricula in Algeria (Rabehi, 2021; Douidi, 2021). Such understandings on the nature of culture seem to confine it with a set of particular ways of thinking and doing which makes one group distinct from the other. This resonates with Jackson’s notion that culture ‘involves membership in a community or group that shares a common history, traditions, norms, and imaginings in a particular cultural space (e.g., a neighbourhood, region, virtual space)’ (2014, p.70).
4.1.2 Culture as Identity

Some other definitions gathered from the data related culture with identity. A first description would be that of Celia, who remarked the interrelationship between culture, identity, and personality:

Celia: It is [culture] our identity, it's what defines, maybe, our personalities. If we don't have culture, maybe we don't know who we are.

In her comment, Celia seemed to first associate the meaning of culture with a collective sense of identity and then moved to suggest that culture could have something to do with how an individual’s personality is shaped and/or constructed. In this sense, Celia’s comment could mean that she viewed culture with a capacity to serve both the individual and the group; a source of a general, yet unique, identification of the self and/or affiliation with a specific group.

Another participant, Nayra also echoed a similar definition of culture:

Nayra: Culture is a part of our identities...for us...culture is everything and, in our country, it’s a word that describes the way you live, how people behave and talk.

In Nayra’s definition above, culture is perceived as an all-encompassing reality that is framed within ‘the constructed structures of nation and imagined national culture’ (Holliday, 2018, p.6). It can also be seen that Nayra is approaching culture from a cognitive perspective. In this sense, culture is not a material construct, rather it is an entity that exists in the mind of its carriers, providing them with a set of broadly similar scripts to the way they communicate, act, and behave in culturally accepted ways (Holland & Quinn, 1987).

Both Celia and S5’s statements above assume the two concepts of culture and identity as relatives or intrinsically interdependent. This reciprocal interaction remains, however, unclear as the boundaries between culture and identity remain blurry. In this vein, Baker (2015) argues
that culture and identity always exist in close relation, this results in a situation where any attempts towards defining identity are ‘unlikely to be any simpler or easier to delineate than culture’ and thus, any definition to identity would ‘not replace investigations of culture; rather, there is likely to be much productive cross-over between the two notions and at times they may be closely related’ (p.105).

Some other isolated definitions, even though marked a return to the notion of culture as a set of events and traditions, primarily linked it to religion. In this regard, Saba voiced the following definition:

Saba: Culture has a lot to do with religion, it’s the most important; it's like the first principle to me. I deal with it every day in my life, and then comes the other elements such as the events and our traditions.

Saba’s statement above may reflect a view of social reality where ‘religion is also lived as culture’ (Olivier, 2013, p.109). In this sense, cultural practices reflect the effect of religion, and the latter is perceived to provide guidelines on facets of habitual behaviours and social conduct.

4.2 Previous Intercultural Encounters

Social and cross-cultural studies have for long noted the close relationship between intercultural contact and outgroup evaluations (Allport, 1954). With this in mind, I aimed to investigate the students’ previous intercultural encounters with speakers of different cultural backgrounds, including but not limited to native speakers of English. The aim was to focus on some of the ways students described tacit assumptions of self and imagined others in these encounters as well as any accompanying difficulties occurring within this process of communication. According to the data, only three students reported taking part in either mediated or face-to-face intercultural contacts, these were Saba, Deena, and Alia. The nature of these encounters was frequently referred to as short-term friendships, online, travel and/or
business contacts. The data revealed that all three students did not perceive these encounters as successful and that was due to a number of factors, precisely the language barrier and cultural differences.

One aspect that emerged in the students’ interviews with regard to their previous encounters was the language barrier. This was particularly the case with Saba who mentioned that despite her foreign language background, she encountered difficulties in communication with some business partners from the USA. In the extract below, Saba reported finding the speakers’ fluency as difficult to keep pace with and interpret.

**Extract 4.1: Language Barrier**

1. Teacher: Have you ever interacted with someone from a foreign country?
2. Saba: Yes, my nephew needed me in his workplace to speak to some people from the USA.
3. Teacher: Aha, you mean here, in your hometown?
4. Saba: Yes.
5. Teacher: And how was your impression of that encounter?
6. Saba: It was good, but when I talked to them, I felt like difficulty in English to understand… it's not like the same that we deal here in university. It was like a little bit quick. There were words I couldn't catch, and I was like excuse me, could you repeat please?

In the example above, Saba explained that the speed of speech created obvious costs in terms of her overall understanding of the conversation. For her, this way of speaking was entirely different from the one she was used to in her language learning classroom. Gorkaltseva et al (2015) ensure that fluency is one of the conditions which bring success to communication. Fluency affects comprehension in interaction. For example, if the speaker is talking too quickly, then this might cause difficulties for the listener to grasp what is being said, and thus affect communication outcomes.
Cultural differences were also reported as a barrier in the participants’ intercultural encounters. The first example is taken from an interview with Deena who talked about her previous contact with an online friend from the Netherlands. In this discussion, she raised the issue that differences in terms of family relations created obstacles for them to carry on with the conversation as they both missed a great deal of common ground.

**Extract 4.2: Cultural Differences (Deena)**

1. Deena: Yes, I remember I once had some contact with someone from the Netherlands, he was 29 but we didn't get along with any kind of conversation.
2. Teacher: Why do you think that happened?
3. Deena: I guess...like in here you can talk to someone who's 29 in a silly conversation, but for him it was weird to talk about silly things. Also, we have different views. I mean like in here we can talk about a lot of things, but for them they don't share a lot of information about their personal life. They don't share a lot of things about their families, and they are not interested in those things. Sometimes they think that it's weird that you have family meetings or traditions, which they believe that it's an old-fashioned belief and at other times, the conversation gets too short that you think the other person is not comfortable talking to you.

In Deena’s narrative above, it seems that conversing with diverse others had not only exposed her to the reality of cultural differences but also led her to construct the view that people from the Netherlands are not keen on sharing information about their families and likewise do not give much importance to family traditions. This recently gained perspective, combined with the humble exchange of ideas, has led Deena to distance herself from the conversation and decide to end this online friendship. It appears that this virtual contact created a sense of distance and apathy for Deena, which has then led her to develop a stereotypical perception of people in the Netherlands.
Another participant, Alia, also talked about the issue of cultural differences when discussing the topic of freedom and independence in Alegria and USA with her American cousin. Though such discussions did not have an apparent impact on their communication, they still highlighted how such profound cultural differences are often filtered through the lens of cultural stereotypes.

**Extract 4.3: Cultural Differences (Alia)**

1. Alia: I have three cousins who live in London, Washington DC, and France. Two boys and one girl. I have like a lot of conversations with them about for example the lifestyle, religion, and the freedom in America. I remember that we once had a conversation about this and like how girls there can do whatever they want.

2. Teacher: Aha...

3. Alia: I was talking about how I need to take my parents' permission to go to another country. And he was like, really? You are 20 years old, and you are free. So, I was like even if I'm going to marry, I have to ask my parents. So, he was like very shocked about how the majority of women here are really oppressed. I was explaining to him that I'm not oppressed but it’s a matter of respect to explain to your parents that you want to go to such place.

In the extract above, Alia talks about explaining to her cousin how in Algeria, as is common elsewhere in the majority of Arab and Muslim countries, women are not allowed to travel internationally without the permission of their male ‘guardianship’ i.e., father, husband, brother, or even son. From Alia’s perspective, securing her parents’ or male guardian’s permission is a matter of respect than of restrictive guardianship. It seems, however, that such perspective (i.e., guardianship) did not appeal to her cousin, who appeared to have elicited a stereotypical judgement about Muslim women as oppressed.

In the analysis shown above, it seems that both Deena and Alia had encountered a rather ‘negative’ experience of intercultural interaction, being reflected in differing world perspectives, cultural and/or religious beliefs. These findings show how these remote types of
intercultural encounters have been affected/ or have sometimes led to the construction of cultural generalisations and stereotypes. Perhaps more awareness and respect towards these cultural differences could have been useful in the avoidance of and/or disruption of stereotypes and, thus, effectiveness and durability of these encounters (Gut et al, 2017).

4.3 Imagined Intercultural Encounters

In the context of this study, some students reported having no previous interactions with diverse others. As such, I asked these learners to imagine or visualise making contact with people from various cultural backgrounds, including but not limited to English language speakers. In discussing their impressions of these imaginary contacts, I asked the students if they were keen on establishing intercultural contact, and if so, what were the factors that would help them develop this relationship or otherwise obstruct it. My intention here was to look for any potential narratives of difference that would likely have an impact on this contact and then similarly continue to trace any salient comments that would reveal students’ assumptions of self and imagined other in these perceived interactional practices.

The data suggested that students were willing to make connections with diverse/imagined others; elements such as language proficiency and respect for beliefs were identified as essential for a successful intercultural interaction. The following two extracts taken from Farah and Nayra’s interview transcripts illustrate these points.

Farah: Factors that help, I think language, I mean the language mastery.

Nayra: First of all, I would love to meet someone from America, for example. Precisely a black person, I’m so into black people and I love their culture...I feel like what would help in the relationship is the respect for beliefs and the way you act with them.

On the other hand, students expressed some other concerns which may decelerate their attempts to build and maintain intercultural contact. In general, participants expressed the worry of being
rejected by others on the basis of their religious affiliation. In support of this viewpoint, Zain gave a detailed explanation.

Zain: I think it's about the religion or the place. This is the first reason. Like they will ask you about where you come from? If you say from Algeria, they will say where is this place? Then you say it's an Arab country. They will say that you are a Muslim or something like that. So yeah, I've seen this a couple of times. I mean like through comments and something like that on Facebook. So, I know they will judge you.

In the comment above, Zain implied that the major barriers to intercultural contact are the categorisations based on nationality and stereotypical representations of Muslims and Algerians. This view was also echoed by Nayra who seemed to believe that as a Muslim, she would need to make additional efforts to defend her identity and avoid being ‘othered’.

Nayra: Obviously when you say, I'm Arabic, I'm Muslim, I'm Algerian, they go to...they'll start thinking...ah, that's a terrorist, maybe.... uh... No... Their culture is so complicated. They're not that... they are sophisticated. I cannot deal with them. I cannot, so we try to show them that we're not... we're open-minded. We are not that kind of what media showed you... and then step by step I'll try to present the real me, that's how I see things...Yeah, so they don't get afraid.

For Nayra, communicating an image of an ‘open-minded’ individual in her initial interaction would help minimize any inhibition that the ‘other’ might feel towards her Muslim identity. In her perspective, this can give the relationship a chance of success. Nayra also seemed to place emphasis on the ideological pushback of violence and terrorism alleged to be departing from the Islamic mainstream. She further argued for the need to eliminate these ubiquitous misconceptions that continue to pervade in media discourses.
In another example, Celia also gave reference to the religious dimension as an obstacle to future contact:

Celia: Religion stuffs especially with the conflict of religions nowadays between Islam and Catholics.

It is difficult to miss the presence of cultural and religious stereotypes in the students’ real and imagined interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Over the years, there have been many voices emphasising the relationship between cultural stereotypes and individuals’ behaviour during communication (Operario & Fiske, 2003). Positive attitudes such as trust and admiration are often triggered towards groups that are stereotypically viewed as skilled and friendly whereas opposing attitudes such as inhibition or anxiety are likely to take place around those who are stereotypically presented in negative ways (Fiske et al., 2002). These findings may be particularly valuable in helping to understand the students’ fear of judgment and anticipated failure to initiate contact across cultural boundaries despite their motivation to do so.

**4.4 The Imagined British/American Other**

This theme discusses the students’ assumptions of the imagined British and American other, in an attempt to examine what potential sets of normative attributes students perceive to be associated with members of the inner circle countries of UK and USA (Kachru, 1985). Given the domination of the language-culture-nation approach to intercultural learning in FL Algerian curricula, particularly native speaker models (Rabehi, 2021; Douidi, 2021; Bouslama & Benaissi, 2018), I speculated that students might have adopted some type of stereotypical thinking about these members, especially in light of the exclusive exposure to the cultural content of British and American communities. The data suggested that students tended to view these groups in positive stereotypic light and references to the British were comparatively more present in the data than the Americans.
4.4.1. The Imagined British Other

This sub-theme reports on the students’ assumptions of British people; in general, these assumptions ranged from specific lists of attributes to detailed accounts of the people and their daily life. When students were asked about their assumptions of the people in the UK, most of their answers were framed in terms of generalizations and multiple stereotypes. Deena, for example, reported perceiving British people as academic, prestigious, and socially organised.

Extract 4.4: The Imagined UK Other

1. Teacher: What perceptions do you have of people in the UK?
2. Deena: British people are academic, and they are kind of...they are prestigious and respectful...and there is social, how to say...hierarchy. Also, their language is kind of the language of the elites.

In her comment above, Deena established the view that the British have a language of elites. By so doing, she seemed to connect features of language variety to the broader social factors of elitism. Further positive assumptions of British people also appeared in some other participants’ responses. For example, Alia perceived Britons to have a peaceful life and an open and respectful attitude towards differences. A comparison of this ‘conflict-free’ culture was also made in reference to the American one.

    Alia: They are polite... they are modest. I always see the British living peacefully more than Americans....they are very tolerant and accept people’ differences and they don't harm people.

Celia, on the other hand, who declared to have never had direct interaction with a British person before, posited that the image she relates to the Britons is that of the organised and well-mannered people. Likewise, eating and speaking manners were especially emphasised. She pointed out below:
Celia: The British give so much importance to manners, to principles, to how we should speak, how you should eat...I mean there is law to everything you do...I like their norms and their principles, and I like the way they live. I mean they are organised.

Similar to Celia, Saba also depicted her assumption of UK people in terms of their manners. She, however, marked a distinction between the older and younger generation in terms of attachment to manners.

Saba: They are basically from those who...um...let's say decide before doing anything. Like...um...for example, in serving tea they have specific norms to say, and they also have specific things to do before eating. I really like these kinds of stuff... But I think the modern generation of British people would not do this, maybe in the noble and old houses.

Zain was also another student who expressed a positive image of British people as hard workers. He noted that:

Zain: British people are workers, I mean everything is just about studying, I guess... they study more to achieve more things.

Among the participants in this study, two more students who had never been to the UK did not provide an explicit description of how they imagined a UK other to be like. Alternatively, they expressed their admiration of the culture as a whole and expressed willingness to visit it one day.

Adam: I just like the United Kingdom; I would like to know more about its culture. I am really looking forward to going there one day.

Farah: British people have a culture depending on what I read and seen in movies, especially the tea break. I like how they say a cup of tea.
The data analysed with regards to the students’ assumptions of Britain and British people suggests that students appeared to view this group in a predominantly positive and idealised way. In this sense, the language of the British was praised, just like their perceived status, competence, and social manners. Next, I set out the students’ assumptions of Americans.

4.4.2. The Imagined American Other

This section now examines the students’ perception of the USA and its inhabitants. The combination of friendliness and hard-working ethic was regarded as indicative of the US and its culture.

Attributions to personality features were similarly signalled in Celia, Saba, and Deena’s assumptions of Americans. In their interviews, these students seemed to associate the positive attributes of friendliness and spontaneity with members of this group.

Extract 4.5: The Imagined American Other

1. Teacher: What perceptions do you have of people in the USA?
2. Celia: The USA people are vulgar somehow... yeah... and you don't have to...uh...you don't have to be polite with your friends. I mean they are less formal and casual.

Saba: Um, when they say someone from America, I imagine this active person, this cool accent and someone who knows more than me when it comes to English.

Deena: I think they are friendly and respectful people.

One student, Zain, expressed a dislike for the way of living in the USA and the general attitude towards their work ethic and meritocracy. He indicated:

Zain: I think the way they live is not that interesting; for them, it's all about the American dream, like being rich and everything like that.
With regards to another participant, Alia for example expressed that she perceives Americans as ‘deep people’; their way of communication and expression of feeling was also praised.

Alia: I always see them...most of them as deep people...you know you can open any subject and talk about it. You can't feel ashamed or... There is no taboo thing when it comes to talking to them. They are real in my own perspective. You know there are some things that you shouldn't really talk about here but there I always see them as they are real people. They're not really shy when it comes to expressing their feelings and themselves.

Another student, Nayra, did not describe her perception of people in the USA, but instead expressed her admiration for the American way of living, not only because the USA represented a dominant economic and political power, but also because of the popular culture of individualism that has most likely played an enormous role in shaping the character of the American citizen. In this regard, Nayra explained that she admired tenants of individualism in American society such as self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and responsibility.

Nayra: First of all, it is the first and biggest power in the world. America is known for individuality. I admire how you learn to live by yourself, how to be responsible for yourself and how to work.

The above extracts show that students have discussed and described at length their assumptions of American people. Many of these positive assumptions represented stereotypical attitudes reflecting an imagined social reality where the American other is endowed with innate attributes of friendliness, respect, and individual competence. It is likely that students have adopted these positive and homogenous attributes of the British and American people based on their own cultural schemata of these two groups. This may have been reinforced through exposure to EFL curricula which present these two cultures (and their members) from a superficial and nation-
based approach (Rabehi, 2021; Douidi, 2021). We might also think of the students’ lack of tangible contact or prolonged involvement with these groups as one possible impetus for the construction of homogenous traits among members of these imagined communities (Anderson, 2006).

4.5 Perceptions of Native Culture

Another theme that has emerged from the interview analysis is the students’ perceptions of their native culture. As I progressed with the interviews, I became particularly interested to learn about how my students looked at their native culture as well as what aspects they appreciated most/least about it. Altogether, the findings indicated that students’ perceptions of their culture were quite variable. While some students, especially females, indicated that their culture was afflicted with social issues centred around the problems of social judgement and restricted freedom, a few others emphasised the rich diversity of their culture and merited some of its essential peculiarities.

It appears that one of the factors behind participants’ dissatisfaction with their native culture is the issue of being judged by others. Alia, for example, described how people tend to judge her for not wearing a hijab.

Extract 4.6: Perceptions of Native Culture

1. Teacher: What perceptions do you have about your own culture? What aspects do you like most/least about it?

2. Alia: I don't like the fact that people judge you for your appearance. When they see me without a scarf, they think oh, she doesn't pray...she is...you know, such rubbish words which I really dislike. So, I hope these kinds of thoughts can be vanished one day, and for people to respect differences. I may not be wearing a hijab or a scarf, it’s true, but I do pray, I do believe in God and the existence of the lord, and I'm a good human being thankfully. Therefore, they have to focus on the character, the intellectual and the soul.
In the above extract, Alia claimed that in her entourage, there is little recognition for individual rights and personal freedom. Alia recalled being ‘othered’ or ‘outcasted’ in some way for not conforming to a certain way of dressing. Usually, in Muslim ideology, the religious dress is a public statement of modesty and piety; women in Quran are advised to wear modest clothing to avoid ‘fitna’, which in Islam means to ‘seduce, tempt or lure’ (Bendixsen, 2013). Not wearing a hijab, therefore, indicates the opposite and women who choose a more liberal approach can easily be subject to criticism and social stigmatization (Sobh et al, 2009). This may signify why Alia explained that despite showing parts of her hair and/or body, she still embraces her Islamic faith and practices her religious rituals such as praying and obeying the Almighty. Therefore, she is not supposed to encounter any difficulties in blending with the dominant culture. In the end, Alia hoped that people can understand that there are more ways to practice the Islamic faith than wearing a hijab. She believed that her modesty is expressed differently through her conversations, behaviour, and character. Through understanding and respect for differences, she hoped that society can counteract the controversies surrounding unveiled Muslim women and minimize negative connotations about them.

With regards to another participant, Nayra reported struggling with a different way of judgement- stigmatizing attitudes against excessive weight people.

Nayra: What I don’t like is the way people think in our culture. I believe that their mentality is so poor. The way they think is so ugly to be honest. I mean the surrounding people, the people that I, at least know, they have like really ugly mentality. They judge you by your appearance. I think all people suffer from this problem, but here it's like too much. If you have extra weight, hey you are fat. They don't care about your feeling, they only care about appearance, and their mentality sucks.
Despite admitting that judgmental attitudes toward overweight people can exist anywhere, Nayra claimed that in her cultural context, it is more prevalent and insensitive to individuals’ feelings and self-esteem. In this sense, Nayra cast light on how women, in particular, can be ostracized for not meeting female definitions of attractiveness.

Deena, too, shared a similar view in relation to judgement:

Deena: I would say judgment. Here, they judge people a lot. I think we should all mind our business.

Celia was also another student who expressed her dissatisfaction with particular social conditions in her entourage. She specifically talked about the restricted access to freedom of speech and respect for individual rights.

Celia: I think that everything in Algeria is exhausting. The culture is a mess. Actually, we can't live freely here. We can't talk freely here. We can do nothing freely here. Here we are linked to traditions.

Unlike the other participants, Farah exceptionally chose to speak about women’s discrimination in her society despite not being asked to. The following conversation between myself and Farah took place at the very end of our interview.

**Extract 4.7: Critiques of Gender Discrimination**

1. Teacher: Okay. Is there anything else that you want to say?
2. Farah: I think that people...I know that some people are closed minded. They think that a girl should stay at home and everything, but I'm trying to change that.
3. Teacher: Any girl?
4. Farah: Mostly a Hijabi girl should stay at home, get married as soon as she finishes her MA degree... get children and start staying at home and
everything. Even at home you can start freelancing. Yeah, I don't want to be the normal Algerian girl. I want to do different stuffs. I want to have a weird checklist that no one has ever done. I just want to be an unusual girl.

When Farah was asked if she had anything else to add, she expressed her frustration about how people in her society view women through a single lens, mostly that of fulfilling a traditional gender role and contributing to the welfare of their household and childbearing despite possessing an ability to achieve notable progress in their studies and/or future careers. It is interesting, however, to see how Farah has particularly chosen to speak about the category of veiled women and how they are being excluded from gaining access to the public sphere in society. That being said, the question remains about the status of women who take a more liberal approach and choose not to wear a veil: does that leave them in a status of less exclusion and cultural standardization? and hence more emancipation and ability to assert an empowering position in society.

When asked about their views of the local culture, several other students responded positively. For these students, it was believed that the local culture was so rich with its distinctive cultural features, such as language, religious values, and even unique architecture. In this vein, three students stated:

Zain: You can say that we have a lot of beautiful and really interesting cultural stuff here, like the way of dancing and designs of dresses, even buildings and things like that. I think that we need to try and show the others about our culture, maybe they will be interested in it.

Saba: Um I like the way of thinking, the way of living, the way of eating, the way of dealing with life, the way I have been raised basically by parents. Yeah, there are a lot of other aspects too, like for example the Arabic language and the mixed slang with French.
Adam: Everything! But importantly our Islamic culture and values.

Learners generally exhibited a mixture of perceptions about their native culture. Particularly noteworthy, however, is the female perspective which cast light on issues such as religious judgments, limitations on freedom of expression and unequal definitions of gender roles. Explaining how things are in society and critiquing prevailing discourses or socio-cultural practices that control or maintain oppression can be a first step towards developing critical consciousness (Carlson et al. 2006). Problem posing education in school settings can play an active role in helping students to reflect upon problematic social conditions and identify how these relate to wider social forces that sustain inequity and perpetuate injustice (Freire, 2000; Diemer et al. 2016).

4.6 Summary

Using data obtained from the audio-recorded interviews, this chapter has aimed to provide insights into the students’ understanding of culture, previous intercultural contact, and assumptions of self and imagined other prior to taking part in the course on critical intercultural learning. Analysing the data has revealed that approaches to describing culture varied from one student to another. On one level, culture was described as a set of contributions connected to a particular nationality and locked in geographical places. On another, culture has been equated with identity and religion. Yet both approaches represented an essentialist and narrow view of culture that failed to expand and move beyond cultural or national boundaries (Holliday, 2011). Grounded in the data were also the students’ perceptions of their lived and virtual experiences with people from different cultures, including those whom they have yet to see; most of the students in this study had experienced or anticipated several problems in terms of establishing intercultural contact. Some of the problems pointed out were the linguistic barrier in communication and dissimilar cultural perspectives. A few other students, despite their
openness towards diverse others, expressed concerns about religious othering and stereotyping especially with the fear of Islam becoming increasingly normalised within American, Western and Eastern cultures (Green, 2015).

A considerable part of this chapter has also given evidence of the students’ assumptions on the foreign cultures of UK/USA and their members; as expected, the findings showed that stereotypic representations about these two nations were firmly implanted in the students’ consciousness. Frequently, these visions seemed to be inspired by an idealised perception, especially when referring to the courtesy or politeness of the UK population, and the strong work ethic of its USA counterparts. The impressions, images, and visions found in the participants' responses may reflect a narrow vision of these foreign cultures that overlooks the complexity and uniqueness of individuals in these contexts. There is clearly, therefore, a pressing need to foster criticality in the classroom. It is necessary to enable learners to examine cultures via a different lens and promote the view that cultural realities, as opposed to being rigid and static, are subject to continuous change and fluidity (McConachy, 2018; Liddicoat, 2019). Additionally, students provided interesting insights into the ways they perceived their own culture using their lived experiences as their frames of reference. At times, these perceptions incubated some negative attitudes towards their social contexts and their thirst for improvement and change in these contexts was believed as necessary to improve the conditions of all its members.

According to the findings exposed in this first data chapter, it is evident that a pedagogy which enlightens the students on the complex, fluid and dynamic nature of cultural realities is a pressing necessity (Holliday, 2018; Devin & Clark, 2014). From an instructional level, we as FL teachers need to abandon traditional and essentialist approaches to the teaching of FL culture and language and act as collaborators with our students to raise awareness of and deconstruct essentialist discourses that restrict people and cultures with geographical
boundaries (Yulita, 2017; Holliday, ibid). The implications of these findings are grounded in the creation of a critical pedagogical model that aimed to raise students’ critical consciousness through problem posing and dialogue. It is hoped that through this process, students are able to move beyond essentialised constructions of otherness and embrace a more hybrid and transcultural view of culture and representations (Risager, 2007; Dasli & Diaz, 2017). The next chapter will present a detailed analysis of the students’ interactional engagements in lesson one of this intervention.
Chapter Five: Exploring Identity and Stereotypes

In a world where racism, different kinds of discrimination, and injustice are on the rise, time spent at school should contribute effectively to prepare students to be real interculturalists who can question these phenomena and act critically, ethically, and responsively.

Dervin, 2016

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter as well as the following, I present the findings from the first and second lessons in this intervention. In my analysis of these two chapters, I examine these group discussions as they naturally emerge in the classroom. Each lesson in this intervention was organised around a series of tasks. In my analysis below, I adopt the sequencing of these tasks to present students’ naturally occurring interactions in the classroom. Within this chapter, classroom interactional data provide insights into what happens when students are given an opportunity to critically reflect on issues of gender, identity, cultural and religious stereotyping. There is a strong agreement among intercultural theorists and researchers that language in itself is a reflection of people’s values, meanings, norms of thinking and acting (Byram & Guilherme, 2000). This makes the language classroom a place par excellence where learners come to engage with diversity and interpret meanings and appropriateness of behaviours, drawing on their culturally built beliefs, abstract assumptions and other socio-cultural dynamics of age, power, and gender (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). As such, foreign language teaching is left with the responsibility to cultivate students’ reflective and analytical skills for the promotion of effective intercultural learning and communication in both native and foreign cultural contexts (McConachy, 2018). One particularly important skill of this analytical thinking is ‘critical reflection’, which is recognised as an interpretive process in which the learner calls into question his/her prior knowledge, beliefs and expectations of the social world and raises
awareness of biased perceptions of self and other (Byram et al, 2001; Byrd Clark and Dervin, 2014). In my analysis of this chapter, I attempt to trace students’ interactions with one another, exploring the collaborative, differing and sometimes conflicting interpretations of meaning that students co-construct as they engage with different tasks. For instance, I examine class talk to locate moments and segments where students seem to reflect on their identities, socio-cultural practices, discourses, and ways of being in and seeing the world. I also present instances where students seem to produce and/or question essentialised constructions of self and other, as well as instances which do not suggest so.

5.1 Exploring One’s Cultural Identity

Informed by the insights gained from the literature review (Byram 1997; Kupka et al 2007; Fantini 2009; Holmes & O’Neil 2010; Dervin, 2016), I decided that the intervention should first focus on developing students’ awareness of their own identity for an enhanced understanding of self and other. This was seen as an important step to prompt reflection on the multiplicity of identities and increase awareness and/or respect for diversity.

To achieve this aim, lesson one of this intervention included a series of three main tasks, namely the Personal Identity Wheel, the Social Identity Wheel, and a reflective task used in conjunction to prompt further discussions. These sample tasks were adopted and modified for use from the University of Michigan’s Inclusive Teaching Program. I chose these sets of activities for two main reasons. First, their ability to energise the group, starting with a brief warm-up task which helped the students feel relaxed and introduced them to one another (Rushidi, 2013). Second, given that previous research had suggested the need for learners to maximise awareness of their own identity, these tasks served to trigger exploration of how they think their ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation, national origin, etc, have influenced the way they see themselves and others, how they reflected on the various ways those identities affect
the way others act or behave towards them, as well as how they compared how their own experiences relate to those of their peers.

5.1.1 Setting the Scene: Inside the Classroom

The classroom in which the first lesson teaching took place was moderately equipped. It housed multiple desks with chairs and a large blackboard on the side; the room did not have any digital resources such as computer desktops, screens or video projectors that could help facilitate a visual representation of learning. I realised early in this study that I needed to find ways to boost student interaction and cooperation while at the same time ensuring a risk-free environment that reinforces trust and active collaboration. To this end, I decided to transform the class into an active zone of learning. Before every session, I made sure to arrive early to the classroom, at least half an hour prior to the scheduled start of the class. My pre-class preparations involved changing the physical setup of the classroom into circular seating. This, I thought, could first help create a new learning experience different from the traditional ones, and also bring students together and create an atmosphere of inclusion, intimacy, and shared negotiation of meaning. Indeed, a critical approach to language learning foregrounds a strong link between dialogue and the development of critical reasoning skills (Dervin, 2016), as it is in ideas of curiosity, questioning and interpretation that learning, thinking, and understanding are dialogically constructed. Through discussion, everyone is allowed to contribute ideas, extend, justify or challenge opposing views that would ultimately lead to the creation of new knowledge. Equally important was the ability of these small talks to retain a feeling of validation, belonging and trust that both myself and the students needed for a successful learning and teaching experience. Moreover, part of the pre-class arrangements also involved decorating the walls opposite the seating with posters that visually represent concepts or quotes related to diversity, inclusion, and tolerance as well as guidelines for discussion. Other
preparations included checking adequate lighting and heating/air-conditioning, setting up the recording equipment and arranging food and refreshments for the regular class breaks.

The first few minutes after the students’ arrival involved reminding them of the intended outcomes of the course, the procedures in place to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of what they will say, as well as the right to withdraw from the study should they wish to do so. I then moved on to introduce what the lesson is about and presented the activities and learning outcomes. The following step was to introduce Recap- which is an online tool that allows students to create video recordings of themselves while documenting their reflective thoughts and comments. To introduce this tool, I used an interactive video material that presented the application in a fun and concise way. Initially, the idea of e-journals received a positive response from the students; surprisingly, however, no one used it. Alternatively, I asked the students to use their journal books to add reflections after each session.

5.2 Dialogic Engagements: Task Two

The selected dialogic moments presented below emerged as students were completing task two on social identity. For analytical purposes, solely the data generated in this task was selected for examination. There are two main reasons for this selection, first because an extensive amount of data in lesson one pertains to information generated in the first activity on Personal Identity Wheel; these included students’ hobbies, colours, food, books, etc (see Appendix A). And second, because I wanted to trace specific moments where students were engaged in critical dialogue about their identities. I should, however, note that all students shared elements of their social identity wheels, however, for the aforementioned reasons, only a few segments were selected for presentation in this chapter.

In general, the task proved to be an interesting way of prompting students to reflect on their multiple identities. In so doing, they drew on their own narratives and lived experiences to unpack assumptions about gender, language practices, knowledge of behavioural norms and
nature of the social world they inhabit. Using dialogue as a tool, students were able to identify and reflect on these variables as products of institutional structures and processes. This reflective attitude is alluded to by Byram (1997) as integral to building critical cultural awareness, which also involves an analytical stance towards ‘the complex of social forces that form ‘one’s own and others’ meanings, beliefs, and behaviours’ (p.35). Equally important, these collaborative discussions allowed students to compare their social and cultural identities in what seemed to be a mono-cultural milieu. This can further help in the exploration of culture as emergent and complex (Baker, 2015), reflecting a whole array of conflicting experiences and intersecting values which as Bhabha (1994) argues may ‘profoundly [be] antagonistic, conflictual, and incommensurable’ (p. 2).

Figure 5.1. Students Completing their Personal and Identity Wheel (s) (Lesson 1)
From left: Nayra, Deena, Adam, Zain, Alia, Saba, and Farah

An important theme in much of the students’ dialogic interactions in task two attends to the ways in which they problematised notions of social change and conformity with respect to gender roles, religion, and cultural norms. This theme emerged as students were articulating
elements of their social identity, such as one’s gender, religious affiliation, national identity, etc. In the midst of this sharing activity, the introduction of gender as an identity category by Saba (see forthcoming extracts) triggered a vibrant exchange amongst students about the issue of social change and the tension between conformity to social norms and individual agency with respect to gender. To illustrate, the data below marks students’ views from two different perspectives. One is the perspective that people need to enjoy greater autonomy and move away from the social structures that constrain one’s development of agency. The second is the need for conformity to social rules, as a means for maintaining stability and cohesion, especially if these rules gain legitimacy from theological creeds. This view reflects a stand that is not very uncommon in the Algerian context. Religion has always been taken as an alley for cohesion and freedom against the flux of social and colonial divides that the region underwent (Sour, 2016). Though such conflicting discourses resulted in some passionate discussions among students, it provided an opportunity for them to observe discrepancies of thought and worldviews in spite of their seeming belongingness to one context.

Extract 5.1 below shows Saba responding to my invitation to share elements of her social wheel. At this point, Saba had already identified elements that characterise her identity wheel (e.g., ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation, etc) and moved on to express how she analytically classifies which of these identity memberships best informs who she is, as well as those that she believes have the greatest/least impact on others’ perceptions of her. As noted above, all participant students had to go through the stage of identifying elements of their personal and social wheels, it is, however, for analysis purposes, that only specific discussion segments were selected for examination in this chapter. An important point to note in the talk below is the way students explicitly engage with the notion of identity. Rather than seeing identity as a simplistic, mono-dimensional entity, students foregrounded the multifaceted nature of identity and some of its complex intersecting elements, particularly gender and religion.
Extract 5.1 The Conflict between Individual Agency and Social Conformity

1: Saba: Yes, so identities that I think about most often are my educational level; identities that I think about least often are my age; identities that I want to learn more about are being a woman and my religion because I have many discussions about my religion and I don’t have the arguments to fight and then at the end I say ‘you’re just a non-believer and you don’t believe’, but I know that it’s me who doesn’t have the arguments, not them [Laughter]. Identities that have the strongest effect on how I perceive myself is being a woman; identities that have the strongest effect on how others perceive you is my educational level and gender because people always ask about my studies and if I’m doing well in my educational achievements.

2: Abir: What about gender?

3: Saba: I mean that anyone who tries to interact with you will definitely treat you according to your gender, a female, or a male.

4: Abir: Do you think there is a difference in treating both genders?

5: Saba: Yes, a huge difference, especially in our society … the woman is not like.

6: Deena: I think that we need to stop thinking about what society thinks; we need to start thinking about ourselves because we are going to represent the next society.

7: Farah: [addressing Deena] Wait, wait… but you are living in this society.

8: Alia: [addressing Deena] Your freedom ends where another’s begins.

9: Farah: [addressing Alia], Yes, thank you.

10: Alia: [addressing Deena], Do you know that your way of thinking will drive people to think ‘she is Europe’? You are disrespecting others! You need to respect the society so that it respects you back.

11: Farah: [addressing Deena] That’s your own thinking, some girls...

12: Saba: Yeah, you have to know the rules in your society, accept and respect them...

13: Deena: Obviously, these ideas seem to be generating from a religious background, I am talking about the gender.


15: Nayra: Yeah, you could become an easy subject for sexual harassments.

16: Alia: Yeah, you got to be realistic, yes, I agree with you; we are somehow oppressed, but again you need to be realistic.
Saba: No matter how much you are open minded; you should respect the society.

Alia: Yeah, I am very open minded, but there are things that are sacred.

Deena: We are the society.

Alia-Saba: No, we are not.

Deena: We are, you are all talking about the old generation, and we will be the next generation and if we keep thinking the same way they do, we will not change anything.

Alia: We can’t change traditions; they form the basis of our lives.

Saba: Look religion is a founding pillar in our society, if we break it the whole structure will fall apart.

Deena: Come on that is not true. Look, if I have kids, I will teach them new things, I will create other people.

Farah: No way.

The notion of multiple identities is clearly initiated by Saba in line 1, who firstforegrounds her multiplicity of identities, particularly articulating the importance of religion and gender for her. Notably, she emphasises that although religion is a frequent discussion topic, she recognises her tendency to dismiss others’ attempts to challenge her views on religion, whilst also acknowledging that she herself often lacks the reflexive ability to explain her convictions. With respect to gender, she mentions that it is one of the main social categories that influenced how others perceive her. In line 2, I pick up on the notion of gender and prompt Saba to elaborate on her view, which leads her to voice the opinion that gender is a major factor determining how one is treated in society (lines 3-5).

It is at this point that Deena enters the conversation and triggers a new trajectory of talk around the role of individual agency relative to social norms. Whilst Deena strongly emphasises the need to shift attention away from societal demands and more towards individual agency, Farah and R1 argue that freedom is not without limits. There is a key turn of significance in line 10, where Alia asserts that Deena’s attitudes towards societal norms will lead her to be accused of being an outsider (‘She is Europe’), brainwashed by foreign ideas that then undermine society. In line 11, Farah then aims to minimise Deena’s perspective by insinuating that her view may
not be representative of women. In line 12, Saba appears to concede her position by aligning with the importance of societal rules. In line 13, when Deena attempts to explain that she is arguing for the agency of women to think more about their own needs, Alia and Nayra move to oppose her view by suggesting that unlimited agency is impossible, with Nayra suggesting that more female freedom would lead to more sexual harassment. This, thus, locates the cause of a problematic phenomenon in women’s excessive freedom rather than men’s bad behaviour.

Interestingly, while Alia appears to align with the narrative that women in Algerian society are ‘oppressed’, she argues for the need to be ‘realistic’ (line 16). Saba and Alia continue to reinforce the supremacy of societal norms, even referring to them as ‘sacred’ (Alia in line 18). Despite such resistance, Deena is persistent in her attempt to argue instead for the primacy of individual agents, arguing that ‘We are the society’ (line 19) and that it is important for individuals to take action to change society (line 21). Other participants sustain their opposition to this idea, including Saba, who begins to assert the fundamental importance of religion (and, by implication, religiously derived notions of gender roles) as a pillar holding up society. Deena is nevertheless insistent that social change can be affected by passing on alternative views to children. Essentially, the extract above illustrates well that the issue of social norms vs. individual agency is a major axis of disagreement amongst the classroom participants with respect to gender norms. Even though Deena adopts the strategy of emphasising that unconditional respect for societal norms can create oppressive and discriminatory conditions for women, other participants need to see existing social structures as sacrosanct, not only because they support the stability of society but also that they, more fundamentally, derive their legitimacy from religion.
Whereas the discussion above has been mostly disputational (Mercer, 2000), in extract 5.2 below, students switch to an explanatory mode as I try to prompt them to reflect further on the factors that helped sustain traditions against shifting regimes of social and cultural thought. Important in the lines that follow is how students engage with complexity as they bring underlying values to the surface for analysis and reflection.

**Extract 5.2 Exploring Socio-Cultural Roots of Value Change**

1: Abir: (To the class as a whole) Okay, here is a question for you all, if as Deena says that generations change, why do traditions survive?

2: Adam: Because we were not open to this world.

3: Farah: Well, we still aren’t.

4: Alia: What are you talking about people, we need to know that we are Muslims, and there are guidelines that we need to strictly respect and follow in our lives; people think that civilization has to do with fashion and speaking French.

5: Saba: Yeah, we have customs and traditions that we should not remove; I can teach my child English, but I also need to teach him how to read Quran.

6: Farah: I have a question to Deena, what if the whole society rejects your call for ‘change’, what can you do about it?

7: Deena: Okay, first I would like to answer why traditions have been the same despite change of generations? Because now, compared to the past, we are open to the world through internet and social media; now we are developing and slowly changing. For example, people thought that the use of French in Algeria can’t ever be replaced by another language, but this is changing now because our generation views English as a better language, so if we raise our children to accept and start using English, we will make a change. It will not happen overnight; it will take some years.

8: Farah: You mean decades!

9: Deena: Look all I’m saying is that if we keep thinking the same way our mothers and grandmas used to, we will stay the same, but if we say I will be me, I will do what I believe to be true, we can then witness a change.

10: Farah: Listen, traditions are sacred in society. I mean what do you think governs a society.

11: Deena: Okay, tell me what are traditions? Explain them to me.
Farah: traditions are our history; if you don’t have them, you have nothing.

Deena: If you are talking about traditions as a lifestyle or way of dressing, all these have changed now. In the past, people weren’t dressed up as we are, they even thought that French language would never ever die in Algeria, but guess what? It is now! Another example, unlike the people today, in the past, women used to get out alone, there was safety everywhere, but after the Black decade, things have changed. This has nothing to do with traditions, it has to do with politics and security in the country.

In extract 5.2, the talk opens with my attempt to extend the discussion on tradition sustainability and transmission to younger generations. As a response, Adam links the preservation of cultural traditions to the lack of openness to the world. In line 3, Farah validates Adam’s idea that Algeria is still a relatively closed society. At this point, Alia shifts the discussion back to the essential need for religious observance and points out that changes in the dress code or mastery of a foreign language do not indicate any kind of social and/or cultural advances. Sharing a similar view, Saba reassures the supremacy of social norms and makes an interesting reference to the potential impact of English language learning on one’s religious identity. She also stresses the need to place a similar importance on both the child’s foreign language learning and his/her Islamic upbringing.

Line 6, on the other hand, shows how Farah decides to challenge Deena’s idea on individual agency and questions her reaction if her ideas were not met with public advocacy. As a response to my question in line 1, Deena sheds light on the role of information technologies and social media in changing the longstanding cultural and collective norms in society. In this vein, Deena elucidates her view by the gradual replacement of the French language with English in the linguistic scenery in Algeria despite French language’s widespread use in society and governmental institutions. Parallel to the French language shift in society, Deena believes that empowering children to lead social change will bring about similar outcomes. Nevertheless, she admits that this will be a gradual process of change. Despite Farah’s reluctance to her
classmate’s argument in line 8, Deena returns to reinforce her ideas on liberating oneself from the influence of precedent conventions of thought and actions and stresses the element of individual agency. The conversation extends between Farah and Deena when Farah refers to the impact of traditions on nurturing a sense of identity and collective culture in society. At this point, Deena questions Farah’s definition of ‘tradition’ and the latter (Farah) refers to it (traditions) as ‘history’ in a way to signify its value. At the end of the discussion, Deena sustains her opposition to this idea and denotes the political and social transformations that emanated after the country’s regional instability during the Black decade (Algeria’s Civil War 1991-2002), specifically, in what relates to women’s safety and freedom of movement in public. She, thus, highlights the role of political institutions as agencies of social change and collective action in society.

In the classroom talk above, further targeted reflection on value change allowed students to develop a deeper awareness of the language and culture interplay in their social context. This aspect surfaces especially when Deena (line 13) makes a point on the replacement of French with the English language in Algeria despite its strong socio-linguistic ties in the country since colonial rule (Benrabah, 2017).

Theorists like Liddicoat (2019), Guilherme (2002), and McConachy (2018) emphasise that foreign language and culture education cannot overlook the complex and overlapping nature of cultures, identities, and social classes. It, therefore, needs to stimulate paths for reflection, evaluation, and dialogue about the perspectives, products and practices of both target and local cultures (Byram, 1997). These notions when implemented within the scope of foreign language/culture education need to focus on ‘the acknowledgement of facts, that is, the input of geographical, historical, social, or political data... [as well as] the complexity of hidden meanings, of underlying values, and how these articulate with the micro- and macro-contexts they integrate’ (ibid, p. 45). It is important to note that the process of reflection in the previous
extracts is not so much on generating cultural knowledge but is rather geared towards the exploration of the ‘complex amalgam’ (McConachy, 2018, p.38) of social, political, and religious structures that shape and construct views and expectations of the social world. Here, the promotion of critical consciousness can be traced via the students’ collective attempts to name, challenge, and re-evaluate some of these underlying notions. It is this dynamic aspect of many-voicedness (Vice, 1997; Bakhtin, 1986) which laid the groundwork for new understandings to emerge (e.g., discussing how change can be invoked to enact transformation in society, see lines 4,5,13).

Although the next extract begins with students continuing to articulate elements of their social identity, reflections on personal experiences are triggered. At this point, it can be noted that the knowledge students constructed on the issue of individual agency and social norms is acting as a catalyst for reflection on the issue of regulated social norms and lived experiences of being ‘othered’. Johnson (2002) refers to this process as ‘relating’, which she defines as ‘learning in the context of life experience’ (p.46). McConachy (2018) refers to such dialogic exchanges on experience as ‘experience talk’, which he defines as the sum of ‘descriptive, evaluative and explanatory accounts of interactional experiences that are collaboratively constructed among classroom participants on the basis of reflection’ (p. 92). He continues to add that such collaborative engagements can then become a valuable resource for the ‘interrogation, [re] interpretation of events...and evaluations of interlocutors’ (ibid, p.10).

**Extract 5.3 Personal Experiences with Social Judgement**

1. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Okay, let’s move on. Adam, would you like to share?
2. Adam: Yes. Identities that I think about most often is my education; Identities that I think about least often are race and religion; the identity that I would like to know more about is religion, of course; Identities that have the strongest effect on how I perceive myself are age and education; and finally, identities that have the strongest effect on how others perceive me is age; I really suffer from that.
3. Abir: In what ways?
4. Adam: Because people think I’m young all the time and don’t treat me well and disrespectfully, even people in my own age.

5. Deena: Can I add something. The problem I faced in my university context, is the fact that people tend to criticize me rather than my ideas. This happened with my teacher recently. When I chose to speak about feminism in my written assignment, she refused my suggestion and asked me to change it because she did not like it. Even though, it was a very well written assignment. Another teacher of mine as well refused my topic on witchcraft because in his own perspective, it represented a taboo.

6. Zain: Did you change it?

7. Deena: I had to because I needed to secure a good mark. Throughout my adolescence, I was criticized a lot for the way I dress, and I still do. I think that people should really mind their own business. I remember that last time I was getting my papers, the lady who was working their asked me why I was dressed up like this? I really do not take this kind of questions now. I don’t know why people can’t just respect others’ choices. Once, I taught in a primary school and I had to wear very classic clothing because I did want to influence young kids with my own style.

8. Abir: Why would you do that?

9. Deena: Because people think it’s a bad thing. They think I’m a satanic person.

10. Alia/Nayra: Yeah, but you have to respect the place you’re in.

11. Deena: Exactly, that’s the point. I respected that; I changed my clothing to meet those standards. But people wouldn’t do the same for me. I really suffer with this issue of judging, my teachers are really mean with me, they think I’m a bad girl, with very little school achievements.

12. Abir: (To the class as a whole) So, why do you think people judge, then?

13. Saba: Because it’s a habit.

14. Alia: Because they are insecure about themselves.

15. Farah: They are weak and do not accept differences.

16. Saba: Yes, exactly. In the US or any other European country, you find mosques and places for Muslims to practice their religious values whereas here in Algeria you can’t see a single Church for Christians.

17. Abir: I’m very sorry to hear that, Deena; this should have never happened.

121
Extract 5.3 above shows Adam reading through his social wheel, describing the main identities which he perceives to have an impact on the way he sees himself and how others view him back. It is in line 2 where the notion of social judgments is first given a specific focus through Adam’s comment, where he explains how he struggles to escape the increasing pressure of others’ judgements on his age. When prompted to further elucidate his thoughts, Adam mentions how these perceived perceptions situate him as someone who lacks resilience and independence due to his young age. He also explains how he lacks a sense of exhibited concern, or consideration as a result of peer abuse in his context. Speaking about her own experience with social judgement, Deena in line 5 echoes a similar sentiment to Adam. She frames this aspect, especially in relation to her academic entourage, where her initiative to discuss controversial issues of feminism and witchcraft was met with rejection from her teacher. What underlies this rejection, explains Deena, is the teacher’s untested fear that these kinds of topics can cause disputes in the classroom. Responding to her classmate’s question in line 6 on whether she had to change her topic to meet the teacher’s expectations, Deena mentions that she had to compromise her ‘risky’ interests to attain good grades. Further to this (line 7), Deena recounts recurring incidents of judgement during her youth and explains the kind of negative impressions she experiences because of her clothing style (Gothic). In so doing, she expresses her frustration in dealing with poor attitudes from people that she barely knows (e.g., encounters with administrative staff). What is more significant, according to Deena, is her respect for the shared codes of female appearance in her entourage. In this vein, Deena recalls taking measures to dress up modestly when she was offered a teaching job at a local primary school. This was a required step to demonstrate responsibility and provide a good example to younger students. Responding to my probing in line 8, Deena explains that taking these steps is essential, especially that being identified as a Goth can attract negative perceptions (line 9).
In line 10, both Alia and Nayra seem to align with each other to foreground the view that it was vital for Deena to behave in a respectful and considerate manner to the school environment. In light of this, Deena is quick to respond that her equal need for respect was not met. Despite adhering to the school’s attire regulations, she still feels that her autonomy is being violated by those who cannot respect her individual choices. Thus, she revisits her frustration of being stigmatised or socially classified as wicked or academically incompetent (line 11).

In an attempt to expand on Deena’s views, in line 12, I step in to prompt the students to consider the rationale behind social judgements. This is especially important as it would help promote contextual awareness on the basis of these judgements. In response, students speculated on a number of factors varying from habitual patterns of thought, troubled self-esteem, and lack of tolerance towards differences. Further extending on the discussion, Saba takes up the issue of tolerance and compares understanding towards religious differences in Algeria with that in European contexts, particularly in terms of providing relevant spaces to practise religious activities and minimizing a sense of cultural alienation in a foreign society.

The analysis of the previous extracts has shown how offering students an opportunity to explore notions of conformity, social constraints and judgement acted as a springboard for narrating their past experiences. At this point, complex understandings emerged as students further debunked how social institutions such as schools, function to foster a tight system of social norms, which in turn, restricts propensity towards change and regulates individual-level cognition, behaviour, and dress code. In the students’ talk above, it appears that the question of conformity to social schemas is intimately tied with hierarchical and stereotypical thinking, especially towards those with a greater appetite for deviant behaviour. This was particularly the case with participant Deena, who was ‘judged’ for not conforming to shared norms on dress code.
The data from lesson one provided evidence of students noting the intersectional and fluid nature of their identity (Baker, 2015). The individual identity ‘wheel’ profiles highlighted shades of difference in and between each student’s sense of identity. All participants engaged in a process of negotiating and reflecting on their sense of self within/ across/ and drawing on different contexts, positions, and discourses in their life (Bakhtin, 1986). Other data segments also revealed how they dialogically engaged with one another to explore the set of social modalities that shape their social world. Indeed, the issue of social change and individual agency was of great interest to students, allowing a number of differing voices and conflicting positions to take place. This helped encourage further discovery, curiosity, and deliberation on the deeper realms of culturally derived assumptions, which not only constitute knowledge of the social world but also provide guidelines for appropriate behaviour and social activity. As illustrated before, these aspects of learning and reflection are central to the promotion and development of critical consciousness. In the next section (5.3), I move on to discuss the details of lesson two, presenting an overview of its tasks, objectives, and main findings.

5.3 Challenging Stereotypes of Self and Other

I organised lesson two around six main tasks aimed at problematising the students’ stereotypic assumptions of self and imagined other. Here, I judged that integrating a set of consciousness-raising activities in task one would help learners explore their own as well as other people’s stereotypical tendencies. The next task entailed a reading text that introduced students to the meaning of stereotyping; it also involved the use of short videos to support the learning of new concepts and gain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. In addition to these two tasks, I designed four additional ones on ethnic stereotypes. The aim, here, was to increase students’ critical engagements and sensitisation of their local context. In my analysis below, I present the sequencing of tasks and highlight the students’ engagements with one another as they proceed from one task to the other. I also attempt to describe the classroom dynamics and
pedagogical decisions that I added and/or omitted throughout this lesson. In table 5.1 below, I outline the tasks and objectives of this lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Activities Used</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The Label Card Activity. b. Let’s Think and Reflect. c. Read and Summarize the Text on Stereotypes/Prejudice/Discrimination.</td>
<td>a. To help students recognize their own and other people's stereotypical beliefs. b. To challenge and critically reflect on stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 Summary of Learning Units, Lesson 2.

5.3.1 Task 1: The Label Card Activity

The idea of this task was to assign a student volunteer with an unidentified label; s/he is then encouraged to guess the name of the cultural group written on the label using the help of his/her peers’ suggestive hints. This awareness-raising strategy was used to help identify which associations first came to students’ minds when they thought of people belonging to these groups. The task did not only aim to explore students’ perceptions of these groups, but also to dismantle them via the class discussions and post-lesson reflections. As we shall see further in this chapter, once I collected the students’ main assumptions about each of these groups, I displayed them on the board and urged students to try and collectively examine why we have certain assumptions and how can we work to ward off some of these judgmental views of others. Revealing students’ assumptions was an important step in this study, despite the
concern that exposing students to stereotypes in the classroom may reinforce them. Houghton (2010) argues that learners should be made aware of their stereotypic thoughts and encouraged to identify those of others surrounding them. However, this step is not sufficient; students must be given time to reflect upon the preconceived ideas and judgments that they ideally ascribe to all members of a specific linguistic or cultural background. Attention to developing learners’ analytical and reflective skills is highly required so that they can identify where they are positioned and what representations they are making of the other (Dervin & Byrd Clark, 2014).

As envisaged, students responded to this task by producing a set of assumptions about the following groups, including Americans, Asians, British, Muslims, and Algerians. At the beginning of the task, students started to produce a slightly different set of answers than the ones instructed in the task, such as giving geographical, political, or linguistic features of the country that its group was being presented (see extract 5.4 below- lines 2-10). Ideally, this was not the aim of the task as students did not generate any explicit characteristics of these group members. For this reason, I stepped in to scaffold a better comprehension of the task (lines 12,14,18,20,22).
Extract 5.4 Assumptions and Stereotypes about Algerians- Americans

1. Abir: Okay, try to give information about members of this group, okay?
2. Zain: An Arab country.
3. Farah: ‘Bouteflika’ (President of Algeria).
5. Deena: Yeah, it is a third world country, it contains different people, different cultures who belong to different races.
6. Abir: I need information about the cultural groups in these countries.
7. Farah: They have different cultures like Twareg (an ethnic group in Algeria).
8. Deena: They have two national languages.
9. Adam: Yeah, second spoken language is French.
10. Celia [card holder]: Oh, I know! Is it Algeria?
11. Group Assemble: Yes… [Clapping].
12. Abir: [Re-reads the questions and activity instructions] …You need to describe the cultural group, their characteristics…for example: how do you view the people there?
13. Adam: So, you mean we talk about the history of that country?
14. Abir: More likely, the characteristics of the cultural group.
15. Celia: Like food?
16. Zain: So, we mention food?
18. Abir: How you view the people there? It’s all about your perceptions of the cultural group there.
19. Farah: Nope, I did not understand the activity, I’m sorry it’s either I get it, or I won’t participate.
20. Abir: Okay, let’s try to give an example. If I say the word Americans, what comes to your mind?
22. Abir: Aha, what else?
25. Farah: Oh! Okay, I get it now. Yes.
26. Zain: They have many different races or something like this.
27. Abir: Good, let us continue with another group.
Once the students understood the task instructions, they began to voice a set of distinctive assumptions of American people as ‘hard-working’ and/or ‘lazy people’ (lines 21,24). The group’s national and ideological beliefs such as ‘the American dream’ and the country’s racial demographics were also mentioned in lines (23, 26). The discussion continues in extract 5.5 below. This time with Adam displaying the card labelled ‘Asians’. Other students also jump in to express how they perceive Asian people.

**Extract 5.5. Assumptions and Stereotypes about Asians**

1. Alia: Oh! I know this one. They have weird eyes… [Laughter]
2. Farah: Hard working people- until they die basically.
3. Zain: Yes.
5. Alia: Healthy ones, too.
9. Deena: They have yellow skin.
10. Adam [Card holder]: Asian people?

In this extract, the students’ assumptions about Asians were mostly positive, except for the first comment which finds Alia, humorously, mapping a seemingly racist notion of Asians as ‘having weird eyes’ (line 1). The following lines of discussion (2,4,5,6) see the students endowing Asians with positive traits such as possessing advanced IQ levels, having a good reputation of diligence as well as maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Another group depicted in positive stereotypic lights was the British. This was especially salient in some participants’ comments in extract 5.6 below (lines 1-6) which contribute to seeing British people as ‘hard working’, ‘classy’, ‘religiously tolerant’, ‘individualistic’ and ‘well-mannered’. Other students, on the other hand, described some static and easily
observable features that are generally associated with the British culture, such as its currency and weather conditions (lines 7,9). Nayra also compared her ingroup’s political system to that of the UK in line 10 and with Zain, Alia and Deena’s supporting hints, Farah was able to correctly guess the correct group. She, however, expressed a little criticism to her classmates at the end suggesting that they could have helped her better with clearer clues such as references to elements of British history and food (line 17). In this case, Farah’s perception of the UK seems to clearly tie in with the easily, observable, and often naïve representations of this country. In fact, studies by Rabehi (2021); Douidi (2021) and Amzinae & Selama (2020) have concluded that target cultures in the Algerian EFL classroom tend to be studied in an often-superficial manner that only addresses the visible information that distinguishes one nation from the other and does not encourage any critical examination of that knowledge.

Extract 5.6 Assumptions and Stereotypes about the British

3. Deena: They have social differences, or let’s say social classes.
4. Alia: They do respect every religion, all people.
5. Zain: They care only about themselves.
6. Alia: Um…polite society or community, they have manners, standards.
7. Deena: They do have a special currency.
8. Farah [Card holder]: Um…manners!?  
9. Alia: Well, the weather…they have a special weather.
10. Nayra: They have a different political system than ours.
12. Alia: Yes, not at all.
14. Zain: They are not democratic.
15. Farah: Okay, British people?
16. Group Assemble: Yes [Clapping].
17. Farah: you guys could have said from the beginning stuffs like they built an empire or a cup of tea!

Next, students had to identify perceptions of Muslims (extract 5.7 below). The main objective behind choosing this category was to explore how students use their comparative thinking on the various images, views, or overgeneralizations that usually typify Muslims around the world to reduce stereotypic thinking towards the other. On a general level, students typically assimilated their perceptions of Muslims to the traditional and religious features of this group (extract 5.7, lines 6-13). However, Farah was the only participant who provided an implicit view of Muslims as possessing minimum freedom to act as they wish in light of rigid principles (line 2) and also as people who believe in peace (line 12).

**Extract 5.7 Assumptions and Stereotypes about Muslims**

1. All Students: Oh! [Excited]
2. Farah: Strict people.
3. Deena: They believe in.
4. Abir: [Interrupting]: No, not too explicit, please.
5. Deena: I’m not going to make it too obvious.
6. Alia: Traditions, they regard traditions.
9. Zain [Card holder]: Egyptians?
10. Deena: Nope, it’s a belief system.
11. Alia: They wear certain outfits to represent their identity and religion.
13. Celia: They follow some specific norms and principles.
14. Alia: It’s a very peaceful concept, come on Zain, shame on you, you are a part of it.
15. Zain: Wait, Middle Easterners?
17. Deena: Can we say Arabs?
18. Farah: No, they are not only Arabs, no we can’t say that.
19. Nayra: But we can find the majority of them in the Arab countries.
In the next extract (5.8), students move to discuss religious stereotyping. Specifically focussing on the broadly believed assumptions about unveiled women. Initially, in the task design stage, I did not intend to include this focus. I, however, noted that in both the class discussions and interviews, students frequently brought the issue of Muslim stereotyping and gendered social judgements to the fore for discussion. To this end, I decided to have students reflect on their perceptions of Muslim women who choose a more liberal approach in the way they negotiate their religious identity i.e., the hijab non-wearers. Generally speaking, the act of wearing a hijab or not is both a visible indicator of difference and a declaration of one’s religious identity and must, therefore, have some implications on the perceptions and behaviours of others (Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013). Therefore, students’ existing conceptualisations of veiling practices needed more exploration. In comparison to the previously presented extracts, the discussion below is much more extended. This is because students were able to generate sophisticated accounts on the broader social, political, and religious discourses about the Hijab in both places where one’s religious identity is not contested (i.e., Muslim contexts) and others where the need to publicly assimilate may be high (i.e., non-Muslim contexts). Important in the extract that follows is how the focus on stereotypical perceptions of the self in Muslim contexts promotes consideration of these same images in foreign contexts. A process of comparison and contrast (Houghton & Yamada 2012) is thus initiated as students begin to see the ways in which they, as Muslims, are perceived both in local and foreign contexts.

**Extract 5.8 Assumptions and Stereotypes about (un) Veiled Muslim Women**

1. Abir: How do you think ‘unveiled’ women are perceived in society?
2. Farah: It is forbidden. They would say she is not respectful.
3. Alia: They think it denotes rebellion.
4. Adam: Do we need to speak about how society thinks about them? Or what we personally think?

5. Abir: Both, what do you think about them? What do you know about how society thinks about them? And more importantly if you agree/disagree with those perceptions?

6. Deena: I think they are ordinary people who have chosen their path, this is their lifestyle. As for the society, Algeria is kind of like an open-minded society.


8. Deena: I mean yeah, Algeria the country and the policy.

9. Alia: Do you mean Algiers? (Capital of Algeria)

10. Deena: No, the country. They accept these kinds of differences if you wear a veil or not.

11. Farah: No, they do not. In the North, maybe. Do not conflate concepts.

12. Alia: Maybe Algiers. In the North, it is okay for them.

13. Deena: Look, when you go to the South, people there would think...

14. Zain: Strict… (In reference to people in the South)

15. Deena: Yeah, they would think you are not a good person if you do not wear the veil.

16. Farah: Even their eyes must be covered! (In reference to which body parts the hijab needs to cover) [Laughter].

17. Deena: Yeah, that’s it.

18. Farah: Because a woman is viewed as temptation, I don’t know why it’s her fault.

19. Alia: No, it’s mentioned in the Quran, come on.

20. Farah: No, even that, they are extreme.

21. Nayra: Maybe this conversation would trigger more thoughts if it was about an external context because I think that women who wear a veil outside our country are seen as a threat.

22. Abir: (To the class as a whole) That’s a good point, what do you think about what Nayra just said?

23. Celia: They consider her as a terrorist.

24. Alia: It is thought that she cannot talk to men, she cannot sit with men, she cannot shake hands with men.

25. Nayra: They think that veiled women are complicated.


27. Celia: Not open minded.


29. Farah: Very conservative, too much.
In extract 5.8, students’ discourse centred around the negative perceptions of non-veiled women in society, especially when they choose not to adhere to the Islamic dress code which, in turn, plays a critical role in visibly marking their religious identity. In line 1, I initiate the discussion by probing information on the prevailing perceptions or stereotypes associated with the non-hijab wearers in society. As a response, Farah, in the next line highlights that women who disregard veiling practices are generally viewed with less respect, especially in a context that stresses the need to wear a head cover.

Adding to Farah’s comment, Alia denotes that people view this as a kind of defiance to the rules of established authority; in this case, the institution of religion (line 3). Responding to Adam’s question in line 4, I repeat the question to make the instructions more accessible for comprehension. In line 6, Deena stresses the idea that the hijab is a matter of personal choice; the understanding of which starts with the person’s individual agency. She also highlights the liberal approach in the Algerian public sector in that there are no policies that ban or impose religious garments (lines 6-10). In line 11, Farah moves to oppose Deena’s viewpoint signifying the North-South Algerian divide, particularly in terms of liberal and conservative thinking in what pertains to dress code and social norms. In this vein, Alia in the next line asserts that a less-conservative attire would likely be embraced in the moderately liberal Algerian North. Furthermore, Deena and Zain in lines (13-15) argue that the case would take another breadth in the Southern areas since people in that region are likely to hold otherwise conservative values and would not appreciate any violation of the traditional and religious standards of modesty. In line 16, Farah adds that in some Southern regions, people legislate some ultraconservative dress codes for women that aim to cover their full face. She continues
to criticise this kind of behaviour in line 18, questioning the logic behind such discriminatory views of gender and social freedoms, especially those that consider women as a symbol of Fitna (i.e., temptation). In this vein, Alia returns to comment in line 19 that Quran has long provided an ideological justification for this issue. In line 20, however, Farah moves to oppose Alia to emphasise that such beliefs about the hijab advocate a strict interpretation of Quranic scripture.

Furthermore, line 21 sees Nayra shifting the direction of the talk to focus on the representation of veiled women in Western contexts. At this point, I promptly direct attention to Nayra’s comment to scaffold comparison with another set of veiling attitudes in Western contexts (line 22). In response, students produced different readings of the veil in the Western world as a symbol of oppression, subjugation and sometimes terror (see lines 23-31).

The example reported above shows that learners were not simply engaging in this discussion to generate a set of pre-conceived images about the hijab wearers/non-wearers. But rather to construct new meanings that consider and deeply look at the contemporary, diverse, and often contested veiling practices shaped by their local Algerian context. The critical insights, which were especially constructed through the interaction between Deena, Farah, Zain, and Alia (see lines 6-20) involved a decompression of the culturally diverse practices and interpretations of veiling in Algeria especially in both urban and countryside areas. Here, it is important to note the cultural variances of veiling in Algerian society. While some women may wear a simple covering of the head, others choose to wear a full face, head and body covering called the Niqab, only revealing their eyes. In some urban areas, especially, where there is less pressure to keep with traditional notions of modesty, some women choose not to wear any head covering. At this point, the students’ dialogue not only inspired a re-thinking of the basic assumptions that surround traditional and modern interpretations of veiling practices but also engaged with the complexity and diversity of issues and images that a woman’s dress touches.
upon. Additionally, students were able to reveal a number of perceptions about Muslim women both in local and foreign contexts. These include rebellion and liberalism, on the one hand, and oppression and terror, on the other. Thus, further reflecting on the gendered nature of clothing and the ways in which clothing complicates the situation for Muslim women in both home and foreign communities. In this sense, the process of learning took place in the real world of these students (Freire, 1993) where they identified their own societal and cultural habits, compared how these norms function in a foreign context, and started to problematise constructed beliefs about the religious dress. Another important insight can also be shown in the way they acknowledged how the heterogeneity of veiling practices is a product of the changing and diverse, socio-political contexts.

The previously presented extracts reviewed some of the stereotypic perceptions embedded in the students’ discourse in the first task of lesson two. In this section, I focused on unfolding students’ previously held perceptions of varying groups. In general, the task appeared to have succeeded in the elicitation of certain perceptions which seem to have nurtured a fixed and essentialising view of these groups. Moreover, as a feature of this interaction, polyphony (Bakhtin, 1986) allowed students to exchange ideas and perspectives, question existing frames of reference and allow for new interpretations of the world to take place. The next section presents task two, which was based on problematising the set of stereotypical beliefs students exposed in task one.

5.3.2 Task 2: Let’s Think and Reflect

Task two was used as a complementary unit to task one. These two tasks were purposefully designed in sequential order to first, help elicit students’ broader judgments about the self and imagined other, and then invite a re-examination of these embedded assumptions. Here, the elicitation stage not only allowed students to externalise their perceptions, but also gave me an opportunity to understand their thinking, and thus guide them with follow-up questions that
helped problematise these assumptions. In Freire’s (1993) terms, this can help create a shift towards critical consciousness, that is to describe how the learners’ thinking gets disrupted to create a deeper understanding of their social world, not only looking at the overall issue but also examining and reflecting upon its root foundations. In Freire’s sense (ibid), this means moving beyond a simple recognition of stereotypic views to acknowledging them as ‘social and collective products which function ideologically by justifying and legitimizing existing social and power relations within a society’ (Augoustinos and Walker, 1998, p.629). Freire’s point here aligns well with Byram (1997) and Guilherme (2002) and Yulita’s (2017) conceptualisations of critical cultural awareness, which places emphasis on identifying ‘one’s own criteria’ (or ideology) in his/her evaluation of self and other. Byram (2008) argues that learning opportunities should be created for students to build this type of criticality. For him, the classroom can be an enabling environment for the examination and careful dissection of these criteria; this he states below:

Teachers are familiar with learners of all ages who condemn some particular custom in another country as ‘barbaric’. They have no rationale other than that of the original meaning of ‘barbaric’, i.e., that it is different and from beyond the limits of our ‘civilised’ society. Although the teacher may not wish to interfere in the views of their learners, for ethical reasons, they can encourage them to make the basis for their judgements explicit and expect them to be consistent in their judgements of their own society as well as others (p.233).

To make the process of reflection more productive, I used a set of prompting questions to help construct new knowledge and generate a multiplicity of perspectives (Chen & Uden, 2009). In the next two extracts below, I present the various meanings students made of this task, and how the class discussion shifted towards the problematisation of national and regional stereotyping; a focus that had neither been considered nor intended at this stage of the course.
Extract 5.9 Using Meta-Images to Reflect on Stereotype Accuracy

1. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Do you think that all of these characteristics depict an accurate representation of that group? I mean all the features that you have mentioned about the cultural groups that you tried to guess about earlier. I think Zain, you've said something about a group being described as ‘lazy’; You’ve also mentioned something about the British, didn’t you?

2. Alia: I think it’s only for minority, not the majority.

3. Zain: Yes.

4. Abir: Do you think most people hold the same assumptions about these groups?

5. Alia: Nope.

6. Adam: No.

7. Deena: I think Algerians hold the same assumptions but not the whole world.

8. Farah: They don’t really know anything about the Algerian culture.

9. Adam: In some countries, they don’t even know that Algeria exists...yeah, I swear.


11. Farah: By the way, who has seen the video about ‘Algeria, where is it?’

12. Nayra: Yeah, true. When I say I’m from Algeria, they say where is it situated? They don’t even know we are Africans. When they hear the word Africa, they think we are Blacks, we’re not Black.

13. Farah: But even in South Africa, they are not Black.

14. Nayra: I know, but they keep conflating it, and they think we are all Black.

15. Zain: Yes.

Extract 5.9 begins with my attempt to challenge students’ thinking on the validity of stereotypic views. Comments such as ‘I think it’s only for minority, not the majority’ indicate some awareness of over-generalisations in Alia’s response (line 2). However, it is Deena’s comment in line 7 that triggers a discourse on foreigner perceptions of Algerians. These perceptions, according to Nayra (line 12), express the idea that Algeria is situated in Africa and thus all of its inhabitants are classified as Black. In line 13, Farah is quick to reply that dark-skinned people are not the sole inhabitants of Africa. Thus, she infers that this view is too reductive of
the continent’s diversity. From the perspective of students, these images, to a certain extent, have become the sole lens through which many people around the world view Algerians.

What is interesting in this extract is that although it begins with students trying to reflect on the accuracy of previously generated stereotypes (see section 5.3.1 of this chapter), a shift towards meta-stereotypes is formulated to illuminate how they think they are perceived by members of out-groups. In social psychology, meta-stereotypes refer to ‘a person’s beliefs regarding the stereotype that out-group members hold about his or her own group’ (Vorauer & O’ Connell, 1998, p. 917). It is obvious that when students think of how their country is seen elsewhere, geographical, and socio-economic aspects quickly come to their mind, depicting Algeria as a marginalised third-world country, mostly inhabited by dark-skinned people. Here, students seemed to position themselves against these notions emphasising the considerable variation of skin colour within the African regions, in general, and Algeria in specific. In this sense, it becomes clear that meta-stereotypic perceptions were functioning as a resource for reflection on the reductive nature of stereotyping. That being said, the students’ engagement at this point was yet to incorporate a critical dimension in which the highly normative views that they think are associated with them/their country become the source for critically reflecting on the stereotypes they have of other groups. This can ultimately lead them to think and act in a less biased way (Houghton & Yamada, 2012).

In the following extract, the trajectory of discussion took another unexpected shift towards regional stereotyping when Alia in line 1 cast light on the negatively charged assumptions of Southerners in Algeria. Here, it seems that reflection on meta-stereotypes has laid the ground for a deeper discussion on the realities of regional stereotyping in Algeria, especially in relation to the prevailing misperceptions of Southerners as backward, outdated or otherwise uncivilised.
Extract 5.10 A Shift Towards Regional Stereotypes

1. Alia: I actually remember this one time I went to Algiers, and we went to this fancy restaurant, they thought we were coming from Constantine (a city situated in North-Eastern Algeria), but they were very surprised to know we were coming from city Y. They were like, we didn’t know you guys dress up nicely like this; I mean they really think we have dark skin, live in the bare desert and tents.

2. Farah: True, that’s so true [Laughter].

3. Alia: I was explaining to them, like no I come from city Y, but I can speak French and English.

4. Nayra: Yeah, and also, cultivation.

5. Farah: The same thing happened with me, when I went to Ghava (a touristic place in Algeria), they thought I was coming from Setif (Algerian city) because of my fair skin. I mean people really think we are Black.

6. Alia: Yeah, true. They think we live around palm trees, dates, and tents.

7. Nayra: Like a Barbarian person or lifestyle.

8. Alia: Yeah, like monsters, cruel and dirty.

9. Farah: Just so you know, those who live in the villages are a lot richer than those living in the city.

10. Adam: Yes.

In the above extract, Alia opens the discussion by describing her experience with judgement when she and her family members were viewed stereotypically during their visit to another city, generally perceived as more urbanised than Southern cities in Algeria. She continues to recite how the people she met with in this area were surprised to know that she descended from a Southern city. The locals in these areas are broadly characterised as old-fashioned and inhabiting desert territories: ‘we didn’t know you guys dress up nicely like this’; ‘they think we have dark skin, live in the bare desert and tents’ (line 1). She further adds in line 3 that she tried to rectify this misconception by asserting her ability to speak foreign languages, such as English and French. In congruence, Nayra in line 4 asserts that coming from a Southern city can also signify a well-cultured background. Similarly, in line 5, Farah recalls a similar experience, when she was visiting a tourist place outside her city. She describes how some
people whom she met there were surprised to know that she was coming from a Southern city given the fact that she had a fair complexion. In lines 6-8, Alia and Nayra continue to describe the prevailing view of Southerners portrayed as ‘barbarians’ ‘cruel’, ‘dirty’, void of any urban standards and characterized by backwardness and primitive lifestyles.

Throughout this extract, students collaborated to unpack the negatively charged assumptions that surround people living in the Algerian South. Here, it is notable that students resist such assimilative integrations which so poignantly place them as inferior to the rest of the Algerian population. Alia’s example in lines 1 and 3, in combination with Nayra’s explicit confirmations in lines 2 and 4, not only functions to foreground the inter-regional disparities that form today’s Algerian reality but to also give insight into the continuous role of language in producing such realities of inequality. As postulated before, challenging these unequal representations and forms of inequality in one’s own context is an indication of critical consciousness (Diemer & Li, 2011). Here, it is valuable to mention that during Algeria’s colonial period, French was used as a tool to establish asymmetrical hierarchies between the highly prestigious individuals and the general masses. In this sense, a good command of French was seen as inherent to the social status of powerful and, thus, well-educated individuals, whereas a less command of the language assumed an unquestioned inferiority to its members (Aitsiselmi & Marley, 2008).

A particularly important feature of this talk can also be seen to emerge in lines 1-4, where the role language plays in revealing the position of its users is particularly made salient. Alia and Nayra’s comments in this vein (lines 1-4) reflected some important insights on the socio-symbolic aspects of language use in Algeria, in the sense that both French and English language use plays an active role in identifying its speakers as belonging to a particular group or having a powerful social image.

It is noteworthy that both English and French language use in Algeria has been brought to its current position due to various historical and modern-day influences. The spread of French,
for instance, has long characterised Alegria’s turbulent history with colonialism. With the glorification of French and stigmatisation of native languages, French soon became the language of superiors; only spoken and used by the elites (Benrabah, 2007). The use of English, on the other hand, despite witnessing a rapid diffusion in Algeria, is still largely restricted to the most affluent and well-educated members (Ramaswami et al, 2012). As a learning process, coming to understand the relationship between language use and social status can develop deeper awareness of the language-culture nexus. In fact, further reflection on this issue can open dialogic possibilities for looking into the role of language in the construction and dissemination of stereotypes in society.

In the following extract, I try to urge students to open up to complexity by inviting them to search their interpretive knowledge for factors that lie behind stereotyping.

**Extract 5.11 Approaches to a Critical Examination of Religious Stereotypes**

1. Abir: (To the class as a whole) How do you think these images of others were developed? Is it through media, surrounding family or the environment?
2. Farah: Yes, of course, the first medium is through media because it is available everywhere, people do not exist everywhere and so they cannot reach every information but through media they can.
3. Alia: But the media is not a valid source all the time.
4. Farah: It’s not, yeah, I know.
5. Alia: Yeah, just like those who view that Islam is ISIS.
7. Alia: The latter has no relationship whatsoever with Islam, they commit what Islam has explicitly made forbidden and they call it ‘legitimate’, how can they identify themselves as believers of the oneness of Allah? It’s completely wrong.
8. Nayra: Yeah, that’s what the media portrays, only that dark aspect.
9. Alia: Yeah, that’s the thing.
10. Farah: They fabricated this; these concepts do not ever exist in our religion; they gave birth to it.
11. Nayra: Yeah, they faked it. Originally when you look closer, ISIS was created by the media.
12. Farah: Yeah, Media gave ISIS power, the real power.
13. Alia: If they had just overlooked it, it wouldn’t have gone this viral...you hear all the time on the media: ‘ISIS has bombarded’ ‘ISIS has killed’, it’s all part of a big propaganda, this way, they give them strength and contribute to this publicity.
14. Farah: Yeah, can’t you see that the concept of ISIS resembles the story of Al Qaida?
15. Alia: Yeah, I know all that does not exist, I know that ISIS and Al Qaida are the same product and manufacturer.

In the discussion above, I try to push students to question the foundations of knowledge that generate and perpetuate biased images of self and other. Farah’s comment in line 2 observes that media plays an integral part in influencing public opinion. In response, Alia in lines 3, 5 and 7 argues that media coverage cannot be taken as accurate information; she gives an example on the mainstream perception of Islam as ‘ISIS’ and asserts that there needs to be a dissociation from the characterisation of Islam as a religion of aggression. This is because most of what ISIS is doing is anti-Islamic and has no religious ‘legitimacy’. In line 8, Nayra steps in to confirm that media outputs often draw negative attention. Likewise, she and Farah continue to assert that the majority of distorted perceptions of Islam were constructed by the media, adding that none of the practices reflected in these images relates to the truthful principles of Islam (lines 10-12). The discussion comes to an end with both Farah and Alia forming the conclusion that much like what happened with Al Qaida, the role of media had a significant impact on the empowerment of ISIS and dissemination of extremist narratives about Islam and Muslims in general (lines 12-15).

Of particular interest in the students’ discussion above, is the way they draw the dichotomy of Muslims vs ISIS. Farah’s comment in line 10, ‘these concepts do not ever exist in our religion’, constructs a collective identity and places a gap between the in-group Muslim fellowship and ISIS. Herein, it can be argued that students are drawing on what Bolten (2007) (as cited in
Hass, Waechter & Krause-One., 2017, p118) refers to as ‘suspected hetero-stereotypes’ or ‘meta-images’ i.e., what students suspect others think about them, to critically reflect on the validity of extremist narratives on Islam. Another important dimension of this interaction is the explicit attention to the role of media in constructing stereotypical representations of Islam and Muslims around the world.

It can be seen that task two did not encourage students to question the stereotypical beliefs that were shared in task one (see section 5.3.1 of this chapter). At this point, it was particularly noticeable that students showed the least engagement when it came to discussing these assumptions. They appeared to resist any conversations about the imagined other and insisted, instead, on discussing national, regional, and religious stereotyping. In my reflective log of lesson two, I documented the following:

> The second session was divided into two parts. The first part on eliciting stereotypes went very smoothly. The second activity, however, did not go really well...students were very reluctant to talk about foreign cultural groups...when we try to reflect on people from other cultural backgrounds, they don’t seem to be interested to talk about them ... I feel like they don’t associate much importance to that because they have no physical, or day to day contact with foreigners (RL2/November 2018).

As demonstrated throughout this section, targeted reflection has helped students to reflect on the truthfulness of stereotypes in general, by developing an awareness that not each and every individual of that group will fit into a specific attribute or disposition. Such awareness, however, seemed to only centre on the self, as there was no evidence of any critical examination of the perceptions that confine American or British people, for example, with attributes of hard work or politeness.
5.3.3 Task 3: Read and Summarise the Text on Stereotypes/Prejudice/Discrimination

It is important to allow students to build an understanding on the process of stereotyping, what identifies as a stereotype and what consequences can it evoke. To this end, I added this task for students to build a conceptual understanding on the concepts of stereotyping and prejudice. In the next step, students were asked to summarize the text individually; the purpose was to help increase their understanding of the content and facilitate the retaining of information. The activity was ultimately aiming to provoke a dialogic interaction between students enabling them to shape and construct new meanings on these concepts. The text introduced a conceptual overview on the nature of stereotypes which can take two forms: positive and negative; it then provided some authentic examples of these two evaluations such as simple images of ‘Asians are good at math’, or ‘vegetarians are pedantic’, followed by an explanation on how people’s unjustified pre-judging develops into unfavourable acts of discrimination (see Appendix B).

The discussion presented below in extract 5.12 took place shortly after I introduced the activity and gave students time to read and build an understanding on the concepts of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Here students were working together to construct an answer to the question posed by Farah (line 2). At this point, the provision of the Asian stereotype in the text appeared to stimulate the students’ attention to think about some of the typifications that concern members of the out-groups, i.e., Asians. This provided an entry point for reflection on the validity of stereotyping and invited students’ close examination on some ready-made assumptions about Asian students.

**Extract 5.12 Probing the Accuracy of Cultural Stereotypes: The Asian Fallacy**

1. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Let us move on to the next activity now. Let’s all try to read this text and try to answer the questions.
2. Farah: Okay, so who agrees that Asian students are really good at Math?
3. Alia: Me.
4. Farah: This is a stereotype.
5. Alia: They are known.
6. Farah: In social media there are a lot of videos of this prejudice.
7. Alia: But they are known to be smart.
8. Farah: They are not actually.
11. Zain: They are, most of them.
12. Farah: Are they? They are hard-working not really smart.
14. Farah: It’s not about healthy lives.
15. Alia: They have healthy lifestyles.
16. Farah: Wait, being smart is not about food.
17. Alia: Well somehow, it plays a role.
18. Deena: It’s about being well-educated in schools. Their school system is not like ours.
20. Deena: It’s about how you raise them.
21. Farah: Yeah, but this does not mean that you are made up to be smart.
22. Zain: Wait, wait, Americans think about Asian people as being smart because they [Asians] came to America as immigrants to study, so they are hard-workers, and so they have generalized this idea of ‘all Asians are smart’ and this is definitely not an accurate idea because if they look closely into all Asian countries, they will find that this is not true, especially in India and China.
23. Farah: Yeah, I mean we could argue that they have built a strong economy with their own effort, but are they really smart as everyone thinks?
24. Zain: Maybe, not.
25. Farah: Yeah, I think they are just like normal people, but they work really hard.

In the interaction I analyse here, the students are trying to decide if the idea of being ‘good at math’ should or should not be regarded as a standardized perception of Asians. In lines 2-11, Farah, Alia and Zain interactionally oppose each other on the relevance and validity of this stereotype. In the subsequent lines, students can be seen to engage in deconstructing this stereotype, i.e., ‘breaking it apart for analysis and reflection’ (Yulita, 2012, p. 50). This is, for
example, noticeable when they acknowledge other facts that could have helped construct and disseminate this perception about Asian people, such as hard work and diligence, good eating habits and efficacy of educational school systems (lines 12-21).

It is in line 22 when Zain makes an interesting input by noting the origins of this pervasive perception of Asians. Here, Zain highlights an important aspect where he makes a distinction between Asian immigrants in the US and non-immigrants who live in places like China or India. In so doing, he posits that these depictions are only related to the first generation of Asian immigrants in the USA. As such, similar depictions may not be valid for other Asians who live in other parts of Asia. Followingly in lines 23-25, Farah reaches the conclusion that Asian achievements have been a direct outcome of hard work and dedication and opposes the taken-for-granted assumption that unrealistically endows Asians with high IQ levels.

In this talk, the discussion arose from the students’ questions and observations as they took control of the task. Here students showed agency as they collaboratively engaged in a critical co-investigation on whether a certain depiction of Asian people as competent in math can be trusted. This was followed by a process of reflection on the kind of contextual elements that have helped reinforce these same depictions. Throughout this extract as a whole, it can be seen that collaborative discussions have stimulated students’ thinking. Through the continuous questioning and challenging of ideas, students attempted to examine and understand the process by which this particular stereotype was formed or why such impressions may exist in the first place.

This next dialogue in extract 5.13 depicts how students were developing new insights on the effects of negative stereotyping and its relation to discrimination and prejudiced attitudes. A deeper exploration of stereotyping as an automated mechanism was also invoked.
**Extract 5.13 Exploring the Nature of Stereotypes**

1. Abir (To the class as a whole): Very good, that was a very fruitful discussion. Who can share his/her summary?
2. Deena: Well, I’ll go first. It’s a positive stereotype to think that literature students are smart and hard-workers, book-readers and their language is so flowering, and they do have a lot of vocabulary.
3. Alia: Well, I have to say: my self-esteem has just increased remarkably. Wow! I'm so happy.
4. Abir: Okay, who can tell me what the text speaks about?
5. Celia: It’s about stereotypes and prejudice; how people judge others.
6. Farah: How their perception can be both positive and negative.
7. Adam: It’s about how everything that you hear about others can/cannot be true.
8. Deena: Can I read what I have written?
9. Abir: Yes, of course you can.
10. Deena: So, people are born with a psychology of forming images about everything around them and when it comes to treating other people, they have different classifications based on their cultural background and when they just know a specific information about this person, they edit this classification which makes stereotyping people’s behavior.
11. Abir: Well-done, Deena. If you could notice what she said in the first line? ‘When we stereotype, it is somehow based on a psychological tendency’?
12. Deena: Yeah, we form images about everything.
13. Abir (To the class as a whole): Did you know that research has shown that stereotyping is a psychologically-driven and automatic process?
14. Nayra: Yes, exactly. It happens unconsciously. This is what I wrote.
15. Abir (To the class as a whole): It probably happens to everybody but the difference between someone who thinks critically and someone who doesn’t is that the former stops in the first few minutes to question and analyze that information and reach a conclusion to not judge someone/an act based on that very little amount of information available. Sometimes, communication breakdowns happen for someone who does not analyze the validity of information and behaves with other people from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds on that basis.
16. Farah: How is that?
17. Alia: So, for example, you are walking in the street, and you see someone. So, you automatically start classifying him/her in your mind without even talking to them or knowing them properly.

18. Farah: Well, for me personally, there are people who I like when I see on first sight and others not at all.

19. Abir (To Farah): Have you tried asking on what basis you built this conclusion?

20. Farah: It’s just like this, I don’t know.

21. Alia: It’s like applying the concept of ‘skimming’ and ‘scanning’. You would have to talk to that person first, then decide if you like them or not.

22. Zain: Yeah, before you judge them.

23. Farah: Look, for me I don’t know those people, but I classify them in my mind.


25. Deena [Interrupting]: I want to finish my sentence. Prejudice occurs when negative stereotyping is used as a motive to treat people badly and create discrimination.

26. Abir: Well- done. Who else wants to add to this information?

27. Nayra: I actually wrote that both stereotyping and prejudice take place unconsciously due to the lack of information on that person/situation, but once accurate information is provided, this can change.

After giving students some time to read the text, I open the discussion by asking students to share their summaries. Deena is the first to comment in line 2 on the concept of positive stereotypes. She provides an example on the favourable evaluation of learners who specialise in English literature describing them as ‘smart, hard-working, and linguistically competent’.

Furthermore, lines 5-7 show how students alternate to clarify the main ideas of the text, uncovering the concepts of judgements and taken-for-granted assumptions. In line 10, Deena builds on the mechanism of how people construct stereotypic views of others based on their own cultural standards. Herein in line 15, I intervene to draw students’ attention to stereotyping as an automated cognitive process, which usually generates from a psychological tendency to identify others. I then move on to introduce some methods that a critical person would normally use to help regulate his/her bias such as attention, suspending thought and reflection. I also tackle the impact of stereotypes on intercultural communication, especially when little is done
to eliminate negative depictions of those who are perceived as different from us. In line 16, Farah expresses trouble in understanding the nature of the stereotyping mechanism. Herein, Alia steps in to elucidate how sometimes people tend to categorise others despite sharing zero acquaintance with them (line 17). At this point, Farah confesses how sometimes, she disfavours others at ‘first sight’ without any valid reasons. In line 19, I build on Farah’s example and prompt her to consider seeking some explanation behind this kind of feeling, such as thinking back to what made her reach this judgement and evaluate it.

Alia and Zain in lines 21-22 next move to advise Farah to be careful not to evaluate individuals until she validates the accuracy of that judgement. At this point, Farah seems to resist their suggestion (line 23), which leads Alia to voice that in this case, Farah’s position is likely to be interpreted as ‘prejudice’. While Deena decides to continue sharing her summary about the relationship between stereotyping and prejudicing, Nayra in line 27 concludes that pre-judgement attitudes can be rectified once accurate information is decoded.

In this talk, students can be seen to recall knowledge previously deduced from the text and apply it in other contexts. This can be noted, for example, in Deena’s comment in line 2, where she used insights from the text to build an example from her own context as a language learner about the commonly shared narratives of literature students as ‘smart and hard-working’. Some of the data segments also showed that at times students were repositioning themselves as the informing party by, for example, taking an active role in seeking and internalising new knowledge, initiating dialogues, and raising questions they had wondered about. This can especially be noticed in extracts 5.13 and 5.14, where students were themselves driving the dialogue, adding, and extending on each other’s ideas, and co-constructing knowledge. They thus became fellow inquirers of the subjects to be learned. This notion reconstruccts banking education taking place in most EFL classes, especially in Algeria (Berriche & Merrouche,
2021), where teachers make deposits of knowledge into the students’ minds (Freire, 1973) (see section, 3.4.1.1, Chapter 2 for a discussion on problem posing education).

A key learning objective in task 3 was for students to understand the meaning of stereotyping and how biased thinking can lead to other social problems such as discrimination and prejudice. The task also prompted students to think of stereotypes as automatically activated, which can then leave little space and flexibility to question their validity. There is strong evidence in the social psychological literature that stereotyping, and prejudice can occur at an unconscious level; previously learned associations that primarily occur through socialization experiences can automatically be activated in the presence of a symbolic trigger, resulting in fundamentally incorrect generalizations about that group’s most representative or distinctive feature (Latu et al, 2011; Dovidio et al, 1986).

5.4 Summary

This chapter has brought together the data from lessons one and two of this learning intervention. The findings reported how scaffolded dialogues on culture, identity and stereotyping created a milieu for students to explore the multiplicity of their cultural identities, question fixated images of self and other and voice critiques of their own social context or discourses of regional stereotyping. Within the critical tradition and discoursing on critical pedagogy, Guilherme (2002) argues for the need to create a dialogic space for addressing questions of difference associated with class, race, or gender, as well as interrogating and examining any common-sense assumptions and uncritical beliefs. What these students were critically discussing in terms of their own social milieu, narratives of being othered or common knowledge of foreign cultural groups relates well with these principles and can be taken as evidence of students’ development of critical consciousness.

Looking at the data from lesson one (see extracts 5.1, 5.2, 5.3), we can note how students engaged with their varied personal and cultural identities, showing which of these identities
they take up, invest in, foreground, or give up. The data also suggested that students’ identification with these memberships is not stable, but rather is ongoing and ‘constructed across different, often intersecting, and antagonistic discourses, practices, and positions’ (Hall, 1996e, p.4). Collaborative reflection and polyphone (Bakhtin, 1986) also triggered profound processing of thinking among participants and the mode of dialogic interplay was elevated to complex levels when students realised that these identities and social categories are constructed within specific modalities of power that regulate individuals’ thinking and behaviours.

Furthermore, the findings from lesson two also showed evidence of students’ tendency to construct positive stereotypic images about certain groups, such as the British, Americans, and Asians. Here, it can be noted that these varied narratives about the ‘other’ are (re)cited, stressed, and romanticised but are rarely the agents of critical examination; hardly any problematisation of these views was raised. Such generalisations, despite being potentially benevolent, can be problematic (Byram, 1997), not because they represent a simplification of the ‘other’, but rather because they convey an ‘arrested, fixated form of representation’ (Bhabha, 1994, p. 75). Some of the data also suggested that students tended to look at the ‘self’ -more than they look at the ‘other’ whereas the ‘self’ represented the focus of attention, the ‘other’ occupied a less significant position (see findings from task two- ‘let’s think and reflect’). This could be explained by several factors, such as their lack of interest in these groups, a poor engagement with the tasks or a shortage of information about these members.

Another interesting finding in lesson two also emerged when students demonstrated agency, taking an active role in seeking and internalising conceptual knowledge. Rather than relying on my teaching input, their interactions become the source of it. Their questioning, critiquing, and challenging of ideas created a process of negotiation and interpretation of meaning, which
as Liddicoat (2019) argues can help move students towards a critical understanding of language and culture. Primarily, the aim of lesson two was not to stir up a set of misperceptions and expect the students to walk out of the classroom. Instead, I wanted to encourage students to reflect on their conceptions by bringing multiple perspectives into the conversation. Thus, helping them construct an understanding of cultural realities as fluid, overlapping and ever-changing. This can further be explored in chapter six, which will report on the students’ critical engagements with ethnic stereotypes.
Chapter Six: Critically Engaging with Ethnic Stereotyping

You could read a dozen large tomes on the history of Islam from its very beginnings, and you still wouldn’t understand what is going on in Algeria. But read 30 pages on colonialism and decolonisation and then you’ll understand quite a lot.

-Amin Maalouf, 2003

6.0 Introduction

The above epigraph was written by the time Algeria turned the page of a 10-year long period of political violence called the ‘Algerian Civil War’. From the outset, Maalouf’s interpretation may seem to throw light on the role of religious discourse in the outbreak of the Algerian civil war in the 1990s. Yet, it is clear in this statement that Algeria’s colonial history was in fact responsible for the many scenes of persecution, racialization, and ethnicization which have and still continue to shape Algeria’s socio-cultural reality to date. Indeed, the colonial divide and rule policies not only made it possible for a number of ethnic divides to take place but also for a myriad of essentialist attitudes and discourses to take root in the hearts and minds of those subjected to it. In defining the nature of stereotypes, Augoustinos & Walker (1998) explain that the development and consolidation of group stereotypes in society is not solely the product of individual cognition. Regardless of their accuracy, stereotypes are deeply ingrained in the historical, cultural, and political practices in society, and would thus require a process of deep examination and critical query to be debunked.

With this in mind, raising awareness of the subtle mechanisms and roots of stereotyping is already a big step towards the debunking of such tendencies. This approach is at the heart of the pedagogical practices implemented in this study. The focus, however, is on helping students examine how ethnic inequalities persisted throughout history to position certain ethnic groups in Algeria as the ‘significant other’. This involves bringing those assumptions to the fore for examination and exposing their accompanying ideological beliefs (Yulita, 2012, 2017). That
is to say, aiding students to notice the oppressive practices of French colonial powers towards ethnic minorities and how such practices function to strengthen the position of certain groups in relation to others.

As a post-apartheid context, Algeria provides a unique opportunity to examine the construction of ethnic stereotyping for a variety of reasons. Perhaps most notably because of its rich mosaic of ethnic groups and languages, but also because of ancient colonial attempts to divide the population and breed attitudes of resentment, mistrust, and fear of the ‘other’ - a post-colonial ‘culture’ which I need to remind my readers is still intensely prevalent despite the ongoing reforms on racial inclusion, national identity and belonging in Algeria since the 1962. The demographic profile and rich colonial history in Algeria would thus, allow several prime opportunities to tease apart hegemonic understandings of ethnic groups. To this end, I sought to develop a number of pedagogical activities to maximise the potential dissection of these biased assumptions. In chapters 4 and 5, I demonstrated the students’ tendency to view the imagined British/ American and Asian other in positive stereotypic lights. I also highlighted their appetite to bring and discuss personal experiences of being othered in relation to their ethnic and regional backgrounds. In this chapter, I present a deeper analysis of the students’ interactions with one another as they try to problematise and question the construction of ethnic stereotypes. I begin with an overview of the tasks used in lesson two and its pedagogical intent, and then continue to trace how critical consciousness manifests itself in the students’ engagements with these tasks, looking closely at how students develop awareness of stereotypes, question their validity, and probe into the ideological and historical context of stereotype construction.

6.1. Overview of Tasks

On the second run of lesson two, the students were asked to enact a series of activities purposefully designed to bring their assumptions of different ethnic groups, including their
own to the fore for examination. These activities also aimed to deepen their understanding of the social and historical systems which legitimise and further contribute to the (re) production of these assumptions in society. Each of these activity tasks ran for about ten to twenty minutes. These tasks are interrelated and intertwined with one another to broaden the learners’ perception of their social surroundings, looking closer into the realities of ethnic stereotyping and how it operates in society. Students also get the opportunity to notice how their everyday lives are bound up around these misconceptions whether they pay attention to it or not. The complexity of learning, in this case, is thus to be examined and discussed in light of the parallel development of these four tasks.

With good success, these tasks, I thought, would particularly be useful for promoting critical questioning and reflection through discussion and dialogue. While performing the tasks, I noticed that students demonstrated higher levels of engagement in comparison to their performance in the first part of lesson two (as noted in section 5.3.2, Chapter 5). In many instances, their curiosity was provoked, and higher degrees of confrontation and tension aroused as they identified with some of the ethnic groups being examined. At this point, in which the varied perspectives of these groups were exposed, each group of students took an effort to negotiate, exchange and defy bits of details that serve to disclaim or reinforce that particular stereotype. This dialogic interplay, I argue in this study, is the one that inspires the initial steps towards the elicitation of critical consciousness in the classroom.

6.1.1 Task 1: Eliciting and Challenging Starting-point Perceptions of Different Ethnic Groups (The Poster Activity)

One initial task for students was to list some of the main ethnic groups in Algeria. As this was done, they were divided into three groups, with each group named Alpha (Alia-Deena), Beta (Farah-Celia) and Sigma (Zain-Nayra-Adam). Each group was then given a large sheet of paper and asked to choose one ethnic group and list as many stereotypes that are commonly used to
describe and/or identify with this group as possible; particularly the ones that are used and recognized in daily life. To allow more freedom, I did not restrain the students with specifications or limitations in terms of which ethnic group they wanted to discuss. When finished, students were asked to rotate the sheets, and each group was then asked to either add any unlisted stereotypes and/or comment, question, or argue about the listed ones. Upon completion, all sheets were posted on the wall and each group took turns to go on stage and present their sheet, while the other two groups watched, listened, and commented accordingly. At a suitable point towards the end of this task, all students had to go through a period of silent contemplation - a reflective pause - to think about the questions of the following task.

The pedagogical aim of this task was to create an organic space for students to state some of the prevailing assumptions of the ethnic other in their entourage. Though it can be argued that eliciting stereotypes may not be a pedagogically sound decision to make, especially since it can magnify students’ misperceptions and even contribute to negative attitudes, this step was seen as relevant in the context of this study; not only because it created a space in the classroom where troubling assumptions are generally rare to discuss and reflect upon (Cohen-Elron, 2005; Misbrand, 2002) but also because it offered opportunities for students to problematise their own and their peers’ essentialised views of the ethnic other. Furthermore, the aim of the ‘rotating’ poster presentations was to accommodate an exchange of multiple perspectives by comparing and analysing different views. As such, students can act as a reflective mirror to one another: identifying assumptions, evaluating the credibility of claims, and generating multiple viewpoints by providing answers to each other’s questions and comments. Bakhtin (1986) would suggest that such a multiplicity of perspectives is vital for achieving higher levels of reasoning. That is, one’s reasoning is necessarily fostered through what has been said or evoked through the varying points of view, personal experiences and background knowledge that students bring into the discussion. According to Anderson et al (2001) ‘thinkers must hear
several voices within their own heads representing different perspectives on the issue. The ability and disposition to take more than one perspective arise from participating in discussions with others who hold different perspectives’ (p. 2). That being said, this first round of activities resulted in a number of intense debates, it was nevertheless a crucial step for generating the students’ assumptions and engaging them in (critical) dialogue with one another.

After completing their list, each pair went up to the front of the classroom and posted their sheet while the other students attended as an audience. This was an opportunity for students to listen and work together to discover commonalities and discrepancies of thought present in their sheets. The emerged discussions were thus enriched by the students’ questions, objections, contributions, and clarifications about the ideas introduced and highlighted, in addition to my interventions and scaffolding moves (see Appendix K for a sample on students’ posters).

The talk below in extract 6.1 presents the dialogic interaction between the first group of students: the Beta team, which consisted of the two non-Chaoui students Celia and Farah (as shown on their Social Identity Wheel) and the rest of the class participants who problematised and challenged Celia and Farah’s assumptions on the ethnic group of Chaouis.

**Extract 6.1 Perceptions of Chaouis (Team Beta)**

1. Celia: There are many stereotypes about Chaoui people, I hear they are hard workers.
2. Farah: They are commonly known to be beautiful.
3. Celia: They have blue eyes.
4. Alia: Well, they have pimples on their faces [Laughter].
5. Celia: I also hear they are heartless.
7. Alia: Brave, you mean brave, right?
8. Adam: How are they heartless? Give me one example.
9. Celia: This is what I hear.
10. Alia: Do you mean they have no feelings?
11. Celia: Yes.
12. Abir: What do you mean by ‘heartless’, Celia?
13. Alia: Maybe they are not romantic or emotional. They are more likely to be realistic and reasonable.
14. Celia: I’m not talking about romance and feelings.
15. Farah: They are brave.
16. Celia: I meant that their heart is ...
17. Farah: Do you mean reluctant?
18. Nayra: Maybe aflame, alert or always ready to help?
19. Adam [Replying to Nayra]: Yes, I agree. They are aflame and show great enthusiasm. They are also very alert but not reluctant.
20. Farah: Guys, this is our presentation. We are responsible for our ideas.
21. Deena: How do we say, um ...trustworthy?
22. Abir (To the class as a whole): Please, let’s talk more calmly so that we can make sense of the discussion.
23. Celia: I also hear they are generous. I met a lot of Chaoui people, and they were all very generous but again this is a stereotype.
24. Abir [Addressing Celia]: But you said you used to hear they were generous, and this was the case when you met some of them, do you think that still makes it a stereotype?
25. Celia: Well, I cannot generalize that because there might be some of them who are not.
26. Farah: I think they are just like normal people; sometimes they feel like giving and other times they feel not, so it’s not a matter of being generous or not.

The analysis of the students’ first discussion poster showed their active involvement and participation in the learning process. The group who created this poster (Celia and Farah) began by working with a number of stereotypic assumptions that have either been constructed through an active process of interaction or passive observation (see below Celia’s views of the Chaouis). Overall, students in this station voiced a number of contested views of the Chaouis and this seemed to signal a discussion atmosphere where hidden assumptions were identified and hunted for further clarification and query.
In the discussion above, Celia in line 1 is the first to voice the commonly shared assumption of the Chaouis as ‘hard working’. This comment is followed by Farah who also appears to have constructed an image of this group from the commonly shared perception of Chaouis as ‘beautiful’ (2). In line 4, however, Alia interrupts the discussion to suggest that this perception is not exactly accurate. Contrastingly, she infers a lack of facial attractiveness within this group because they ‘have pimples on their faces’. In line 5, Celia reports another perception of the Chaouis as ‘heartless. Unlike Alia’s comment in line 4, Celia’s statement does not go without challenge or criticism. Lines (6,8) show how Adam starts questioning these claims. Here, it is important to note that the word ‘heartless’ in Arabic is used to convey two opposing meanings: one is positive expressing bravery and courage, and the other is negative expressing indifference towards others. This perhaps could help explain Alia’s comment in line 7 where she tries to offer an alternative meaning to the description of ‘heartless’; her comment could both be interpreted as an attempt to allow Celia to revise her judgement or as an invitation for Adam to notice an alternative and (arguably) positive interpretation to the meaning of ‘heartless’. In response, Celia fails to articulate a reason that justifies her judgement; her comment ‘this is what I hear’ (line 9) may indicate that she is trying to distance herself from the made claim.

In lines (10-21), students jointly construct a discourse in which they try to negotiate differences in assumptions about the personality traits of Chaouis, gradually moving from negatively charged judgements (no feelings 10, reluctant 19) toward positive ones (alert, ready to help 18, trustworthy 21). Subsequently, in line 22, the discussion starts to get more intense. At this point, I try to ask for a calmer exchange of ideas, especially that everyone tries to prove his/her point of view. This demonstrates some of the difficulties that teachers may experience in mediating group discussions in class.
In the following line (23), Celia produces a complex statement in which she both reports and recognises the stereotypic view of the Chaouis as ‘generous’ but comes back to confirm it through her previous interaction with ‘a lot of Chaouis people’ who appear to have shown readiness to share more of what was already necessary or expected. At this point of the discussion, I step in to prompt Celia to think about whether she would still consider the stereotypic nature of this assumption (line 24). Here, Celia is able to critically reflect on her thought process as she seems to realise that this is a stereotype and appears to be trying to re-evaluate its validity ‘I cannot generalize because there might be some of them who are not’ (25). Similarly, in line 26, Farah concludes the presentation by refuting the accuracy of generalised views and fixing dispositions towards others.

Walking (talking) through the first discussion panel, students posed questions, listened to each other’s suggestions, and offered new lines of thinking. This dialogic inquiry was yet to incorporate a critical dimension in which, for instance, awareness of group stereotypes was raised or how stereotype use is transmitted and maintained in society. It can, however, be seen how through this dialogue, students moved from a negative and belittling image of the Chaouis as having ‘no feelings’ (10) and ‘reluctant’ (19) toward that of being ‘alert or ready to help’ (18) and ‘trustworthy’ (21). What this is beginning to show is that these imageries and common group representations are not ingrained in its members, rather they are constructed concepts that constantly change and (re) adapt situationally. In this piece of data, this ‘re-evaluation’ process could have taken place because a member of the Chaouis was present to refute such views (Adam- as shown in his Social Identity Wheel), or because students felt pushed into a process of negotiation and conflict resolution in an attempt to achieve group consensus. Particular attention needs to also be paid to the impact of teacher scaffolding and questioning in aiding students to recognise their stereotypical images and interrogate those images in relation to their previous experiences. This seemed to be the case with Celia and Farah who
can both be seen to evaluatively move away from a tendency to generalise assumptions of the Chaouis (lines 24-26).

Another interesting aspect in extract 6.1 attends to the way in which Adam’s experience in the course has encouraged him to see himself as an outsider. Being a member of the Chaoui group, Adam felt stereotyped against. As he saw himself reflected differently in the images reiterated by his classmates, specifically positioned as ‘heartless’ and ‘reluctant’, he felt the need to withhold any future judgements by taking a critical stance and questioning any narratives presented at face value. This, he demonstrated in his reflective log:

During my experience with you (Abir), I have stopped judging others relying only on what I hear from others. I remember the way they were talking about the Chaoui people; on that day when I went back home, I asked my mother if some of the things we discussed in class were true or not. (RL- Adam /December 2018).

Continuing on from the previous talk, extract 6.2 below marks the interaction that took place between group Alpha, also consisting of the two non-Chaoui students Alia and Deena (as shown on their Social Identity Wheel) and the rest of the class members. At this stage, both Alia and Deena had already read and added content of their own to the first poster created by the Beta team (Farah-Celia) on Chaouis and moved to share their responses with their peers. In this piece of data, some students seemed to voice a number of essentialist views that presented members of the Chaouis group as monolithic entities. Such positions tended to be associated with personal experiences. Growing up in a milieu of the Chaouis, Alia for example explained how she has come to form a number of assumptions with regards to their way of living, style of clothing and general lifestyle. Schneider (2005) indicates the influence of
personal experiences in the creation of social myth, and it is interesting to see the impact of this direct experience on Alia’s deeply seated assumptions of this group.

**Extract 6.2 Perceptions of Chaouis (Team Alpha)**

1. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Okay, let’s hear from the second group who wrote about the Chaoui people as well, and then compare and discuss the differences; let’s remember to use arguments and analyze what others say.

2. Alia: Okay, our neighbours were Chaoui as well but they were not known as being hard-working people because they inherited a lot of money from their ancestors and so I don’t believe they are hard-working people.

3. Deena: They are not, true.

4. Alia: Yeah, also they have no sense of fashion whatsoever, I can assure you that.

5. Nayra/Celia/Farah: Oh, no.

6. Abir [addressing Alia] Wait, is that a stereotype that you heard somewhere or is it your own conclusion?

7. Alia: I’m telling you; these people were my neighbours.

8. Celia: Come on! you can’t judge a whole generation based on one person that you have seen!

9. Alia: This family had five members.

10. Farah: Just 5? Well, how many Chaouis people do you think exist in Algeria, huh?

11. Deena: No, have you ever seen Batna before? [A nearby city which has quite a large population of Chaoui people in Algeria- commonly known for its high-fashion boutiques].

12. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Please let's not try to talk collectively; we cannot hear each other when everybody is speaking at the same time. Alia, would you please try to explain your point?

13. Alia: Okay, so first what I meant by fashion was not only related to the style of clothing, I also meant their way of thinking.

14. Deena: And lifestyle, also.

15. Celia: So, you should speak about the lifestyle not fashion.

16. Farah: What’s your proof Alia?

17. Zain: Okay, let’s move to the next description.

18. Alia: Backwards people [Laughter].

162
19. Zain: Oh my God, this one is a tough one!
20. Alia: Wait guys, trust me. I have lived around these people until I reached 12; they have a lot of money, but they don’t have a good sense of thinking, they just like traditions.
21. Celia: So, you formed your whole perception based on this family of 5 persons?
22. Deena: And lifestyle.
23. Alia: Lifestyle is rubbish!
24. Farah: Look Alia, half of my family members are married to Chaoui people, you are misrepresenting them and conflating them with Arabs.
25. Alia: Guys, we’re just discussing.
26. Celia: What I see is that you have formed your own stereotype here and believed it basically.
27. Abir: Okay! Thank you both for this presentation. Who would like to go next with Kabyle group?

In extract 6.2 above, I open the discussion by asking the second group of students to share their completed poster of the Chaouis. This strategy was intended to help the students engage in a simple compare and contrast process of their assumptions. It was hoped that any surfacing differences of opinion would help provide an entry point into argumentation and analysis on the validity of these judgements.

In line 2, Alia presents a counter-stereotype to Celia’s view in extract 6.1, who expressed that Chaouis are known to be hard-working people. In this turn, Alia openly objects to this view and justifies her perception by referring back to her lived experience with members of the Chaoui group. In line 3, Deena steps in to validate this point and over the next turn (4), Alia interferes with another heavily charged judgment of Chaouis as having ‘no sense of fashion’. Herein, I intervene to prompt Alia to elicit the logic behind her judgement by asking her to think if this assumption is based on direct experience or some socially constructed view (line 6). Lines (7-11) show how the conversation moves from a cumulative to an exploratory level (Mercer, 2000) especially when Celia starts disagreeing with Alia in (line 8), denoting how it is inaccurate to presume that one person could represent the features of a whole group. At this
point, Alia seems to continue resisting, which then pushes Farah in line 10 to question Alia about how many Chaouis she thinks exist in Algeria and the extent to which she thinks they all fit into her stereotypic attribute.

At this point, the discussion was getting intense again with each student trying to prove himself/herself right. In line 12, I intervene to invite calmer contributions and ask Alia to clarify her views in an attempt to encourage her to consider some careful reasoning. The next few lines (13-18), however, show how Alia continues to claim more rigid views of the Chaouis such as being ‘backwards’ and lacking any ‘good sense of thinking’ (lines 18, 20); two descriptions that highlight the negative images she has constructed of the Chaouis through her direct experience with them. Unlike many of his classmates, Adam (self-identified as Chaoui) was not an extensively vocal participant in this extract; nonetheless, he appeared to engage as an active listener, often observed laughing at Alia’s derogatory comments towards the Chaouis. It is not very evident why Adam did not take part in this interaction, but one possible reason may relate to the fact that he did not want to produce any more tensions in the dialogue and so, he tended to remain silent while Alia, Celia and Farah dominated the conversation.

Over the next few turns (lines 21-26), students continue to challenge Alia’s views by questioning the quality of her assumptions and prompting her to notice the fallacy in her reasoning (Celia in lines 21, 26). Also interesting in line (24), is when Farah opposes Alia’s views of the Chaouis, but at the same time expresses a subtle criticism to another ethnic group (Arabs). By using this strategy, Farah seemed to present the Chaouis as a favourably distinctive group, while depicting Arabs with negative stereotyping.

In this talk, it is clear that Alia showed no response to her classmates’ invitation to recognise potential fallacies in her thinking or provide reasonable warranting to her admitted reasons (lines 8,10,11,16). In other words, Alia’s talk did not seem to display any explicit reasoning
but rather tended to be disputational as she refused to re-consider any beliefs in consultation with others. This again indicates the pressing need for critical and reflexive thinking.

In the ensuing extract, students move to discuss the ethnic group of Kabyles; none of the students identifies him/herself with this ethnic group. Assumptions of the Kabyles were also developed in the juxtaposition between the two groups of Alpha (Alia-Deena) and Beta (Celia-Farah). The extract presented below shows that students were generally relying on attributional stereotypes to describe the ethnic group of Kabyles. Group-based hierarchies which placed the Kabyles in more dominant positions were also constructed on the part of some students who showed a strong tendency to favour this group over others.

**Extract 6.3 Perceptions of Kabyles (Team Alpha)**

1. Deena: Next, we will move to talk about Kabyle people. We have divided the stereotypes about Kabyle people into two sections: positive and negative.
2. Abir: Okay, go ahead.
3. Alia: Okay, so my dad went to the Kabyle region and told us these things: first, they are healthy people, obviously because they produce and consume large amounts of virgin olive oil.
4. Zain: Yes, sure they are.
5. Celia: Look, obviously, if they were living in a coastal area, they would have a lot of advantages including a pleasant climate, organic food, etc.
6. Alia: I know, I told you; they are very intellectual, most of them are doctors and philosophers.
7. Farah: Yeah, their city is always ranked first nationally in the A-level exams.
8. Deena: Yeah, because they have very bright students.
9. Alia: They are also rich because most of them earn well from their jobs as doctors and they have huge houses etc.
10. Farah: More of like palaces not normal houses ha-ha.
11. Celia: Yeah, true very beautiful houses.
12. Abir: Let us all listen to each other, Adam has something to ask.
13. Adam: Don’t you think that they might also have inherited all their money from their fathers- just like Chaoui people?
15. Alia: No, no, no! Let me clarify this; I have clearly explained that they earned their money because they are intellectuals, doctors and they work really hard.
16. Celia: So, you think that they made all this wealth by just working as doctors?
17. Alia: Yeah, unlike Chaouï people who are all a bunch of farmers!
18. Adam: Oh, really? Who are the biggest gold merchants in Algeria then? Aren’t they the Chaouis?
19. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Okay, okay calm down everyone, please. Let us move on with the descriptions. Go on Alia.
20. Alia: Kabyle people reject other people’s languages; they stick to the French language mostly and they hate English and even Arabic, they also allow ‘no room for mixed marriage’ and they are very selective in terms of social classes, and they tend to judge others- like rich or poor, etc.

Lines (3-11) of the talk above see the students from both groups (indicated above) taking a sequential talk to elicit some of the pervasive images of this group. Often these perceptions pointed to the distinctiveness of this group in terms of their lifestyle, intellectual capacities, and high financial status. Here both groups’ perceptions of the Kabyles bore strong similarities to each other. This signalled a smooth turn-taking exchange characterised by the accumulation of unquestioned pieces of knowledge and mutual agreement.

It is in line 12, however, where the discussion takes an interesting shift as I try to direct everyone’s attention to Adam’s questioning in line 13. Here, it seems that Alia’s previous claims with respect to members of the Chaouï group, as those whose only way to get rich is through inheritance (see extract 6.2-line 2), have provoked Adam to question if such claims can also be said about the Kabyles. Sensing the challenging tone in Adam’s questioning, Alia is not afraid to re-assert her claim that Kabyles are ‘intellectual’ and ‘hard workers’ and would thus, deserve to earn money and enjoy being rich. These claims later push Celia in line 16 to probe this assumption by asking Alia whether she believed the Kabyles solely made their fortune through their normal paying jobs. When asked, Alia does not provide any reasonable
explanation but rather constructs a hierarchical image in which the Chaouis are not only perceived as different but also deviant and inferior in class in comparison to the Kabyles. These allegations seem to rely on the fact that the Chaouis cannot be considered as high as the Kabyles especially since they lack some of their essential features (e.g., intellectual capacities, diligence, and decent financial assets).

Meanwhile, in the discussion, Adam who identified himself early in lesson one as Chaoui, was sitting at the back of the room. His body language spoke volumes; the tension on his face was very obvious and his intense eye contact indicated that he was seething in rage. In line 18, he breaks in with a brooding voice to ask Alia if she missed an important fact about his ethnic group— that as being the country’s biggest gold producers and would thus have an eminent position in society. At this point, the class atmosphere was getting really tense. As such, I tried to navigate such a complex and emotionally charged moment by asking everyone to move beyond this argument and discuss what is next (line 19). At the time, this proved to be a good strategy to manage such discomforting moments. It was, nevertheless, a good opportunity for me to revisit some of my assumptions to manage such emotional intensities in a pedagogically responsible and strategic way.

Further along the discussion, line 20 sees Alia continuing to voice her perceptions of the Kabyles. These constructions often pointed to the Kabyles’ willingness to embrace the French language and refuse Arabic or English as a dominant language. Other descriptions also invoked their marital customs and innate sense of superiority. In this passage, Alia is reproducing a number of historically rooted assumptions about the Kabyles. These notions are often referred to as the Kabyle myth which main purpose was to create an ethnic divide between Arabs and Kabyles, and to use such a division to justify colonial expansions and policies. Such discourses of difference attempted to negate the Kabyle’s Islamic morality who, according to the opinion of colonial literature, were ‘barely practising Muslims and almost never prayed’ (Agarin, 1971,
These alleged beliefs of the Berber (Kabyle) culture made them more assimilable to the superior French sects. Ultimately, this caused a major Arab-Kabyle split contrasting ‘the positive attributes of a Berber culture which was sedentary, industrious, individualistic, and democratic with the negative attributes of an Arab culture which was nomadic, lazy, deceitful, and above all–fanatically religious’ (Ruedy, 1998, p. 586).

In the above extract, we can see that students are engaging their schemas to refer to what they perceive as the naturally predisposed and characterizing features of the Kabyles as ‘healthy’ ‘intellectual’ and ‘rich’ (lines 3-11). When voicing these sets of attributes, I suggest that students were drawing on their personal and cultural knowledge of this group (Bakhtin, 1986). This may in part be attributable to the exposure of the Berber culture through popular media. The cultural, linguistic, and societal patterns of the Kabylia region are often broadcasted on the local radio, tv networks and newspapers (Alauda, 1999); and very often, members of this group are depicted in narrowly stereotypic lights which overlook the complexities surrounding their reality. This perhaps could explain why students failed to see the diversity within this group in light of such popular media depictions. Further data evidence (lines 13-17) also shows that there was a tendency to construct binary oppositions that place two opposing groups against each other (i.e., Chaouis vs. Kabyles). This not only creates boundaries between groups of people but also suggests an implicit hierarchical assumption that one group is superior to the other. This was clearly illustrated in Alia’s comments upon being prompted by Adam to warrant her assumptions of the Kabyles.

In extract 6.4 below, students move to discuss another set of assumptions on the Kabyle group; this time presented by team Beta which also consisted of the two non-Kabyle students Farah and Celia. The discussion in this extract was also characterised by a somehow oppositional and defensive tone of thinking as certain students resisted any calls to reflect on their assumptions.
Extract 6.4 Perceptions of Kabyles (Team Beta)

1. Abir: I can see that in Celia and Farah’s poster, you have written the words ‘no religious sense’ and ‘traitors’ referring to Kabyle people, is that right?
2. Celia: Yes, it’s a stereotype.
3. Farah: Yeah, especially ‘traitors’ because they are always considered as such.
4. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Okay, let’s remember this idea then. We will deal with it in the next activity.
5. Nayra: Hold on, I read something that sounds very contradictory to me. On one side of the poster, you wrote ‘support mixed marriage’ and on the other side, it’s written ‘no room for mixed marriage’.
6. Alia: Yes, true, they don’t allow external marriages.
7. Celia: No, Alia’s group wrote ‘Kabyle are against mixed marriages, but some members in our group have witnessed the contrary, so we have written ‘support mixed marriage’ as a counterargument.
8. Alia: No, but what you have seen is an exception only.
9. Celia: No, this is not an exception you are wrong, a lot of Kabyle women are married to men from different ethnic backgrounds.
10. Alia: A very limited number.
11. Farah: Okay, what about marrying foreigners, then?
12. Alia: Well, that’s a different topic; they marry those because they are handsome and rich. Look, even in my poster about the Kabyle group, I wrote ‘classism’. They do select people; you would need to be rich and good-looking.
13. Celia: Okay, so what I understand is being Kabyle or not does not matter as long as you have the money, social class and looks!
14. Alia: Yeah, but still it’s an exception; power, money and physical looks are exceptions, otherwise no mixed marriage is allowed.
15. Celia: No, I don’t think so.

In extract 6.4 above, the students moved to discuss group Beta’s worksheet of the Kabyles. In line 1, I try to direct the students’ attention to the assumptions put forward about the Kabyles’ religious affiliation or description as ‘traitors’. By so doing, I attempt to scaffold the exploration of these judgements as social and historical products in the next activity (line 4).
For the next few lines, there emerged a couple of instances that reflected a vibrant pattern of interaction between both groups of Alpha and Beta. These patterns illustrated an ongoing and reciprocal process focused on the challenging of claims, evaluation of reasoning and offering of alternative viewpoints (lines 8-15). This, for example, can be noted in the students’ discussion on the reality of interethnic marriages in the region of Kabylia. Whereas some students, such as Alia argued that Kabyles do not support mixed marriages (line 7), other students such as Celia did not find this idea as compatible with their existing knowledge of this group. In criticising Alia’s assumption, Celia implies that a high number of Kabyle women are in fact involved in an inter-ethnic marriage relationship. In so doing, she presents a counter-stereotypical narrative to that posited by Alia (line 9). Another attempt to challenge Alia’s claim in line 7 is also initiated by Farah (line 11) where she tries to prompt consideration of the growing propensity of mixed marriages between Kabyles and foreigners in present-day Algeria. That being the case, she tries to oppose Alia’s claim by asserting that the practice of marriage did not remain endogamic in Kabylia since interethnic marriages have been an exception for a long time. In response, Alia steps back from the claim she introduced earlier in line 9 and repositions the argument that inter-ethnic marriages do occur in Kabylia, but only when certain social and economic considerations are involved in the process. In an attempt to strengthen this position, she shifts the conversation perspective toward a number of accounts which suggest that Kabyles are likely to rank people according to their economic status, power relations and other divisions, especially when it comes to partner choice (line 12, 14). Here, it is hard to overlook that exposure to opposing views by Celia and Farah has made Alia resort to an even more rigid (and sometimes negative) perspective about this group and its members (see lines 8,10,12,14).

In the discussion that follows, students are invited to a new stationary by team Sigma who presented their worksheet on the ethnic groups of Arabs and Beni-Mzabs. The general rule for
task one was for every two students to be assigned a particular ethnic group. However, As is shown in extracts 6.5 and 6.6 below, group Sigma presented two groups with a total of three members (Nayra-Adam-Zain). Essentially this was because one student was absent, but also because I wanted to cover as many ethnic groups as possible. At the time, I did not see any problem with this kind of misalignment; the overall aim was to bring these internalised assumptions to the surface for analysis and examination and that is what students appeared to do.

Excerpt 6.5 below illustrates students’ talk when group Sigma moved to discuss their perceptions of the ethnic group of Arabs. At first, the level of critical engagement remained quite shy in this extract. That is to say, there was little critique or challenging of the ideas elicited about this group. Nonetheless, the nature of discussion took a different turn with my attempt to move the dialogue further and problematise Alia’s statement of Arabs as ‘problematic’ (line 16 below).

**Extract 6.5 Perceptions of Arabs (Team Sigma)**

1. Nayra: Okay, we will now talk about Arabs. We don’t have much information, but we will share what we know.
2. Abir: Okay, no problem.
3. Nayra: First, they are separated and don’t have an original identity.
4. Adam: Well, they don’t have their own culture!
5. Zain: They don’t have their own tribe.
6. Nayra: They have thoughts from different ethnic groups like Kabyle, Chaoui, etc. So, they are a mixture somehow.
7. Alia: Yeah, even western thoughts. Just like us for example, we are Arabs, but we think like French or American people, the same thing basically.
8. Celia: Our team wrote down ‘good nature’.
9. Alia: We added hospitality.
11. Nayra: What do you mean by ‘good nature’?
12. Celia: It means they are kind.
13. Zain: No, not the majority.
14. Celia: Yes, I know... this is a stereotype. You guys keep interrupting me, I am not stating my personal opinion. I am telling you about what’s commonly known or prevailed in the society.
15. Adam/Zain: Ah, okay. If this is a stereotype, then it’s fine.
16. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Okay, good. I can also see here the phrase ‘problematic people’, who wrote this?
17. Farah: Alia did.
18. Alia: Yeah, I mean that they always complain, make issues, problems, and arguments.
19. Nayra: But all people do that!
20. Adam: Yeah, true.
22. Celia: Also, they are open-minded.
23. Zain: No, what are you saying? Kabyles are open minded, not Arabs.
24. Celia: No, Kabyles are ‘narrow-minded’. We Arabs are ‘open-minded’.
25. Alia: Arabs are not open-minded.
26. Celia: But why?
27. Alia: Okay, I can say that we are a little bit ‘open-minded’ and that’s because we have been heavily influenced by the Western mentality, but in a very wrong way.

In the opening of this excerpt, Nayra starts the presentation indicating the lack of information they were able to generate about this ethnic group. With my accord, she continues to voice information in the next line about the Arabs’ lack of an ‘original identity’. This view is further supported by her team members Adam and Zain, suggesting that members of this group lack their own distinct culture and/or tribe (lines 4-5). In Line 6, Nayra adds that a number of cultural attributes from the different groups of Kabyles and Chaouis have influenced Arabs. The next turn sees Alia who identified herself as Arab (see table 3.1 on Participants’ Ethnic Backgrounds, chapter 3) drawing attention to the impact of western thoughts on the Arabic identity. Generally speaking, students in these turns seemed to share some high consensus over the hybrid nature of Arab culture and up until line 8, the sequence of talking was characterised
by smooth turn-taking. Here, we can see that students were building knowledge of this group with a minimum number of explanations or warranting of the assumptions presented.

Over the next few lines, Celia and Alia continue to reveal the assumption that Arabs are ‘good-natured’ and ‘hospitable’ (lines 8-9). Upon being asked to justify and explain these assumptions by Adam, Nayra, and Zain in lines (10-13), Celia voices quite an unexpected statement in line 14 to distance herself from the made claim. Here, she emphasises her awareness of the stereotypical nature of this statement. She continues to highlight that every claim she had made so far was a mere reflection of some of the prevailing assumptions associated with this group. Important to note here is that the origin and validity of these salient notions i.e., ‘hospitality’ and ‘kindness’ remained unpacked. Nevertheless, students at this point seemed to acknowledge these notions as widely accepted stereotypes.

Followingly in line 16, I try to direct the students’ attention to Alia’s assumption of Arabs as ‘problematic people’. In the lines that follow (18-21) Nayra, Adam, and Zain project an implicit disagreement with Alia, in the sense that making complaints or arguing about certain issues is a common characteristic of all human beings. While Alia does not seem to comment on this, Celia on the other hand, jumps in with another assumption that Arabs are open-minded (line 22). This view is then countered by Zain who believed that it is more accurate to attribute features of open-mindedness to the ethnic group of Kabyles (line 23). In response, Celia in the next line takes a defensive stance, attributing the unwanted traits of ‘narrow-mindedness’ to the Kabyles and affirming the opposite with regard to her own ethnic group i.e., Arabs. This may be seen as representing her attempt to reinforce a positive group image but can also indicate how she strategically attempted to rationalize and/or justify her individual view of Arabs as open-minded upon being challenged by Zain (line 23). In the following line (25), Alia continues to object to Celia’s view of Arabs as open-minded but then again comes back in line
27 to acknowledge the gradual pace of openness in the Arab culture induced by the influence of western regimes.

In the discussion that proceeded, students can be seen to have moved from a stage of cumulative talk, in which they were noted to build on each other’s knowledge with a very thin layer of rationale (lines 1-7), into an exploratory mode of dialogue (Mercer, 2000) in which reasoning is questioned and claims are critiqued (lines 8-15). The example given above also demonstrated my role as a teacher/facilitator in prompting reflection; this can be noted in line (16) where the students’ attention was directed toward Alia’s essentialising assumption of Arabs as ‘problematic people’, which then helped to establish the discussion at a more interrogatory level.

Contrary to the above-discussed excerpts, in which more challenging and agitation were noticed, students in the final station (i.e., the ethnic group of Beni-Mzab) showed a slower pace of questioning (see extract 6.6 below). In many instances, students consistently sought consensus and avoided challenging each other. As such, the talk below can be seen to take a more ritual nature, with little room for a critical engagement. Whether my mediation played a role to shape the talk into a more reflexive one will be unfolded in the analysis of this next talk episode.

**Extract 6.6 Perceptions of Beni Mzabs (Team Sigma)**

1. Abir: Okay, thanks so much Alia and Celia. Shall we proceed with a new group now? Zain, Alia, Nayra, and Adam, would you like to share what you wrote on your poster?
2. Zain: Okay, I will start by talking about the first group ‘Beni-Mzab’. We know very little information about this group, but we will share this limited knowledge. First, they are very strict when it comes to religion, but in a very wrong way.
3. Adam: Yes, they have wrong ideas about Islam.
4. Zain: What I mean is that they are super strict, they don’t allow any other.
5. Farah: Norms?
6. Adam: No, we mean that they don’t even allow a woman or a young lady to go out.
In this extract, the floor is given to team Sigma to present their worksheet. None of the students identified him/herself with the ethnic group of Beni-Mzab. At the beginning of the presentation, Zain indicates that they have very minimal information about this ethnic group. The next few lines see students’ attributing traits of religious strictness, superiority, and distance to this group with lesser and lesser initiatives to challenge and/or examine the
presented assumptions. On many turns, students were seen to appeal to one another’s pre-conceived assumptions of this group as a reliable source of information. Each student was building on what the other said by paraphrasing a postulated claim (lines 2-3), completing a sentence begun by the other (lines 9-10), or asking each other about certain aspects and taking answers with a form of affirmation (lines 4-8 and 23-27). The data analysed in this extract also indicated several expressions of agreement using words such as ‘yes, 100 per cent’ (7) and ‘yeah, that’s true’ (8). It was clear on these occasions that the talk continued to display the characteristics of cumulative discussion (Mercer, 2000) in which any interaction between the presenting team and the opposing one only occurred in the context of either adding new assumptions or validating the presented ones.

As can be seen in this extract, there was little to no evidence of reflection and/or questioning of assumptions. That is to say, none of the students seemed to identify the fallacy in the other’s reasoning; hasty generalisations were abundantly elicited as all members of the Beni-Mzab group were expected to conform to one pattern- that which depicted them as sectarian, superior and unitary. But perhaps what marks the distinctiveness of this interplay is the absence of my attempts to expand the students’ consciousness and push them to re-examine their assumptions of this group from a critical lens. Different to extract 6.1, I did not help students to further justify their stance or identify contradictions in their statements (lines 12, 24). Unlike extract 6.2 (line 6), I did not encourage them to critically evaluate the conditions under which they came to build their assumptions of this group, nor did I prompt a careful consideration of the variability of behaviour and way of living within this context. Indeed, it seems that my role in soliciting thoughtful discussions and helping students make the criteria by which they evaluate the other as explicit as possible (Byram, 1997) is highly important if critical consciousness and criticality is to be promoted in these spaces.
As demonstrated throughout this section, the group poster activity provided an opportunity for students to engage in an ongoing dialogue where they acted as critical mirrors to one another: identifying assumptions, judging the acceptability of claims and debunking fallacies. As shown in the discussions above, such a process was not always easy or straightforward. There were times when some students remained resistant and did not want to decentre from their conventional ways of seeing the ethnic other. There were other interactional moments when students did not engage reflexively and were shown to build on each other’s ideas as though they assumed the accountability of their assumptions (Mercer, 2000). This posits the challenge of how to deal with such complex constructions that take root in ‘dominant ideological frameworks which provide the conditions for normativity’ (McConachy, 2018, p.41). Time, therefore, needs to be spent in the classroom to interrogate the layers of these ideologically sanctioned assumptions of the cultural and/or ethnic other. This can, for example, be achieved through the uncovering of these assumptions as products of historical or colonial ramifications leading to the creation and maintenance of these constructions. This will be explored in detail in the next few tasks.

6.1.2. Task 2: Provoking Dissonance Through Multimodality

As seen in the previous section, students tended to stereotype the ethnic groups of Chaouis, Kabyles, Arabs and Beni-Mzabs in both negative and positive ways. For this task as well as the next, I adopt an intervention strategy based on the theory of Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1978) to create a state of dissonance and encourage students to think in less stereotypical ways (see section entitled ‘Transformative Learning’ in Chapter 2 for more details). That is to say, I pursue a rational approach to provoke less biased evaluations of both in-group and outgroup members by pairing a representation of the stereotyped group with contrasting information and/or positive images that would either implicitly or explicitly encourage learners to re-think the accuracy of these taken for granted assumptions. By the same
token, I also draw on Bakhtin’s (1986) notion of polyphony to create a multiple variation of voices, points of views and discourses (including the texts and voices of authors, myself and the students) to enrich the discursive space of my classroom.

To clarify for the reader, I was not able to locate any learning material that targeted the students’ assumptions of the Chaouis, therefore, I substituted this group with another social category (i.e., the Oranis) which I thought would bring more fruitful and engaging discussions in the classroom. Table 6.1 below illustrates the pedagogical model and ethnic groups used in this task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHNIC GROUP</th>
<th>EXISTING PERCEPTIONS</th>
<th>THE LEARNING MATERIAL</th>
<th>MATERIAL EXPLAINED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabyles</td>
<td>All Kabyles are shallowly religious. All Kabyles are assimilationists to French sects.</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>The basis of this picture is to juxtapose the bottle of wine as a symbol of alcohol consumption with that of the quill pen which is used to signify all the important scholarly works by Kabylia’s Muslim leaders during colonial periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beni-Mzabs</td>
<td>All Beni-Mzabs people are traders. All Beni-Mzabs people live in unurbanized premises.</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>The region of Ghardaia (Beni-Mzab) is generally depicted with its manufacturing industry and highly trading systems. Nevertheless, the city harbours a contemporary touch of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Oranis
All Oranis adopt quite a liberal lifestyle and are shallowly religious: prevailing club culture, alcohol consumption and partying practices.

The city of Oran is generally depicted with its liberal lifestyle including the harbouring of pubs, bars and nightclubs. Nevertheless, it was the only Algerian city that established the first football club in Africa and the Arab world in 1897. This makes it a source of national pride. This idea is demonstrated in the soccer ball as opposed to the disco ball usually found in nightclubs and leisure places.

Table 6.1 Pedagogical Model for Task 2.

The data extracts presented below illustrate the class discussions after the students were given time to quietly observe the images shown in table 6.1 and discuss their interpretation with the class. These next few extracts aim to show how students attempted to de-construct or sometimes even re-construct some of the stereotypes that had been elicited and critiqued in earlier discussions.

Even though the task was intended to encourage students to disrupt their stereotypical constructions of these groups, for some students this did not prove to be the case. The data
shown below in extract 6.7 show that for some students, such as Alia, stereotypical views of the ethnic other had not been disrupted, and at times been reinforced. Indeed, as stated previously in chapter two, the main problem with stereotyping is that it portrays a specific category of people as homogenous, thus, toppling the assertion that certain forms of behaviour and dispositions are attributed to all the members belonging to that group (Schneider, 2005). It appears, however, that a few students such as Celia and Saba were beginning to notice that generalised inferences, traits, attributes, or behaviours of a certain group should not be transferred to all members belonging to it.

**Extract 6.7 Resisting to Learn**

1. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Now that you have had some time to closely look at these images, can you share what you understand from it?
2. Nayra: Kabyle people drink alcohol, wow!
3. Alia: YES, they do. Mine says ‘Beni- Mzab’ are very stingy and unwilling to spend, YES...Oran is a city of alcohol and nightlife, YES!
4. Celia: You know something Alia? If a person from ‘Beni Mzab’ was present here with us today and caught you talking about them this way, he would have some serious talking to do with you.
5. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Okay, let’s start with picture one. Read what’s written on top and let’s try to analyze it together.
6. Saba: Okay, I will start. The idea behind this picture is that unlike what is commonly known about Kabyle people always consuming alcohol, skipping fasting during Ramadan, etc. These people are also known for being respected scientists and scholars.
7. Abir: historically speaking, the majority of religious scholars were Kabyles.
8. Alia: So, what should we do, ignore such an idea?
9. Abir (To the class as a whole): What do you think?
10. Alia: I think that we shouldn’t be thinking about what happened in the past; we need to construct our views and perceptions based on what is happening nowadays.
11. Nayra: Your history defines you, if you know your past, you can find your way to the future.
12. Celia: We could interpret the picture in the sense that seeing Kabyle people drinking alcohol and missing religious obligations does not negate the fact that there are also Kabyle people who are religiously committed, who try to follow the rules of their religion and do what’s morally right for themselves and others.

13. Saba: Look, the point of this picture is to make you accept the idea that immoral and dishonest acts in society do not only exist within one specific cultural group like Kabyles or Beni-Mzabs because you could simply find any of these negative qualities in any other person who belongs to any other group. Unfortunately, this idea is very pervasive in our country, we keep saying that Kabyles are not religiously committed and stuff but in reality, you could find this quality in any other group.

In this extract, the students were invited to share their thoughts on the images presented in task 2. Alia is the first to respond to the task, attempting to rebound some of the stereotypic judgements shown in figures 6.1-6.3 (table 6.1) (line 3). From the beginning, Alia is seen to resist the material presented in this task, explicitly using the information presented in the images to further derogate the ethnic groups of Beni-Mzabs, Kabyles and Oranis. Here, resistance is recognised as an attempt to weaken the presented counterevidence, and thus (re)produce and/or prompt the fixity of these accounts. In response, Celia in the next line is quick to echo that a member of the Mzabi ethnic group would not be so content to hear Alia’s rigid judgment in line 3. Following my second call to share ideas, Saba shares quite an elaborate interpretation of the concept in Figure 6.1. Her comment in line 6 serves to invoke an awareness of the biased conclusions assumed of the Kabyle group members. In her comment, she posits the quality of their religious faith by referring to their ‘respected scholars’.

This leads me in the next line (7) to elaborate on the role that Kabyle scholars played in the development of Muslim theology throughout history. In response, Alia in line 8 is seen to question whether these biased judgments should be ignored. At this point, I did not want to provide any direct information or impose any evaluative statements. Instead, I withheld any
views and invited students to collectively share and construct an answer to address Alia’s questioning (line 9).

Whereas Alia returns in line 10 to suggest that one needs to construct his/her perceptions of the other in light of contemporary events, Nayra in line (11) indicates the significance of one’s past to his/her future. Important in the lines that follow, is the further emergence of a sophisticated interpretation by Celia in line 12, where she notes that these behavioural expectancies should not be generalised mainly because they do not apply to every individual of the Kabyle group. As such, it is surely that some Kabyles neither drink alcohol nor skip Islamic duties, so there may be some incorrect generalisations that all Kabyles are shallowly religious, when in fact only a small minority is. This kind of reasoning is also echoed in Saba’s comment (line 13), who adds her thoughts concerning the use of behavioural generalisations with the claim that it would be irrational to rely on these generalisations to draw inferences about the other; simply because everyone has equal chances of adopting these behavioural patterns.

Whereas the talk here has begun with a problematic reading of the material presented i.e., Alia validating stereotypes, other students can be seen to make some useful steps towards a more critical view of the ethnic other. Specifically, through Celia and Saba’s interpretations, we can see how the perceived interchangeability of the Kabyle other is relatively getting diminished. Although Celia and Saba did not necessarily reject the idea that stereotypes may have a kernel of truth, they emphasised the need to perceive the ethnic other based on his/her unique and individual traits. What is important here is that the individuality and uniqueness of the members in this group are emphasised and the perceived entitativity is no longer used for inducing assimilation to the group stereotype. This can be seen as an important step toward a more complex and de-essentialised perception of otherness (Holliday et al., 2010).
In extract 6.8 below, students continued to share their interpretations of the images presented above, this time with Zain’s reference to another pervasive stereotype about Orani people. This led students to a critical talk on the situational factors that exacerbated such assumptions of the Oranis, including the setting in which Raï music originated, the type and degree of influence Raï music has promoted in this setting and how such behaviours were thought to give rise to stereotypes towards people in this context, especially in an environment that promotes conventionalism and submission to religiously sanctioned standards of behaviour (Deeb, 2007). Below, I present more details on the emergence of Raï music in Oran and its potentially contributing role in this process of stereotyping.

**Extract 6.8 Dissecting the Social Construction of Stereotypes: The Case of Oranis**

1. Zain: Just like what people say about Oran (the second major coastal city in Algeria) that it has nightclubs and stuff.
2. Alia: Yes, it is actually called ‘Oran Deuxième Paris’ ...Oran is a catastrophe indeed, people there live in a ‘haram’ (prohibited by Islamic law) manner to a great extent!
4. Zain: That’s not true. I have seen a documentary about Oran with regards to resembling Oran to Paris ...etc., Believe me, the results of this survey were very surprising; it showed the complete opposite; people there did not agree with most of the unacceptable behaviours going on there.
5. Saba: Yeah.
6. Farah: Yeah, we know that what we hear about Oran is not true.
7. Saba: These clubs only exist in the suburbs of Oran, people who want to go there and party would actually need to travel long distances to find such places. You would never find these clubs in the city centre.
8. Alia: Could someone explain to me why clubs exist in a Muslim country in the first place?
9. Celia: Look, Sidi Belabbas and Oran are well-known cities for harbouring the first Raï musicians in Algeria; that explains why people always associate musical concerts and the party clubs with these two cities in Algeria.
10. Nayra: Yeah, in the beginning, only a few people used to attend and then when this kind of music became so popular, everyone started to visit these two cities to attend these specific rai musical bands.

11. Celia: Even the major musical festivals used to take place in the big cities such as Oran and Algiers, simply because that's where Raï music originated from.

12. Nayra: Yeah, Oran was the centre of this, but nowadays this has become very pervasive in most cities such as Annaba, Algiers, and other cities.

13. Celia: Yeah, even here in city Y, we have clubs and all...we just don’t know where they are located.

14. Nayra: Yeah, we just don’t know their locations.

The first concept to emerge in Extract 6.8, which Alia persistently invokes in line 2 is the discourse on Oran as a city that resembles Paris and would thus surely incubate a ‘haram’ lifestyle. To further understand the extract above, I offer a brief summary and discussion on the evolution and context of Raï music in Algeria and its relationship with the construction of negative assumptions about Orani people and the city of Oran in general. Spread over a large area, the Orani population was characterized by great diversity. During the colonial period, Oran became a multi-ethnic context with the French, Spanish and Arabs living in different parts of the city. This vibrant and multi-ethnic dimension made Oran known as ‘Little Paris’ and contributed to the emergence of a wide range of musical formats, among which was the Raï music. Native to the Orani Algerian music, Raï quickly appealed to young people who ran counter to the refined, and traditional artistic music at that time. Despite such appeal, Raï music was banned from tv and local broadcast media in the early 1970s, mainly gaining its popularity in the milieus of nightclubs and cabarets hangouts in Oran (Kefalonia, 2001). Ever since, Raï has become controversial music and was often contested in many contexts; mainly because of its provocative lyrics and opposition to Islamic values (Rowland, 2016). It is assumed that many of these factors have since contributed to the creation of a biased image that still continues to breed a sense of religious inadequacy towards Oranis.
In an effort to problematise this view or perhaps prompt Alia to consider an alternative perspective, Zain in line 3 mentions that he had explored a documentary about Oran and found that most of its inhabitants were not supportive of such claims. In the lines that follow (5-14), it can be noticed how students like Saba (line 7), Celia and Nayra (lines 7-14) tried to ‘deconstruct’ the stereotype and break it for analysis; highlighting that this view was void of any validity given the fact that Raï music originated in the city of Oran in the 1920s and was the first city to host these musical events. This argument cast light on the social influence of musical concerts and especially its close relationship with alcohol consumption, and how this eventually led to the construction of stereotypic views that categorize people from Oran in controversial ways and stereotype them as liberal, western, and especially religiously uncommitted. Other students such as Nayra (line 12) added that these kinds of ‘partying’ behaviours also exist in most parts of Algeria, even in their hometown (city Y), which is highly regarded as a conservative region in comparison to Oran.

In this extract, we can see instances of a deconstruction process vis-à-vis the underlying causes of certain stereotypes of the Oranis. Here, the learners dissect the external events that may have created and exacerbated the use of stereotypes or attributions of Orani people as religiously shallow and/or living in a ‘haram manner’. Throughout this extract, students can be seen to construct knowledge on the emergence of Raï music in Oran and what effects that had had on the proliferation of nightclubs and cabarets in the city. They then come to the conclusion that such stereotypic eliciting events are what causes attributions of religious shallowness accessible in memory with regards to people from Oran. Another point of interest can also be seen in the way students notice how such ‘partying practices’ are also taking place in other cities, such as their hometown. What this implies is that the associative link which so exclusively associates Oran with ‘liberal practices’ is no longer valid; simply because no other cities and/or members of any ethnic groups are immune to such behavioural practices.
Throughout this dialogue, students shared valuable knowledge that they could use in the future to disrupt the status quo discourse about Orani people and challenge the different (rigid) dispositional inferences that are drawn regarding the behaviour of its members. This kind of dialogic thinking is one that fosters critical consciousness through ‘an examination of societal and individual contradictions by questioning fundamental assumptions and constantly reconstructing ever new interpretations of the world’ (Martin, 2003, p.414). This realisation may not potentially have happened had I adopted a banking style of education and given students a list of information to be regurgitated in assessment tasks (Freire, 2000). It must, however, be mentioned that students’ point regarding the influence of Rai music and partying culture as a priming event for the construction and prevalence of stereotypic associations of Oranis may be contestable as I myself was not able to locate any literature that supports these inferences. Nonetheless, the students’ attempt to dissect the origin of these socially shaped representations and provide the social and historical events that increase their accessibility indicates that they began to develop a critical voice which reflects on and questions the logic behind these generalised perceptions of otherness.

Following the discussion in extract 6.8, I tried to push the students’ thinking by asking them whether the images they had seen in task 2 presented a true reflection of these groups. This triggered a new line of enquiry in terms of the mechanisms by which certain attributes come to be associated with particular social groups, as well as the mediating role of interpersonal communication in the transmission of these stereotypes.

**Extract 6.9 Thinking Critically about the Social Transmission of Stereotypes**

1. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Let me ask you something. Do these pictures represent a true reflection of these people? Why/ Why not?
2. Zain: No.
3. Deena: No, this is stereotyping.
4. Nayra: Yes, it is a true reflection; it does not exist in the whole city, though.
5. Adam: Yeah.
6. Celia: It is a true reflection, but only with a few people, a specific kind of people.
7. Alia: You mean minority?
8. Celia: Not necessarily, we don’t know the real percentage of people who actually relate to these characteristics.
9. Abir: (To the class as a whole) But don’t you think that these characteristics can exist in anyone’s persona, no matter where he/she comes from?
10. Adam/Celia/Nayra/Deena: Yes, true!
11. Nayra: But they are more known for this. When you mention these characteristics, your mind automatically starts thinking about this group in society.
12. Celia: I think that this type of people (i.e., greedy, get drunk and break fasting during Ramadan in public or attend club parties, etc.) represent a minority in their own group, but the issue is that these kinds of behaviours became so well-known and prevalent among others in society because these people have no problem showing it to others. I mean they do these things, and they are okay with others seeing them doing it.
13. Saba [addressing Celia]: You are still accusing them and it’s wrong. Look, I will explain to you how this happened. For example, let’s suppose me and Farah did a little survey about Kabyle regions and found instances of alcohol consumption, nightclubs, and stuff. Alia for example never heard of this information before, but once she hears it from the two of us, the chances of her believing this information from both of us are a lot higher than her doubting it. Automatically, this information starts spreading among people.

Extract 6.9 above picks up on the previous discussion in extract 6.8. In response to my question in line 1, Zain and Deena in lines (2-3) both articulate the idea that these images represent a stereotype-based expectation, whereas Nayra, Adam, and Celia (lines 4,5,6) suggest that stereotypes do have a kernel of truth, at least with regards to a small number of people. In line 9, I step in to ask the students whether these particular traits can be applied to any individual regardless of his/her national origin. Herein, students seem to agree that geographical placements are not a good predictor of any similar traits of a particular group (line 10). Nayra, however, in Line 11 suggests that some traits tend to automatically cluster around a specific
group of people because they are more notable for this. In response, Celia in line 12 explains that stereotypes take a normative character because certain members of the stereotyped group are not reluctant to manifest such traits in public; this leads other people to perceive them in ways that are only consistent with that particular stereotype. Following, Saba in the next turn (line 13) opposes this idea, implying that stereotypical perceptions should not be characterised as valid inferences of reality. She then indicates that stereotypes are products of a social and discursive process that occurs in the course of everyday communication.

This piece of data showed a pattern of interaction that was prompted by my initial questioning, which triggered a series of inquiries into the credibility of stereotypes and their relative degree of accuracy. Specifically, my questioning created a context in which the students were able to notice how the link between certain attributes and the specific group presented is not a fixed association (See lines 1,9). An analytical frame within which students began to ask questions, probe the credibility of these assumptions, and generate observations was also created; this provided a reflexive loop into the variable and contextually specific nature of stereotype content. In other words, students began to notice that stereotypes are shaped contextually and discursively through an active process of influence among people who share the same socio-cultural context. Individuals are, therefore, agents in the creation and dissemination of these misleading attributions through the process of social transmission.

In this next short segment of talk which builds on the previous one, the dialogue takes an interesting turn when stereotyping tendencies once again appear on the discussion table after being critically dissected in the previous talks. In my attempt to identify instances of critical consciousness, I align with the assumption that the nature of dialogue is unpredictable, and the development of skills for critical awareness does not necessarily follow a linear line of progression. Therefore, I attempt to place more emphasis on the different manifestations of criticality that surface in the students’ talk, including but not limited to the identification of
hidden assumptions biases, and illogical fallacies in others’ thinking, the examination of assumptions from multiple perspectives, attention to the contextual variability of behaviour, and awareness of the dominant, and sometimes oppressive, social, political or cultural structures that help to construct or reproduce stereotypes, thus viewing these as structural problems (Carlson et al, 2006; Houser and Overton, 2001; Watts et al, 2011).

**Extract 6.10 Re-Constructing Previous Stereotypes: The Case of Kabyle People**

1. Abir: (To the class as a whole) This is actually a very good point that you made. Where do you think all of these stereotypes originated from in the first place?
2. Saba: Ignorance and lack of knowledge.
3. Farah: Jealousy.
4. Nayra: Well, it could be that their ancestors were Jewish, I mean you never know. Maybe they were a mixed group, maybe their ancestors did not know about Islam, and this idea about them not following Islamic teachings spread over the years.
5. Celia: They even refused Islamic expansion.
6. Nayra: Yeah, exactly and they stayed tied to that idea.
7. Farah: Honestly speaking, whenever I’m about to meet someone who is Kabyle, I immediately think he/she drinks alcoholic beverages [Laughter].
8. Saba: Yeah, true! [Laughter].
9. Celia: No, I don’t really think that way.
10. Farah: But I’m not 100% sure about that, there is always space for skepticism.
12. Celia: I mean, even here in our city, there aren’t that many Kabyle people but still you find those who consume alcohol.
13. Farah: Yeah, true. Arabs love to drink. Ever since ancient times, Arabs are generally known to enjoy alcohol consumption.
14. Celia: Well, don’t say that, Farah; you are ruining everything that we have been discussing until now! You can’t generalize this idea by saying ‘all Arabs like to consume Alcohol’; we need to learn how to discuss actions as performed by individuals, not groups.
After the discussion on the social transmission and accuracy of stereotypes in extract 6.9, students moved to discuss the origins of stereotypes. Here, the majority of students chose to discuss the negative stereotypes which often pointed to the Kabyle’s willingness to abandon Islamic teachings and adopt a liberal lifestyle. In so doing, they were able to generate a number of factors which may have helped disseminate such negative representations of this group in society, among which were, for example, the lack of contact with this group, group competition or deeply rooted assumptions which resisted change (lines 2-4). It is in line 7, however, when Farah constructs a stereotype about the Kabyles with regards to the drinking issue— an evaluation which Saba seems to align with (line 8). She, however, returns in line 10 to imply that her judgments are not entirely adequate as there is ‘always room for scepticism’. In line 12, Celia makes an interesting contribution by articulating the view that alcohol consumption also exists in non-Kabyle regions, such as their hometown. In this vein, Celia’s thoughts suggest a critical observation in which the association which so exceptionally links the stereotypic patterns of drinking with Kabyles is deconstructed. While Farah in line 13 seems to agree with Celia’s position in line 12, she returns to contradict this view by formulating a new stereotypic view of Arabs as the ones who ‘love to drink’. In following up on Farah’s comment, Celia does not agree with Farah’s assessment of Arabs. Adding an important perspective to the discussion, Celia stresses the need to avoid generalisations and perceive others through their unique behavioural practices rather than their membership in a particular group.

Through this multimodal engagement task, we see some students developing the understanding that a group’s perceived entitativity should not be used to make attributional inferences about its individual group members. In essence, it is this perceived tendency to view group members as uniform and cohesive that paves the way for overgeneralization and stereotyping (Spenser et al, 2007). As they progressed through the task, students also adopted a critical stance by
questioning the conditions under which stereotypes are most likely to be formed; what kind of pre-conditions helped increase the tendency of stereotyping against particular groups such as the Oranis, and what role does communication have on the formation of group stereotypes. Other segments of the data also marked instances of resistance in which certain students failed to notice the presented counterevidence in the images suggested to them in this task (see Alia-extract 6.7). By the same token, other students also seemed to acknowledge the counterevidence in one context yet return and construct another in a different interactional moment (see Farah-Saba, extract 6.10, lines 7-8). This not only reflects the rigidity of these poorly warranted beliefs but also the complexity and cyclical nature of the de-construction process. That is to say, students keep moving back and forth in this continuum, shifting, renouncing, de-constructing and re-constructing new and existing stereotypic fixations through a constant interplay and negotiation of meaning.

6.1.3 Task 3: Dissecting the Ideological Dimension of Stereotypes Within a Critical Decolonial Perspective

The pedagogical intention of this activity builds on one of the general aims of this study, i.e., to lead students into the stage of being ‘critically aware of one’s own context’ (Guilherme, 2002, p. 31). To critically examine our previously unquestioned assumptions of others is not simply to identify what these are, but to also recognise them as forms of an ideological construction of difference and discrimination (Hinton, 2020). It is through the unmasking of these ideologies that we might succeed in creating a state of critical consciousness and encourage students to revise assumptions and expectations of self and others.

In this activity, students were instructed to read the text on ‘Religious Conflicts in Algeria’ which generally explores some of the complexities involved in the religious conflicts that took place in Algeria throughout the past decade (see Appendix C). The author places a special emphasis on the Kabyle regions where members of this ethnic group played a central role in
sustaining the Islamic faith during French colonialism. This passage was chosen because of its potential to create a type of ‘disorienting dilemma’ (Mezirow, 1978), and contribute to the creation of polyphony (Bakhtin, 1986). Put differently, the text presents the students with new information that disprove biased judgements of Kabyles as those ‘believed to be potentially assimilable to French civilization by virtue of the supposed democratic nature of their society, their superficial Islamization, and the higher status of Kabyle women’ (Burke, 2014, p. 33) and add external voices to the process of dialogue (Bakhtin, 1986). Thus, it provides an impetus for the re-examination of these beliefs. The next step in this task was to invite students to share and discuss their thoughts about the text and reflect on this information in relation to the images explored in activity two. The task appeared to provide a space to think about the normativity of certain assumptions and their relation to colonial legacies. Overall, students succeeded in questioning and sometimes reversing colonial narratives of the Kabyle group. They also showed patterns of critical engagement in terms of asking questions and examining common-sense knowledge.

Figure 6.4 Students Reading the Text on Religious Conflicts in Algeria (Lesson 2)

From left: Adam, Alia, Nayra, Deena, Farah, Celia, and Zain (+ Saba outside on a break).
Extract 6.11 below shows how students went by to weigh up or simply think about the validity of their stereotypic thoughts about Kabyles and analyse how and under which circumstances these biased judgements have been produced and maintained.

**Extract 6.11 Tracing the Ideological Roots of Stereotyping**

1. Abir: (To the class as a whole) What do you notice or deduce from the information presented in the text?
2. Zain: Kabyle is a great place! [Laughter]
3. Abir: (To the class as a whole) No, listen. The purpose of this course is not to oblige you to change your opinions. It only aims to stir up discussions that would leave you with some sort of a new stream of thinking and in the end, it is up to you to build your own conclusion.
4. Farah: Well, this is like a slap in the face! It’s strange how a person can hold on to a set of ideas about something or someone, and then reads very basic counterarguments that are like truly transformative.
5. Celia: I’m not with or against these arguments. You can’t judge a group of people when you know so little about them or about their background. So, in the end, I cannot judge a whole group just because I have seen two members doing something that is socially/morally unacceptable or whatever.
6. Zain: But even though, there are some people who would not change their stereotypes even if they were presented with evidence. For example, if you bring them a social experiment about Kabyle people that denies those facts, they would disproof it and hold on to their generalizations.
7. Celia: Yeah, it becomes a belief, but all of these conceptions are remnants of the French colonization.
8. Saba: I mean with regards to the text; I think that these represent dependable facts about how Kabyle people helped in the resistance against the French colonizer. In fact, maybe Kabyle people had better patriotic values than the other groups in Algeria, but maybe the idea behind this stereotype about Kabyle people originated from the fact that many of the Kabyle old generations migrated to France in the colonial times; that’s why people may think they are more prone to living as Europeans.
In initiating this task, I made an invitation to students to share their thoughts. Here, the interaction began with an interesting comment from Zain whose statement in line 2 ‘Kabyle is a great place’ seemed to invoke a subtle satire. Though Zain’s comment may be interpreted as an innocent shift in perspective, the general laughter that followed his comment, albeit indicative of the relaxed and trusting relationship students shared in this learning, validated the impression that he might have voiced this opinion because he thought it was a desirable response for me as a teacher. After the laughter faded, I explained to Zain and all the other students that no one should feel obliged to change his/her opinion. The aim of this intervention was to encourage them to suspend judgements until these have been carefully thought of. At this point of the interaction, I made sure to acknowledge my students as co-investigators of knowledge, and I allowed them the space to construct their own voices and take a more active role in determining their positions towards these assumptions. This is in line with what Freire (1993) proposed in his ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’, where he critiqued the banking system of education, especially when knowledge is transferred one-sidedly from the teacher to the learner and learners are less engaged in meaningful dialogue and problem-solving.

On the other hand, for participant Farah, the text appeared to have succeeded in delivering new content that contradicted her previous assumptions. This, she indicates in line 4, where she refers to the effect of counter-stereotype evidence in transforming stereotypic assumptions. In another pronouncement, Celia also steps in the debate to place a neutral stand against the information found in the text: ‘I’m not with or against these arguments’ (line 5). She also adds that she wouldn’t pass judgments based on little information. Though Celia does not express a clear position about the text; she does, however, seem to stress the need to avoid irrational generalisations. Her comment in line 5 serves to indicate her approach to suspending judgement, which is what Facione (2015) identifies as an important skill in the development of critical thinking. Whereas Zain in the next line (6) accounts for the persistence of stereotypes
Despite knowledge of stereotype ‘incongruent’ information, both Celia and Saba in the following lines (7-8) acknowledge the role of colonial history in the shaping and breeding of such representations.

In this piece of data, we can see how exposure to ‘conflicting’ information has encouraged reflection on the ideological roots of Kabyle stereotypes and prompted the re-examination of existing frames of reference (Mezirow, 1978). In what follows, we can also note how students, at different times during the discussion, take on the role of investigators who instead of waiting for my prompting, initiated critical dialogue with their classmates. This can, for example, be seen with participant Alia in extracts 6.12 and 6.13 below.

In the talk below which picks up from Extract 6.11, there is a broadening discussion on the nature of stereotypes and what people should do with them. Here, students engage in a kind of problem-solving discourse on the complexities and richness involved in assessing stereotype (in)accuracy and whether media plays a role in the creation and dispelling of stereotypes.

**Extract 6.12 Keeping the Dialogue Going: Should We Believe in Stereotypes?**

1. Alia: So, what should one do in this case? Believe stereotypes about them or believe their history?
2. Deena: Believe yourself.
4. Celia: I would say your eyes.
6. Abir: (To the class as a whole) Well, this is the whole point behind the reflective journals. When you go back home, I would like you all to reflect on what you have read in the text and discussed in the tasks today. But don’t forget to document this thinking in your reflective logs; you may reach a conclusion about this.
7. Celia: Personally, I am neither with nor against stereotypes.
8. Farah: Come on Celia, haven’t you ever heard of something about a group and believed it?
9. Celia: No, believe me, I am not that type of person. I do not judge a group based on what I have seen from one single member.
10. Farah: But have you ever felt skeptical about it at least?
11. Celia: No, I did not, trust me. I may seem like I’m making this up now, but I’m not. Just because I have seen or heard about a few people from Oran who go clubbing down to a pub or a bar does not make me believe that all Orani people are like that.
12. Nayra: Yeah, these people are 50/50.
13. Celia: No, sorry. I can’t even say that because I simply do not have updated statistics in my hands. I mean if you just look closely, this is the media’s job: disrupting the truth, presenting what’s negative and showing you only bits of what it wants you to know.
14. Saba: Yeah, media is all about propaganda.

Continuing on from the previous discussion, Alia in line 1 starts to question whether one should believe in stereotypes. In response, all the other students suggest different answers, including the belief in direct contact and factual knowledge of that group (lines 2-5). During this time, I attempt to encourage students to re-visit what they had seen in the previous tasks and reflect on this question in their reflective logs (line 6). The next few lines of the conversation (7-10) also see the students arguing about the credibility of stereotypical claims. Notably, this time, with Celia’s stance that while her personal contact and/or a direct acquaintance may afford her a unique lens into the characterisation of Orani people, it should not, however, limit or bias her view towards all groups and individuals of that same place (line 11). She returns to add in line 13 that the media environment often delivers negative content about these ethnic groups in an attempt to fabricate and/or distort perceptions about them; a point of view that is further supported by Saba in line 14.

What is important in the interaction above is that Alia’s question offered a way of extending the talk to how the spread of stereotypes is made possible through media platforms. The latter is seen to blatantly denote information that is intended to sway opinions about certain groups. With this consideration in mind, students drew the conclusion that stereotyping can thus potentially be reinforced by these media products. In the next extract, the classroom interaction moved forward with more questioning and critical probing to advance knowledge and
understanding of the role and source of stereotyping, specifically in relation to the Kabyle group.

**Extract 6.13 Developing a Critical Voice: Stereotypes as a Device for Political Control**

1. Alia: I have a question. What is the role of stereotypes in general? Is it distorting or deviating from the truth?
2. Saba: Stereotyping is judging a whole population based on your view of one person.
3. Alia: I believe that stereotyping has a lot to do with politics.
4. Farah: Yeah, that’s so obvious. Why do you think this issue persisted for so long, huh? Because politicians do not want to see groups in our country united; they want them all to stay divided.
5. Alia: Yeah, true.
7. Farah: This is postcolonial thinking, why do you think we still do not have any real information about what happened in the Algerian revolution? Because people who have worked hard to distort the truth are still ruling the country.
8. Alia, Saba: Yes, true.
9. Celia: I think that the Media in Algeria is playing a major role in this issue. For instance, when ‘Al Nahar’ channel produced a documentary to show how Kabyle people broke their fast-during daytime in Ramadan, it was done on purpose; the aim was not only to populate this kind of stereotype about them and restrict attention to this specific issue but also to distract the people on the more serious issues in the country and fill their hands with this controversial topic. I mean it could even be that those people who were caught on camera are not Kabyles in the first place and they could even have done it in exchange for money.
10. Farah: I mean even if we look closely at the information in this article, we could think that the whole purpose of this colonization strategy was to generate distrust among people during that critical time. If distrust is widely spread among people, the revolution won’t succeed.
11. Zain: So, what is the cause behind stereotypes, the government?
12. Celia: I think it’s narrow-mindedness and politics.
13. Saba: Also, governmental corruption.
14. Abir: Interesting insights! Thank you everyone for your contributions. Let us now move to the Just Because activity.

In the conversation depicted above, the interaction also began with Alia’s questioning the role of stereotypes. This observation led students to reflect upon the ways in which group stereotypes are used as a device for political control. This issue is first brought to attention by Alia and Farah (lines 3,4, 7) who refer to the practices of power elites to divide and distort narratives about the Kabyles both during colonial and modern-day Algeria. In a similar fashion, Celia also throws light on the role that local media has played in the internalization of racist and essentialist modes of thinking about the Kabyle group (line 9). Herein, Celia refers to a documentary which depicted violations of Ramadan fasts on behalf of some members of the Kabyle group. At the time, such content was met with intense moral outcry and wider public criticism and the result was even more aggravated stereotypic depictions of Kabyles as religiously incompetent. Yet, from Celia’s perspective, degrading the image of Kabyle groups is not what this stereotype is really about. In her comment, Celia emphasises that such policies were also used to deflect the mass’ attention away from other social and political problems in the country. She goes on to question the identity and motivations of those individuals depicted in the documentary. In so doing, she shows a growing scepticism about the accuracy and trustworthiness of such media reports. The next line (10) also sees Farah reflecting on the information presented in the text. Based on this, she draws the conclusion that such misinformed narratives of the Kabyles were used by the French conquerors to breed a sense of mistrust among those who fought back against the overbearing colonial rule. In lines (14-16), other students also can be noted to probe the factors that shape and distort individuals’ assumptions about other groups. While Celia speculated on the narrowmindedness and political influence, Zain and Saba (lines 14, 16) identified governmental control as a possible contributing factor.
Of special note in this extract is that the students who seemed to have more rigid assumptions of other ethnic groups are those who are marking the appearance of a more questionable attitude toward the origins of Kabyle stereotypes, their relationship to the social and political structures, and their history (see best participants Alia and Farah lines 1, 3, 4, 7, 10). Here, we may think of the impact of the text and images shown above in creating a sense of disequilibrium or dilemma in thinking and urging students to question what was previously taken-for-granted (Mezirow, 1978). For the other students, the content of the text provided an entry point for reflection on the larger, visible, and invisible socio-political ideologies surrounding the Kabyle stereotype; the latter is often ignored, unquestioned or concealed by popular media.

The critical dialogues that transpired in the preceding extracts demonstrate how through careful task sequencing, a space was created for students to disrupt and question the common discourse of the Kabyle group. In essence, it is this attention to the content of the text, together with reflection on the co-constructed meanings and kinds of knowledge and assumptions revealed in the preceding and following talks that lead students to generate new interpretations regarding the nature of stereotyping in general, what purpose they are used for, what happens when people rely on a largely inaccurate stereotype to judge an individual from a certain group and under which conditions stereotypes are formed and maintained in society. This outcome was not achieved with my help as much as it was attained through the students’ own critical questioning and co-construction of knowledge. That is to say, students in this task slipped into a teacher identity, while the latter slipped into a facilitator one. Instead of passing down personal beliefs, I held back and acknowledged the students as co-constructors of new (and arguably) more critical understandings of stereotypes. With no ‘correct’ answers and an open dialogic space, students were able to demythologize the many popular claims about the Kabyles. They discovered that when they are choosing to focus on the ‘drunk’ or ‘fast breaking’ Kabyle, they are also coldly turning their gaze on the numerous Kabyle men and women who
are religiously devout and proud of their Muslim-Algerian identity. Equally important in this task is the students’ reflection on the complex dimensions and root ideologies which continue to give legitimacy to these popular claims. Ultimately, it is through this emerging meta-awareness that students develop their critical consciousness; that is an ability to not only recognise hegemonic assumptions but to also seek to understand from what standpoints they are making these distorted understandings of the world and of the people in it (Guilherme, 2002).

6.1.4. Task 4: Re-Visiting Assumptions: The ‘Just Because’ (JB) Sheet

The purpose of this task was to create another space for students to re-visit some of their previous assumptions by imagining themselves in situations that mirrored being stereotyped against. This was achieved by asking them to list down a set of assumptions or labels that they, as members of a certain group, would not want to be associated with. The pedagogical aim of this task was to propel students to identify with groups experiencing stereotyping and discrimination. Thus, offering them an opportunity to ‘decentre’ and take an outsider’s perspective. For this task, students were given 15 minutes to fill in their sheets and then share aloud their outputs. At this stage, I tried to offer support and assistance whenever needed and consistently reminded students of the need to be honest and only write what reflected their true opinion instead of what they thought I wanted them to say. The next few sections will explore the students’ responses in detail.

For some students, deconstructing previous stereotypes involved them moving from one end of the spectrum to the other. That is to say, students substituted their negative assumptions of these groups with positive ones. This can be seen with participants Adam and Alia below.

Just because I’m Arab, I am not ill-educated, lazy or hypocrite. I am knowledgeable. ...Just because I’m Beni- Mzab, I’m not
religiously strict or stingy, rather I am good in finance and know how to manage my money...Lastly, just because I am Chaoui, I am not heartless unfashionable or anti-social. (Adam/JB Sheet).

Just because I’m Kabyle, it does not mean that I consume alcohol or don’t believe in God. I’m not that rich either and I work so hard so I can deal with my financial issues; I’m not that healthy and I sometimes struggle with health issues. Also, just because I’m Chaoui, it does not mean that I am racist. I don’t have a poor sense of fashion; I just have my own sense of fashion. (Alia/JB Sheet).

Because most of Alia’s episodes of classroom talk remained resistantly stereotypic (See extracts 6.7 & 6.8- Task 2), it was unclear to me whether these statements reflected a transposed position from her previous stereotypes or a tendency to say what she thought would meet my expectations. To this end, I decided to probe more into this. The following extract is a short conversation that I had with Alia after she finished reading through her JB sheet.

**Extract 1.14 Reflective Discussion with Alia**

1. Abir: Do you believe in that, Alia? Do you believe in what you wrote?
2. Alia: That’s the thing.
3. Abir: So, you don’t believe it?
5. Abir: Why did you write it, then?
6. Alia: Because I spoke about these people before [in the previous activities] and I wanted to change my stereotypes. I know that there are Chaoui people who have a sense of fashion.
7. Celia: I like how Alia can have two contradictory views at the same time!
8. Abir: Right, I’m going to repeat the same question. Do you believe in what you just wrote?
9. Alia: In this respect, yes, I do. There are Chaoui people who have a good sense of fashion.
The short dialogue above demonstrates that, in the beginning, Alia was not confident in the answers she provided in her sheet. Through my continuous questioning, she returned to indicate that she now recognises that ‘there are Chaoui people who have a good sense of fashion’. It is unclear whether this shift in perspective reflects a willingness to transpose stereotypic binaries, or whether it suggests a tendency to meet moral expectations, or even an attempt to make the transformation of views evident in public; however, Alia’s refreshed thinking suggests some flexibility in thinking and can be taken as a sign for starting to see the Chaoui other in (arguably) less stereotypical ways.

In contrast to stereotyping, some other students chose to transpose their previous assumptions by primarily focussing on the ‘other’s individuating information. In other words, when forming their impressions of the ethnic other, these students chose to prioritise information that largely depends on the personal characteristics of that particular individual rather than the group membership that he/she belongs to. Zain’s JB sheet provided evidence of this new stream of thinking.

> Just because I’m Chaoui, I’m not conventional or unfashionable, I am a normal person with my own good and bad characteristics...Just because I’m from Beni- Mzab, I am not stingy, I am not always rich and own businesses, I am a normal person with ambitions like anyone else...Just because I’m from Oran, I am not someone who goes to nightclubs...Just because I’m Kabyle, I’m not a drinker, I’m not Christian or Jewish or an Arab hater. (Zain /JB Sheet)

Another intriguing aspect which emerged from the students’ JB sheets was their newly re-constructed self-concept. In their sheets, several students reconstructed the negative perceptions and judgements that others have come to accept about them. For these students, stepping away from the judgements they experienced in their entourage involved a process of
‘looking inward’ and finding one’s ‘voice’ by challenging the habitual image of the self and allowing for more inclusive and positive perceptions of the self to take place.

Just because I love posting satanic pictures, I am not Satanic, an attention-seeker and I’m not taking drugs .... Just because I look rude does not mean I am a careless student; I am a motivated person and an A student.... Just because I like to wear black, I am not depressed or have low self-esteem. (Deena /JB Sheet)

Deena’s comments above suggest that she was able to conceptualise and express the self positively in such a way that rejects the negative attributes that others assume of her in her social surrounding (see Chapter 5 for a more extended discussion of this topic). As opposed to the past, where Deena struggled with judgements that targeted her dressing style and labelled her as ‘satanic’ ‘drug user’ and ‘depressed’, she showed stronger awareness of, and confidence in herself and reconstructed a positive image of the self as a motivated and hardworking individual.

By the same token, Nayra was also another student who disrupted an assumption about her religiously stereotyped self. In her sheet, she demonstrated how she had reconstructed some of the stereotypic views that associate Muslims with acts of terrorism and religious intolerance; an issue which also surfaced in the students’ pre-course interviews (see Chapter 4, section 4.3 on Imagined Intercultural Encounters).

Just because I am a Muslim, it does not mean I am a terrorist, or I live in a terroristic environment, or I refuse all other religions. (Nayra /JB Sheet) [Emphasis added].

The findings from the students’ JB sheets suggest that this reflexive exercise entailed not only a process of (re) construction and (re) negotiation of the ethnic other, but also a new discovery
of the self. In this activity, students felt they were in a better position to problematise and re-define some of the narratives that are told of them by others. In so doing, they affirmed the roles, traits and characteristics that best define who they are and who they expect themselves to be. The data also showed that in the process of (re)constructing the way they perceived the ethnic other, the students’ thinking at times simply shifted from a pre-existing, negative categorial level to another that is positive. This shifting or adjustment of thinking reflects a process that is imperfect, incomplete, and even messy. Though students, at various moments in the class, showed promising signs of awareness of the dynamicity of culture and non-static typifications of its members, over-generalisations -nonetheless positive- appeared again (see best Adam-Alia - JB comments). That being said, their engagement evidenced a willingness to transpose these negatively charged judgments, which can be seen as a step forward in their critical awareness journey.

6.2 Summary

Working from the assumption that a pedagogical space for enhancing criticality in students, stimulating argument-based and productive dialogue is necessary in the EFL classroom (Byram, 1997; Guilherme, 2002; Dervin and Clark, 2014; Dasli, 2011a), this chapter attempted to examine the dynamics and complexity of dealing with stereotype deconstruction in the classroom context. The findings in this chapter build on this argument to highlight the effect of foregrounding rather than backgrounding the need to challenge students beyond their conventional zones and prompt them to re-think the ways in which they have learned to perceive and act towards the ethnic other.

The findings of this chapter demonstrate that challenging students through a transformative approach was valuable in the process of confronting students’ deeply embedded assumptions of the ethnic other. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, making these ideas accessible for reflection and further exploration is crucial for fruitful and responsive learning. The data
presented in this chapter indicate that positions of criticality were taken up differently as students progressed from one task to the other. The data from task one has shown how the diversity of perspectives (Bakhtin, 1986) which emerged from the classroom talk has provided a catalyst for the expansion, argumentation, justification and challenging of stereotypic assumptions, which at times proved quite derogatory and resistant to reconstruction. The chapter also pays attention to my role as a teacher/facilitator in aiding students to become fellow inquirers of the subjects to be known. Such praxis seeks to integrate a language of critique that transforms banking education taking place in most EFL classrooms and positions students in less agentive roles (Freire, 1993).

Likewise, the data analysed from tasks two and three indicate evidence of the students’ emerging awareness on the role of entitativity in stereotyping. When students were given time for talk and critical reflection, they formed the recognition that a group’s perceived entitativity should not form the basis for making trait inferences about its individual members. These observations led to a discussion on the validity of stereotypes, after which students began to reflect upon the naturalness and normativity of these practices in their context. Through the use of Mezirow’s (1978) concept of disorienting dilemma, students were exposed to alternative perspectives and eventually, it was this diversity of perspectives which provided a catalyst for re-examining conventional ways of perceiving self and ethnic other. Similarly, through teacher scaffolded talk and debriefing, students moved toward a more complex understanding of how contextual influences shape and control the construction of stereotypes as well as how these stereotypes interrelate with other collective ideologies, reflected in media, politics, and public discourse. These critical positions became manifest in class talk in various ways, often in a non-linear line of growth as students spent time constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing reductive definitions of the ethnic other. Indeed, education about stereotyping and prejudiced attitudes is not a topic that can be addressed within the course of one or two
sessions; in fact, any expectations that would assume so would be built on unrealistic goals. Nonetheless, providing space for the questioning and interrogation of these dominant discourses is vital for promoting a language that reduces social tensions and promotes cohesion in an ethnically and culturally responsive way.

This chapter has also raised a number of questions into what critical consciousness might mean when sometimes students refuse to transcend their biases and insist on expressing derogatory views in the classroom. More importantly, what effects does that have on students who might feel offended, attacked, or imposed upon. It is in the context of such moments that teachers are offered both the challenge and opportunity to promote dialogue aimed at critical reflection and consciousness-raising while simultaneously thinking about the complex emotional ramifications of such a process.
Chapter Seven: Discussion

No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.

- Albert Einstein

7.0 Introduction

This study has aimed to respond to calls for more contextualised examples on the integration of critical approaches to language learning. As such, it has reported on the findings of an eight-week exploratory intervention that implemented a critical intercultural pedagogy which aimed to develop students’ critical consciousness in relation to issues of identity, stereotypes, and ethnicity. This study has aimed to understand the nature of learners’ engagements with these key notions and identify the emergence (or not) of critical consciousness as constructed through classroom dialogue and interaction. To do this, four specific questions have been posed:

RQ1: How do students view the self and imagined other?

RQ2: How is critical consciousness developed through dialogue?

- How do students construct more complex understandings of identity?
- How do students critically engage with stereotypes of self and imagined other?
- In what other ways can critical consciousness manifest itself in dialogue?

RQ3: How does the teacher contribute to the promotion of critical consciousness in the classroom?

In this final chapter, I return to the research questions to identify key findings from the previous chapters (4,5,6) and consider their significance in light of the literature explored in chapter two. To further enrich answers to my research questions and analytical points, I present additional segments of data that emanated from the students’ discussions in subsequent lessons or were noted in their reflective journals. For ease of presentation, findings will be discussed...
thematically under three main sections. The first section illustrates the students’ view of self and imagined other (7.1); the second discusses how students developed critical consciousness through dialogue, looking at the students’ engagement with identity, stereotypes, and inequality through (critical) dialogue (7.2). Finally, section three discusses the teacher’s role in fostering students’ engagement and critical consciousness (7.3).

7.1 How Do Students View the Self and Imagined Other?

As argued before, the treatment of culture from a predominantly essentialist view can create a limited representation of the cultural and social reality of people’s lives and practices and, thus reinforce the risk of stereotypes (Holliday, 2018; Baker, 2017). Indeed, what we came to know through Rabehi’s (2021) and Douidi’s (2021) recent studies on the status of intercultural learning in Algeria has shown that the presentation of culture in Algerian nationwide EFL curricula is 1) heavily deployed from a fact-based and essentialist perspective; 2) constructed through banal nationalism; 3) and addressed from a tourist-centred perspective on Anglophone cultures. Additionally, these studies have also alluded to the lack of complexity in the transmission of culture and the scarcity of critical intercultural pedagogies. Drawing on these insights, examining what potential sets of prevailing discourses students had of the self and imagined other was therefore of paramount importance. This emergent awareness was used ensuingly to first, help me create an adequate space for scrutinizing students’ starting point assumptions while scaffolding them to adopt a questioning attitude towards these perspectives (Guilherme, 2002).

7.1.1. The Self as Othered and Alienated: Pushing Against Regional and Religious Stereotyping

In talking about themselves as Muslims, Algerians, and Southerners, students weaved together a number of discourses that constructed a negative and quite critical positioning made available to them by out-groups. Initially, the pedagogical aim here was to examine the ways that these
students constructed a storyline and/or image of themselves as belonging to a certain national, religious, gendered, or regional group. One particularly interesting finding is that students chose to speak about the narratives that were constructed for them by out-groups (i.e., suspected hetero stereotypes). In so doing, they alluded to a number of stereotypical constructions that overlooked them as individuals with a range of personal histories and life experiences, and narrowly depicted them as oppressed, third-world classified, old-fashioned and barbarian.

In the pre-course interviews, participants such as Zain, Nayra, Celia, and Alia expressed concerns about making intercultural contacts due to negative stereotyping of Muslims around the world. Similarly, in one of our reflective discussions in lesson 1 (see section 5.3, Chapter 5), almost everyone presents in class shared the assumption that Muslim women were to be stereotyped with a plethora of negative categorisations that painted them as oppressed and subjugated. These findings are in keeping with stereotypes of the Muslim woman as oppressed, which have been part of Orientalist discourses about the Middle East (Said, 1978). In recent years, specifically after 9/11, these discourses of Muslim women and Islam, in general, have become revived within the growing debate on Islamophobia (Mohanty, 2003; El Saasawi, 2007; van Es, 2016). In their discussion on Islam and media, Kavacki & Kraeplin (2017) maintain that the idea of ‘Muslimness is invoked in political and public discourse to demarcate the nation and to situate the visibly Muslim body as the Other’ (p.852). This process of othering continues to feed stigmatising public debates about Islam and Muslim women in general, perpetuating monolithic representations that reduce complex individuals to a set of specific traits (Ahmad, 2018; Kabir, 2016; Eid, 2014).

Moreover, in the more natural and authentic conversation that emerged while participating in the post-reflective task (as shown in sections 5.3.1/ 5.3.2, Chapter 5), students also cast light on the issue of national and regional stereotyping; in many cases, participants such as Celia,
Nayra, Alia, and Farah indicated that notions of inferiority, marginalisation and primitivity dominate in the collectively held stereotypes about Algerians and ‘Southerners’ in general. Perhaps the strongest expression of these notions came from Alia and Farah’s experiences with regional stereotyping in Algeria; both of these students indicated how others viewed them as less civilised and backward because they were descending from a Southern area in Algeria (see extract 5.10).

What sometimes also surfaced in these discussions was an attempt to resist this kind of ‘naming’, accepted as normal and taken-for-granted. Some students were unhappy with this stereotypical position made available to them. As this one example from Alia which showed how she attempted to assert her ability to speak foreign languages when presenting herself to out-groups (see section, 5.3.2). In so doing, Alia attempted to place herself in a position that showed resistance but also demanded recognition of the self as valuable and sophisticated. Within the literature on critical pedagogy, Garcia et al (2009) argue that part of developing critical consciousness is the ability to recognise forms of oppression and inequality and present critiques of dominant discourses. In these ‘brave’ spaces of open dialogue, Alia could be seen to have developed voice (Hooks, 1994), resisting, challenging, and critiquing the dominant and marginalised discourses of Southern (minority) populations in Algeria.

### 7.1.2 The Other as Idealised and Appealing

In the analysis of data, discourses about the imagined other tended to speak of a superficially ‘idealised’ but nonetheless essentialised view of this imagined other. In more specific terms, there seems to be a general tendency to construct positive identities for the British, Asian, and American other as well as an implicit assumption that their practices are radically different from one’s own. Broadly speaking, positive stereotypes could be defined as the attribution of favourable beliefs or evaluations about members of a particular group; they are particularity
‘detrimental to egalitarian perception [and can] lead to increased essentialism’ (Kay et al, 2013, p.287). The British and/or American other was seen in the eyes of these students as prestigious, friendly, and having a strong work ethic (see Deena, Zain, Saba, and Celia’s responses in the pre-course interviews--Chapter 4, sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2). Likewise, the stereotyping of Asian people produced a favourably positive identity associated with high academic performance and diligence. This was also evident in the students’ responses to the label card activity (see Farah and Celia’s responses in section 5.3.1, Chapter 5). According to the available data, it was found that most of the students’ representations of the imagined other were framed in stereotypical terms (see students’ responses in section 4.4, Chapter 4). Considering the comments that students initially made about these groups, it seems that they did not draw attention to the plurality and complexity of meanings, identities and realities of these individuals and their practices. These positive constructions were produced as natural and integral to identifying these groups. These findings corroborate Li’s (2013) investigation of stereotypes held by Chinese EFL students. Overall, Li found that students constructed positive representations of Americans as predominantly ‘having the character of being open, individualistic, enthusiastic, and easy going’, whereas, for the British, they were depicted as having a ‘genteel character’, ‘noble’, ‘courteous’, and living in a ‘highly developed country’ (p.99-100). The findings, however, counter the insights put forward by Alqahtani’s (2015) study which found that international Saudi students had formed a stereotypical view of people in the UK as ‘conservative, reserved, arrogant, and unfriendly people’ (p.157). Alqahtani’s (ibid) maintained that students constructed their views of the British through exposure to books, websites, or anecdotal experiences. Here, I would also add that, in this study, learners’ positive stereotypes about the FL countries (i.e., UK and USA) could potentially be related to their motivation and interest in learning the language. In fact, this proposition is in line with earlier findings which highlight the relationship between learners’ positive attitudes towards a target

In general, it was found that only when discussions revolved around topics drawn from the students’ immediate context (e.g., direct experiences with regional stereotyping and social discrimination) could they consider the discussion authentically and engage in deeper reflection and criticism of how these stereotypes have prevailed in society. One example of this could be seen in the students’ engagement with the post-reflective task shown in section (5.3.2, Chapter 5). It was anticipated that post-reflective tasks would provide an opportunity for them to problematise how they imagined the practices, relations, and identities of these groups (e.g., British, Asians, etc) and to reflect in ways that developed deeper insights and challenged instant judgements. The task, however, did not seem to provide a space for students to question the alleged renderings of reality associated with these groups. Only when a distorted image of the self was provoked, were spaces opened to critically reflect on its accuracy. This, for example, occurred at specific dialogic moments observed in the students’ problematisation and critical examination of national, ethnic, regional, and religious stereotyping in lessons 1 and 2 (see sections, 5.3.2, Chapter 5; 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, Chapter 6).

7.1.3 The Imagined Ethnic Other

With regards to how students viewed the imagined ethnic other, it was found that students constructed stereotypical views that varied between positive and negative evaluations of these groups. Notably, in comparison to the assumptions about the American, British, and Asian other, a greater variety of negative assumptions appeared in the students’ views of the ethnic other (see extracts 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, section 6.1.1, Chapter 6); this again signals the need for addressing ethnic conflicts in contemporary Algeria through critical intercultural learning and education.
Before proceeding to discuss how students engaged with ethnic stereotypes, it is worth mentioning that the students’ identification with in/out groups was an element of complexity in this study. The differences between self/other or in-group /out-group belonging were difficult to identify because of the multiple, shifting, and inconsistent element of identification. Here, the study alludes to Dervin’s (2013) concept of ‘mixed intersubjectivity’, which posits that people’s identifications of themselves, as well as others, are inconsistent and fluid.

7.2 How is Critical Consciousness Developed Through Dialogue?

At the heart of my pedagogical vision for critical intercultural learning was the need to sensitise students to the complex, fluid and hybrid nature of culture and identity. It was my contention that such a dynamic and cosmopolitan conception of culture is necessary to avoid the essentialising of cultural meanings. To this end, I developed a set of consciousness-raising and reflexive activities that would help students to reflect on the multiplicity of their identities, challenge and deconstruct commonsensical assumptions of self and other, and recognise these as embedded in broader systems of inequality.

7.2.1 How Do Students Construct More Complex Understandings of Identity?

To support the notion of fluidity and complexity of culture, I introduced students to the learning tasks of Personal and Social Identity Wheels (see sections 5.1, 5.2, Chapter 5). In class, students readily discussed and shared a wide array of information about their families, place of origin, ethnic affiliation, and national origin, to mention but a few. This practice of sharing offered students a way of relating to each other and allowed them the opportunity to perceive one another as complex individuals with a unique yet acute sense of reciprocity with one another. The data suggested that students constructed identities which were multifaceted, consisting of various social categories such as race, age, religion, etc. Thus, far from perceiving the self as unitary and static, students began to realise the multiplicity and changing nature of their identity (Norton, 2000). Furthermore, within the process of reflecting on their sense of self, students
were also able to ponder on which identities they situationally emphasise or downplay across different sites, which ones can be considered as more proximal and relevant in their individual lives, as well as which have the most effect on how others perceive them (see section 5.2, Chapter 5, extracts 5.1 and 5.3 on Saba and Adam’s elaborations on their multiple identities). This experience of observing/exploring the performance of various memberships allowed these students to reflect on the situated nature of their belongings. As inferred by Schegloff (2007), categories are more than just mundane devices for referring to people, they are ‘social products of specific interactional contexts that are constantly being negotiated, brought about, and shaped by the activities, expectations, and actions of the participants’ Tranekjær (2015, p.126). Therefore, a person may have multiple identities but not all identities are equally salient or relevant in all contexts.

Furthermore, this questioning of personal and social identity is vital for raising awareness of the differences and similarities existing between students in class, which can then promote reflection on respect for diversity and a deeper understanding of difference (Carter, 2008). In fact, as was readily apparent in their post-class journal reflections, some students managed to develop an awareness of the complex nature of their identity as well as awareness of diversity within other people. Thus, realising that while being members of the same culture, there are internal diversities among group members. As argued before, this kind of understanding is necessary in order to avoid essentialising others (Baker, 2015). This view was echoed in Saba’s journal entry after lesson one as she mentioned how the group discussion has helped her discover ‘how many differences and similarities there were between people who co-exist in the same culture’. For others, awareness of this diversity was clearly helping them to reflect on how people might perceive the world differently. This was clear in Adam’s journal comment below:

From today’s lesson, I have learned that even though we are from the same country, same community, each one of us got his own definition of his/her
own identity. Personally, I used to think that culture is the first thing that controls the identity of a group of people in the same community, but it turned out to be far from this.

By the same token, some other students like Farah also reported that discussion with others in class has helped them gain deeper self-awareness, often related to a greater understanding and perception of their own internal attributes. In this sense, Farah was becoming more cognizant of her own performance and beliefs.

I got to learn more about myself, especially the things about the three adjectives that describe me, I could not think of anything; for example, if I was in an interview and I was asked to talk about myself, I think I would have been puzzled. However, thanks to those two-wheel tasks, I was able to grasp my individualistic features.

Equally important, some other participants also remarked that they were both able to learn more about themselves and about their classmates. One student, Alia, commented:

What I have learned from today’s lesson is the ability to know more about my friends’ likes and dislikes. I also learned to speak more about myself and embrace other people’s differences.

These findings indicate that engaging in these dialogic discussions and tasks has made way for some students to gain new insights and understandings about one’s sense of self (e.g., Farah and Alia). Furthermore, these class discussions also seem to have prompted reflection on the appreciation and respect for diversity, as well as sensitivity to differences (Rigamonti & Scott-Monkhouse, 2016). These findings are in keeping with Einfalt’s (2019) study which found that engaging students in forum discussions about their identity has encouraged reflection around one’s sense of identity and that of others as well. Through a similar approach, Lain (2017) also concluded that engaging students in forum assignments has been found significant to ICC development, providing an opportunity for students to ‘explore their cultural identity creatively,
while simultaneously raising their awareness of how others view the world and construct their identities’ (p. 135).

7.2.2 How Do Students Engage with Stereotypes, and What Does This Reveal about Their Critical Consciousness?

In chapter two, I argued that developing students’ critical consciousness, specifically in what relates to stereotypes, may be provoked through the arousal of dissonance via 1) Mezirow’s (1978) notion of disorienting dilemma, and 2) Bakhtin’s (1986) notions of critical dialogue and polyphony. At the time, I set out to attempt to do what Apple (1999) called ‘interruption of common sense’, and what Giroux had long referred to as the ‘destabilization of authoritative discourse’ (as cited in Gore, 1993, p. 35). Drawing on the students’ immediate context, I developed a set of consciousness-raising tasks that involved the conscientization of stereotypical thinking. Through the arousal of dissonance and dialogue, I had hoped that students would be able to see, identify, and question what has become natural to them. In the sub-sections below, I shall demonstrate how through (critical) dialogue, students drew on and shared their own locally situated, socio-historical knowledge to reveal, deconstruct, and build awareness of stereotypes as part of broader social and historical structures of inequity.

Furthermore, the data provide evidence that critical consciousness was not just a reflexive state of awareness that is constructed in the individual’s isolated mind, it is rather a collective act of engagement with others to (re) construct new understandings and perspectives of the world (Bakhtin, 1986). It will also be recalled that in various sections of this study, CC was found to be a shifting and non-linear process of multiple insightful moments; one does not acquire critical consciousness as an end-product as it will always be in a state of re-construction, I argue. To discuss these points, I begin by discussing aspects on the promotion of CC through the students’ (critical) dialogue in the classroom.
7.2.2.1 Naming Stereotypes: Sites of Negotiation and Difficult Dialogue

As seen in chapter 6, during the group poster activity, students engaged in a collaborative, interactive process of dialogue where they voiced different assumptions and stereotypic views of different ethnic groups. Generally, the class discussion helped students to see how others may have very differing views from their own. This observation was shared by some of my students. For example, in her journal submitted the week following lesson 2, Farah appeared to realise how the diversity of perceptions challenged her thinking about stereotypes. She wrote:

In the poster activity when we were split into groups and we had to share our posters on the board, I got to see how many differences in opinion we all had. I realised that there were many contradictions. I then started to think, do these different opinions reflect the reality of this ethnic group, because generally the group is made up of different people, and they must have different features and personalities. (RL- Farah /November 2018).

In class, students contributed existing knowledge as well as a desire to learn and share what they know with others. In the process of doing so, they reached out to generate visions of what is not yet collectively known or understood in place. As reported in section 6.1.1, Chapter 6, students can be seen to name stereotypes, make personal connections and problematise each other’s ways of seeing and perceiving these groups. Recall for example in extract (6.2, Chapter 6) when Alia described her perception of Chaouis as ‘backward’ and corroborated such assumption with personal experience. In response, Celia picked up the idea and responded, ‘so you formed your whole perception based on this family of 5 persons?’ (Parallel extract). These discourses allowed students to ‘learn and grow by confronting their differences’ (Freire, 1998, p. 59). Here, it can be posited that the poster activity provided a pedagogical space for dialogue and reflection. This is aligned with CP authors’ principles of critical thinking as the ability to collectively question the obvious and take a reflective perspective (Freire, 2000b; Giroux,
According to the findings, multiple perspectives and interpretations were brought up to the fore, and this exposure has helped bring these assumptions into a sharper focus. Here, the Bakhtinian (1986) notions of heteroglossia and polyphony are of particular relevance as well. Bakhtin reminds us that during dialogue with others, people call on different social discourses and experiences which are shaped in different social circumstances to bring new perspectives to the dialogue (e.g., Alia drawing on personal experience). This kind of multi-voicedness (Vice, 1997) could be seen to have helped students to exercise their critical consciousness through encountering differing perspectives, challenging assumptions, and making new understandings about these groups.

Moreover, analysis of the students’ interactional data has also revealed instances of difficult dialogue, particularly when derogatory assumptions of outgroups were strongly invoked. This led to moments when these dialogic encounters became very heated resulting in deep, emotional, and sometimes very intense responses. Though many of my students appeared to be making initial steps towards CC, there were others who struggled. Some students talked about the frustration and conflict they experienced with other students in the class. In her reflective log, Farah shared: ‘I was disappointed that there were a lot of negative traits expressed by my classmates concerning my ethnic group or tribe’ (RL- November 2018). By the same token, Saba also expressed her frustration with regard to not being able to reach a peaceful agreement with some of her class peers during their dialogue:

I was surprised to see that some people were actually still carrying very dusty ideas they use to judge others. It was really disappointing to me that I wasn’t able to convince them to change their minds about an assumption that I personally see as wrong and unfair to others (RL- Saba /November 2018).

According to Ruschman (2014), developing critical consciousness requires some uncomfortable cognitive processing. It has been argued that emotions play an essential role in power dynamics and are vital in the establishment of social structures (Lupton, 1998). Emotions
and power, therefore, interact in a social setting to produce societal standards of emotional expression and behaviour (Boler, 1999). Such normative structures sustain social inequities, hegemonic perceptions, and feelings. The challenging of one’s ideas and perspective about other people, cultures, and social structures would thus imply a disruption of his/her emotional relationship to them (Ahmed, 2004), which can later result in feelings of anger, fear, or sadness. Heated discussions are generally looked at as negative in the educational arena, although they are necessary for engaging students in critical inquiry regarding their values and beliefs (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). Yet, balance appears to be a key aspect in bringing students closer to critical consciousness without compromising their wellbeing. It is important therefore to allow people the space to discuss frequently divisive and challenging views but yet making everyone feel like they are a part of the discourse, even when there is disagreement. These conflicts can either result in no resolution or can help move students to new levels of self-awareness, allowing them to better appreciate diverse points of view or, at the very least, embrace disagreements. The findings discussed above are in line with Yochay & Stark’s (2016) study which attempted to implement a pedagogical practice for developing social work students’ critical reflectivity through the challenging of stereotypes. Yochay & Stark’s (ibid) concluded that even though students were found to have developed a reflexive attitude towards stereotypes and their relation to dominant modes of discourse in society, they experienced a sense of discomfort through emotions of stress and anxiety. Nonetheless, Yochay & Stark’s (ibid) aligned with Boler (1999), & Zembylas’s (2015) assertions that ‘discomforting feelings are important in challenging dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain social inequities’ (p.1).

7.2.2.2 Adopting an Introspective Stance Towards Ethnic Stereotypes: Attempting to do Critical Dialogue

For Houghton & Yamada (2012), provoking critical reflection can open spaces for critical learning to emerge. In class, I hoped to engage students in a process of reflective scepticism
where they would start to take up a sceptical disposition towards the natural and common-sense character of these stereotypical constructions, and eventually come to see them as part of broader ideologies of inequality and oppression. By way of an example, we can think of tasks 2 and 3 implemented in the second lesson of this intervention (see sections 6.1.2; 6.1.3, Chapter 6). Starting with task two, students were invited as a group to create new meanings regarding the images presented to them (see table 6.1, Chapter 6). As mentioned earlier, the activity involved students engaging with these images as a type of ‘disorienting dilemma’ (Mezirow, 1978); this was based on the assumption that stereotypes can be challenged through counter-stereotypic content (i.e., students engaging with a type of content against their schemas).

Importantly, Bakhtin’s (1986) notion of polyphony is of particular relevance in this case, as it helps us understand how a discursive space which invites a multiplicity of voices to collide with one another is created. Notably, these voices include what is expressed in these images and what the text authors are saying (i.e., task 3), in addition to my contributions to talk as well as those of my students. As opposed to a monologic class regime, which both Bakhtin (ibid) and Freire (1993) would find unproductive for the development of CC, whole class dialogues can allow for a multiplicity of meanings to emerge, not through an uncritical exchange of ideas, but through a dynamic ‘give-and-take’ process of disagreement, conflict, uncertainty, and genuine questioning.

In class, I attempted to support this process by raising questions that supported the students’ critical thinking and reflection. Importantly, these questions I posed were not ‘phony questions’ with an already made answer (Wrigley, 2009, p. 73). Rather, I attempted to invest in open-ended questions that called for the students’ active participation. At this point, students started to examine these assumptions by imagining new possibilities and recognising ‘the possibility of error’ in their beliefs of the ethnic other (Dewey, 1933, p.30). This type of engagement was, for example, observed when both Celia and Saba started to think about alternative
interpretations to the pervasive stereotypic image of Kabyles as religiously inept. In the process of doing so, they started to consider the possibility that other practising Kabyles exist, too. As such, not every single Kabyle person fits into these group-relevant beliefs (see more details in extract 6.7, Chapter 6). By looking at the other side of the coin, students demonstrated an openness to explore these beliefs from a different angle; this is an element that Dewey (ibid) would perceive as key to critical consciousness. Moreover, in other segments of their discussion, students shared contextualised insights that helped them to organically move towards the ‘seeing’ of ‘how stereotypes came to exist in society?’ Together, they questioned the nature of these misjudgements by digging into the historical and contextual roots of some of these problems, particularly with regard to the Orani case (see extracts 6.8 and 6.9, Chapter 6). Here, it is important to note that these insights were derived from the students’ own contextual knowledge. As a teacher, I was drawing information from the students rather than depositing knowledge. In Freire’s non-banking form of education, this is referred to as situatedness, which means grounding the class activities in the students’ localised, personal, and socio-cultural backgrounds. Giroux & McLaren (1994) would, too, argue that criticality develops as students engage in constructive dialogue with their peers about issues that reflect their cultural backgrounds and heritages. It is this contextual situatedness, argues Jennings et al (2010), what motivates students to adopt new ways of seeing and perceiving inequities and oppression.

The above-discussed findings echo those postulated in Saheli’s (2003) study which concluded that through the experience of disequilibrium (i.e., encountering different information that contradicts black racial stereotypes), students were able to develop a questioning attitude towards these dominant discourses, which then helped open a space for questioning its validity.
7.2.2.3 Deconstructing Colonial History: Recognising Stereotypes as Ideologies of Oppression

The students’ journey towards developing critical consciousness also involved them constructing an awareness on the role of ideology in stereotype formation (Hinton, 2020). Discussions often centred around the reinterpretation of historical events and discovering new ways to understand how history was written by those in power. Revisiting colonial practices and their role in the construction and dissemination of Kabyle Myth appeared to have helped students to understand how history and social power can fuel systems of oppression that perpetuate stereotypes. During a class discussion, Celia reflected on the media coverage of Kabyle ethnic groups in Algeria, explaining how this was used to reinforce stigma and stereotypes towards Kabyle regions (see extract 6.13, Chapter 6). These dialogues became an opening for critical dialogue and a space to make connections to modern day events, further questioning the role of modern-day political agendas in the perpetuation of these assumptions. In class, students readdressed these issues in ways that widened their world views and questioned privilege and marginalisation.

Another important indicator of critically in the students’ dialogue has also been manifested in the form of posing questions (Golding, 2011; Mason, 2007). For example, Farah’s question in lesson one which opened a space for the probing on the accuracy of Asian stereotypes (see extract 5.12, section 5.3.3, Chapter 5). Another example can also be found with Alia. As shown in chapter 6, after several episodes of resistance, Alia started to ask if stereotypes had a negative valence? And what sort of social function do stereotypes serve? (See extracts 6.12 and 6.13, Chapter 6). Both of these questions had implications for the more important question of what exactly should people do with stereotypes? Although there were other moments in the course where other students posed questions, these two moments stood out because they suggested that Alia may have started to question stereotypes after being exposed to the dissonance
content, primarily illustrated through the material content of tasks 2 and 3, as well as the
different and new interpretations put forward by her classmates as they engaged with this
‘dissonant’ content. To remind my readers, Mezirow (1993) postulated that our previously
established frames of reference (i.e., perspectives and worldviews) can be shaken or
destabilised through our encounter with dissonant information that makes us question what we
previously took for granted. Bakhtin’s (1986) notions of polyphony and heteroglossia are also
of relevance in this case as explained in section 7.2.2.2 above.

Freire (1993) reminds us that it is difficult to expect any signs of critical learning from the
students when they are not actively involved in knowledge construction. His main contention
was that teacher-centred approaches are alienating and irresponsible to the students’ capacity to
generate knowledge and develop higher-order thinking skills. Therefore, in class, I tried to
avoid making this space for students yet another ‘lifeless’ experience of being the static objects
of my ‘depotitories’ (Freire, 1999, p.1). As the data showed, such perspectives gave further
impetus for some students to become problem posers themselves (e.g., Alia, Farah) who seek
new understandings through critical dialogue.

Overall, these findings mirror insights drawn from Wilson (2004), Jennings et al (2010) and
Manning (2010)’s educational studies which examined the role of critical dialogue and
engagement in the challenging of dominant oppressive discourses and adoption of critical
perspectives on issues of migration, oppressive stereotypes of youth groupings, and gender
disparities in earning. In Wilson’s study, it was found that dialogue helped students create a
‘new, more complex and sophisticated discourse model of immigration in America’ (p.36).
Whereas for Jennings et al (ibid), the findings revealed that students were able to deconstruct
oppressive societal images of youth as ‘troublemakers’ or ‘unproductive’, and reconstructed
‘alternative images based on their personal and peer experiences’ (p. 39), recognising the ways
in which youth generations can contribute to society’s welfare. Manning (2010), as well, examined the role of Freire’s concept of ‘culture circles’, which aims to develop students’ CC through dialogue about their own personal community concerns. The findings illustrated that ‘through participation in the community of circles, women and men who had been alienated from their culture were encouraged to recognise, scrutinise, and take action regarding their location in society and their oppression’ (p.92). Importantly, however, and, in accordance with what was found in this study, all of the aforementioned studies alluded to the messy, non-linear, and incomplete nature of critical dialogue and the process of developing critical consciousness and awareness.

7.2.3 In What Other Ways Can Critical Consciousness Manifest Itself in Dialogue?

The analysis of data revealed that there is potential for critical consciousness to manifest itself through the development of voice and the critiquing of oppressive discourses in one’s community. These, I shall discuss in sections 7.2.3.1 and 7.2.3.2 below.

7.2.3.1 Critical Consciousness: Resistance and Finding Voice

Giroux (2003) makes a particular contribution to our understanding of CP classrooms as a place for ‘contestation, resistance and possibility’ (p. 6). The findings of this study support the claim that teaching for critical education should not be assumed to be always already straightforward. In other words, there would always be room for conflict, resistance and uncertainty as students engage with opposing perspectives. I have presented instances in my data where some students were producing some strong judgements of self and other in class. For example, in many of her class engagements, Alia appeared to be stubborn, outspoken, and bold. She was also confident and articulate; she frequently showed acts of resistance enduring the consequences of being ‘booed at’ by her classmates when voicing her assumptions about a specific topic and/or ethnic group. On several occasions during the class discussion, it was notable that Alia refused to respond to my or her peers’ invitations to critically scrutinise her assumptions. At the time, I
not only struggled to understand her reaction but also wrestled with my role as a teacher to deal with resistance and discomfort in class. I reflected on this in my reflective log:

When Alia expresses her opinion, she holds dearly to the assumptions she claims even if these are somehow offensive to others. I fear that this might make her peers feel uncomfortable. Perhaps this is her way of emphasising her position in the group, perhaps she is even unaware of this (RL2/November 2018).

For McLaren (1994), this kind of resistance could have been the way for Alia to make her voice heard in the classroom and to define herself as ‘an active participant in the world’ (p.227). In this sense, her resistance could be interpreted as an effort to affirm her agency and think independently to create her own meaning. Brown (1998) and Freire (2011) would posit faith in educators to create more humanistic and democratic ways of understanding their students’ resistance; a dialogue in which both the teacher and students engage in discussing everyone’s perspectives, further questioning ‘hegemony and fixity’ (Grey, 2009, p.131) would help move everyone towards exercising critical thinking.

7.2.3.2 Critical Consciousness: Critiquing Dominant Discourse

The findings of this study also revealed that critical consciousness can also be manifested through the expression of critique and discontent towards dominant discourses of inequality and marginalization in Algeria. In class, students critiqued discourses of social judgments (see extract 5.3, section 5.2, Chapter 5), gender roles (see extract 5.1, 5.2, Chapter 5), regional stereotyping (see extract 5.10, section 5.3.2, Chapter 5), and religious stereotyping (see extract 5.11, section 5.3.2, Chapter 5). Some students, like Deena for example, not only critiqued these dominant societal discourses of inequality but also argued for the need to revive the agency of women in society (see extract 5.1, section 5.3.2, Chapter 5). Moreover, we could also see how Deena was arguing for a type of agentive scenario of change that could influence and transform
the status quo in Algeria. It is also worth mentioning that critique of discriminative discourses also surfaced in the pre-course interview data, especially from the females’ point of view, these included discontent towards religious othering, limitations on freedom of expression and unequal gender roles. These accounts support previous research which postulates that developing CC entails a reflective awareness of one’s own context and examining their role to exert change within (Freire, 1993; Carlson et al. 2006; Watts et al. 2011; Houser & Overton, 2001). Moreover, these findings are broadly consistent with McWhirter & McWhirter’s (2016) study which investigated the development of critical consciousness of inequality among young Latina/ Latino adults. The study found that through group dialogue, learners were able to develop awareness on the reproduction of oppressive systems of inequity; these students also articulated new ideas which reflected their motivation for change and responsibility to address inequity.

7.3 How Does the Teacher Contribute to the Promotion of Critical Consciousness?

The discussion of data now turns to identify in what ways did my practice as a teacher help enhance students’ CC. The analysis of data showed that the orchestration of sharing pedagogic authority, scaffolding reflection, and creating safe spaces were all part of an effort to build a learning environment that supports critical consciousness and awareness.

7.3.1 Negotiating Authority through Student-Generated Critical Contents: Giving Voice

As previously mentioned in chapter three (see section, 3.4.2), I came to class with a partially completed syllabus. Students were afforded the opportunity to contribute to the syllabus by selecting discussion topics that would contribute to their own learning. In my effort to create a more democratic learning environment and in this way, a more student-centred learning experience, I contacted the students amid the completion of the stereotyping unit and invited their input about what they would like to discuss in the upcoming sessions. The following extract illustrates how my students and I collaborated to generate additional themes and
negotiated which activities to include in the curriculum. Extract 7.1 below presents our discussion in the online group chat.

**Extract 7.1 Negotiating Syllabus**

1. Teacher: So, what would you like to learn in this course? What would you like the activities to be like? Any ideas?
2. Saba: The activities, can they be something like acting?
3. Alia: Yes, performing or presentations.
4. Teacher: Yes, we can do that, what else?
5. Saba: hmm, what about guessing games based on cultural judgements?
6. Teacher: So, you’re saying you want interactive activities, right? What sort of themes would you like to cover?
7. Saba: Yes, we would love to [referring to interactive activities].
8. Alia: Religion, racism and black skin, or feminism.
9. Teacher: That’s good. Can others share their thoughts as well, please?
10. Saba: I would suggest culture or religion and their relation to politics and society in here. I know that Celia would definitely want to discuss this (Laughter).
11. Nayra: Ideologies of racism or political issues in North Africa. We can discuss how these issues are dealt with in society, and we can refresh and enlarge our knowledge about this. Diversity is also something that we can include.
12. Farah: Maybe racism, prejudice, or discrimination in our community.
13. Adam: Yes, I agree! discrimination based on skin colour or ethnic background in Algeria.

As shown above, it is obvious that the students in my class came up with similar, if not overlapping themes broadly relating to social issues of racism, prejudice, culture, and religion as well as political issues in Algeria. It was also obvious through the class discussions that took part in lessons three and four that some of my students had a strong drive to share some experiences of discrimination that happened in their personal lives or that they witnessed in their immediate context. Celia, for example during a discussion on racist practices in lesson 4, shared her personal narrative with bullying at school. She revealed how, as a young girl, she
grew up being subjected to abuse and harassment because of her skin colour and acne struggles. In her comment below, Celia did not specify what sort of problematic behaviours were inflicted upon her; she revealed, however, that racist bullying was far more troubling for her as she was thought of as ‘ugly’ and unattractive.

When I was in middle school, I remember that boys used to bully me a lot because I had chronic acne and scars while growing up and what made it worse is that they used to think I was a lot uglier because I had brown skin (Celia, side discussion, L4).

Issues of colour and discrimination were also recurring subjects in the classroom. This is not surprising since the majority of students referred to racism at least one time in their suggestions of new themes. Oftentimes, these discussions were an opportunity for students to share with me their daily struggles or aspirations for themselves and for their society. These shared anecdotes provided an entry point into reflection on social and racial inequality in their context, adding new socio-cultural knowledge about race and whiteness in their context. Put differently, these relational accounts exposed how racism is structured, normalised, and reproduced, in both subtle and explicit ways to devalue and exclude those who are visibly different. In this next extract which formed part of our extended discussion on issues of prejudice and racism in the final session, one of my other students Nayra, also reflected on the use of linguistic labels to segregate people of colour from those of lighter skin; she noted that our class conversation reminded her of a prior interaction with her father, where he used the label ‘clean’ to describe a ‘white’ member of staff that she was advised to approach in her visit to the council. At this point, Nayra added that she started to question the normalisation of such racial discourse: ‘I asked him why would he refer to him like this? And I wondered what the case would be if this man was black, would he, then, refer to him as the dirty one?’. It seems safe to say at this point, that Nayra was not only seeking to explain what happened, but also trying to move beyond a
mere description of an incident towards a reflective evaluation of discriminatory attitudes, this suggests that ‘decentring’ was taking place during this critically reflective moment in the talk. This communal sharing of information on race and whiteness also encouraged other students to share some of the repeatedly racialised episodes that they observe among members of their families, especially when it comes to ascribing greater worth and appreciation to light-skinned infants. At this point, reflection on personal anecdotes is not so much about sharing socio-cultural knowledge but is rather on beginning to contextualise experience within a broader societal view and interrogating the context behind the use and development of these social inequities, this reveals some degree of conscientization in this area. This can be seen in Nayra, Celia, Deena, and Saba’s discussion below.

**Extract 7.2 Sharing Anecdotal Realities of Race and Colour: Racial conscientization**

1. Nayra: I remember this one time when I wanted to get something from the city council and my dad was advising me to go to the right issuing department, he was talking about this administrative assistant and he referred to him as the ‘clean one’, given the fact that he was ‘white’. I was surprised to hear this, and I asked him why would he refer to him like this? I wonder what the case would be if this man was black, would he, then, refer to him as the ‘dirty one’?

2. Celia: Omg! My grandmother is like this as well. I mean she is racist even when it comes to babies.

3. Deena: My grandmother as well (Laughter)

4. Celia: You know something, my grandmother does not even come close to a baby who is a little bit skinny/ dark-skinned or even brunet/brunette. However, she adores babies who are white and a bit chubby and she loves to spend time with them!

5. Saba: My grandma does the same, honestly.

These findings suggest that building on the students’ suggestions and sharing pedagogic authority with them has the potential to affect learners in meaningful ways. Shor (1996) reminds us that teaching from a critical perspective should not place the teacher in a position of domination as much as it should motivate him/her to share power with his/her students. As
discussed in chapter two, a classroom that is participatory needs to take into consideration students’ own knowledge, lived experiences and interests as part of developing its own curriculum. This negotiation process not only deconstructs the top-down approach of the teacher as the one who exclusively owns power and authority in the classroom, but also considers learners as ‘critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher’ (Freire, 1993, p.62); this helps to build their confidence as they feel that their ideas are valued, and their personal experiences and heritage are used as meaningful learning input in the classroom. This is important because the process of determining curricular content in Algerian educational settings has mostly been influenced by a ‘top-down process of curricular development’ (Gherzouli, 2019, p. 4). As such, students find themselves in front of a pre-determined curricular content that does not provide legitimate space for their own knowledge and lived experiences.

### 7.3.2 Scaffolding Reflection

Reflection is increasingly regarded as an essential skill for supporting students’ capacity for introspection, self-analysis, and open-mindedness (Argyris, 2004; Schön, 1991). Although reflection can be a solitary process, Freire (1996) suggested that it can be encouraged through dialogue and collaboration with others. In classroom talk, teacher and/or peer scaffolding is particularly important for nurturing the process of reflection and sharpening skills for description, justification, evaluation, and interpretation (McConachy, 2013). In a way, this involves students taking control of their learning and being responsible for what and how they learn. The analysis in chapters 5 and 6 showed that through specific facilitative interventions, students were able to critically engage with the content and challenge common sense assumptions in their knowledge.
As a teacher, I took constructive moves to elicit students’ conceptual knowledge and use it as a resource for interaction. If students are to learn from one another’s dispositions, then these ideas needed to be revealed and brought to everyone’s attention to draw on (McConachy, 2018). Unquestionably, students entered the class with certain established assumptions and ways of knowing in the world; bringing these perceptions to the fore for analysis is a precursor to comparing and contrasting the new ideas so that these can be discovered, challenged, expanded, or reconstructed. Undertaking the role of the facilitator, I attempted to enhance this by generating opportunities for these assumptions to occur. For instance, I included class activities that 1) encouraged the brainstorming of ideas in a free-flow manner; this allowed students to think freely and generate ideas quickly (see task 1 – The Label Card Activity, section 5.3.1, Chapter 5). 2) create a competitive learning environment and increase motivation to participate (see task 1- The Poster Activity, section 6.1.1, Chapter 6). This task proved useful in giving students a little pressure to perform and compete against other teams to create their own content 3) provided visual aids (e.g., images, videos, see e.g., task 2- Provoking Dissonance Through Multimodality, section 6.1.2, Chapter 6) which helped in the enriching of many-voicedness in discourse (Vice, 1997; Bakhtin, 1986), and portrayed meanings rather than abstract observations (Leavy, 2009).

Reflective thinking is not impulsive, it is a process that requires effort, motivation, and engagement (Gelter, 2003). Particularly important to scaffolding students’ reflection was the use of questioning techniques. As a teacher, I needed to create impetus for thinking and reflection. Apart from managing class routines, requesting students’ attention, or meeting some other instructional purpose, I used questions to elicit further articulation of ideas, making these available for collective probing (Morgan & Saxton, 2006). This, for example, can be seen in chapter 5 (section 5.2) where I acted deliberately to provoke more reflection on the issue of tradition sustainably and social change. This was done through an elicitation move (see extract
5.2, section 5.2) that was not only addressed to Deena, who provoked the notion of social change, but also to everyone in the class to try and reflect on the factors that help sustain traditions. This helped elicit contextual knowledge on the cultural, religious, and political variables that control change and stability in society. These students were emphasising, articulating, and critiquing how things function in society, while some were advocating the role of these systems (see Alia, Saba, Farah’s responses), others were expressing discontent with it (see Deena). Something similar occurred in the second lesson on ethnic stereotypes where students were able to develop contextual awareness in dialogue (Manning. 2010). This took place by tracing the social and political roots of stereotypes of Kabyle and Orani groups (see extracts 6.8, 6.9, 6.11, sections 6.1.2 and 6.1.3, Chapter 6).

Probing has also been a useful scaffolding technique. Quite similar to the method of questioning, probing was a strategy that I used to examine conclusions that students have drawn from a particular activity (see extract 6.7, section 6.1.2, Chapter 6), to push them to think about the veracity of certain assumptions (see extract 5.1, section 5.2, Chapter 5), or to seek a deeper exploration of the problem and examine its foundation to identify what underlies it (see extract 5.4, section 5.3, Chapter 5). Moreover, these attempts for scaffolding allowed for a collective sharing of ideas, which in turn increased capacity to notice the assumptions that contradict each other, thus pointing out any discrepancies (see extract 6.1, section 6.1.1, Chapter 6). It also encouraged a collective process of scrutiny of the assumptions put forward and uncovering how these relate to wider structural considerations. Additionally, an important element of these interactions is that they allowed learners to see situations and actions through the eyes of others, during this time, alternative perspectives start to emerge which can then ‘provide a catalyst for re-examining, complexifying and decentring from conventionalized ways of understanding’ (McConachy, 2018, p. 152).
Additional aspects of scaffolding also included aiding the interaction to move forward especially, at certain moments where the dialogue did not necessarily manifest apparent consensus among students. Here, it was important for me to make use of a repertoire of talk strategies to respond to students’ arguments and disputational moments, by for example, asking certain students to clarify their assumptions (see extract 6.1, section 6.1, Chapter 6) or by asking everyone to listen carefully to the other person’s contribution to the dialogue. In many cases, such strategies not only allowed all voices to be heard and validated but also facilitated the progression of dialogue while maintaining shared authority and power with students.

These insights are in line with the findings of Jennings et al (2010) which emphasised the central role of the teacher as a facilitator in soliciting students’ voices and opening up spaces for critical reflection and problematisation of societal discourses and stigmatising stereotypical images of youth in society. On a general level, these findings confirm Giroux’s (1988), Freire’s (1993) Mezirow’s (1978) view of teachers as ‘transformative intellectuals’, whose role in the classroom can significantly help sharpen students’ critical thinking and consciousness (see section 2.1.3.4, Chapter 2 for a discussion on the role of teachers in CP classrooms).

### 7.3.3 Creating Safety Nets

A pedagogical climate that supports participation and an honest sharing of ideas, particularly in relation to difficult matters of race, discrimination and oppression is key to critical consciousness (Holley & Steiner, 2005). CP assumes that critical dialogue can exist in an environment where all students feel that they have the right to speak, that this right will be respected by others, and that all ideas will be responded to respectfully with no harm attached. This is not to imply that safe spaces are free of conflict or discomfort. A basic feature of critical dialogue is that it pushes students to move outside of their comfort zones. To do so requires some level of discomfort or struggle with who we are and what we believe in (Tomoka, 2009;
Holly & Steiner, 2005). Therefore, in a place where dominant ideologies are challenged, it is expected that students experience tension as they grapple with ‘new concepts and challenging social issues at a cognitive level, while they also experience them affectively, either internally or externally’ (Jehangir, 2012, p. 3). The need therefore to create a space that welcomes these myriad voices and fosters constructive dialogue becomes greater than ever.

On a foundational level, it was essential to begin the course by creating a set of ethical discussion guidelines (Hyde & Ruth, 2002). These rules included, for example, the need to voice opinions without being offensive to others, carefully listening to others and trying to understand their viewpoint. At the time, this proved beneficial for maintaining a climate of inclusion and respect amongst the students. It also helped students feel secure enough to openly voice their views, beliefs and intimate experiences with social judgements, regional stereotypes, and discrimination without fear of reprehension or ridicule from others (refer to Deena, Alia, and Celia’s narratives in Chapters 5 and 6, sections 5.2; 5.3.2; 7.3.1, Chapter 7 respectively).

Having an ethic of empathy and caring was also a necessary element in my effort to provide a safe space. I realised at an early stage of this course that I wanted my students to engage in a ‘humane’ experience that provided care and compassion for them instead of something too abstract, technical, or emotionally distant. Martin (1992) argues for an approach to critical learning that provides care and value for other people’s subjectivities. As an educator, it was important for me to maintain a sense of emotional and cognitive proximity for my students; this included having empathy, being ready to deeply connect with their experiences of judgements and reducing emotional intensity in the classroom (see extract 5.3, section 5.2). There were also occasions where I tried to follow on moments when students felt distressed or emotional by offering them support and encouragement (side talks and personal communication).
Educators in CP have also suggested other ways to facilitate the creation of safe spaces in the classroom. Recommended characteristics included transforming the physical environment by arranging the seating in a way that is conducive to classroom discussion (Holly & Steiner, 2005). Students in the classroom negotiated safe spaces by opting for a circular seating arrangement. This not only helped instil a sense of belonging and cohesion in the classroom but also contributed positively to the students’ participation and enthusiasm for dialogue and deconstructed any positions of power or authority among myself and the students.

These findings are in keeping with previous theoretical contributions from the fields of social justice, CP, and pedagogy of discomfort (Boler, 1999; Berlak, 2004) which often assume that for the ‘critical’ to happen’ (Luke, 2004, p. 26-27), some ‘discomfort’ should be expected if conscientization is part of our pedagogical vision. However, these theoretical notions also foreground the importance of creating safe spaces for students to feel empowered and develop voice.

### 7.4 Summary

This chapter has attempted to answer the overarching research questions that guided this study. In this chapter, I have argued that the orchestration of multiple pedagogical decisions and mediums has helped encourage critical and creative dialogue on issues of identity, stereotypes, racism, and social inequities. This purposeful combination of critical approaches has created a space for critical consciousness to emerge, not as an independent action, but as a collective performance that is constructed through recursive manifestations of criticality.

In this chapter, it was suggested that students’ engagements in partnership with the teacher were key to eliciting conscientization. With such a point of departure, attempts to create a safe space in which difficult dialogue can take place, authoritarian modes are minimised, and
opportunities for reflection and analysis are facilitated have been conducive to criticality development. Through exploration of the self, students developed awareness of the fluid and complex nature of their identity. Through dialogue, they engaged in naming, problematising, deconstructing and sometimes renaming essentialist discourses of the ethnic other. In spaces of conflict and contestation, they collectively looked for answers that questioned the construction of stereotypes and their validity, they critically reflected on the origin and meanings of the discourses that naturalise everyday realities, and they arrived at the understanding of these definitions as products of social and ideological standpoints (Hinton, 2020).

The challenges and concerns of moving toward critical consciousness are many (Tomoka, 2009). The findings have revealed that this study is no exception. Challenging one's ideas and perspectives about other people can create a type of cognitive overload which can result in feelings of anger, discomfort, or alienation. (Tomoka, ibid; Ruschman, 2014). This can block pathways for dialogue. Indeed, the findings reported some ‘difficult’ moments during which dialogue has been disrupted, particularly when certain students felt less empowered to challenge or reject dominant views in the conversation or when others voiced reservations or even resistance to examine conventional ways of seeing. However, it was also shown that at times, these difficult dialogues were conducive to criticality at both the personal and interpersonal levels. It seems that this difficulty, or otherwise discomfort was a key moment for some students to call into question their prior beliefs. At other times, it was also crucial for bringing in additional perspectives that challenged and disagreed with the interpretations formulated beforehand. This newly developed diversity of perspectives contributed to the progression of ideas and lead to a larger and more complex understanding of the social issues being examined.
Chapter Eight: Conclusion

8.0 Introduction

This study has sought to provide a contextualised interpretation of the ongoing, promising, and non-linear process of critical consciousness as developed in classroom interaction. One of the aims of this study was to fill a gap in the field of intercultural learning - that which explores how criticality is negotiated within classroom talk. I used qualitative research to collect data, consisting of recorded classroom interactions, interviews, and reflective student journals. Analysis of empirical data found that factors such as dialogue, teacher scaffolding, reflection and problem posing increased the likelihood of opening up spaces for critical intercultural learning and consciousness. In this final chapter, I aim to 1) address the research questions and provide a summary of the main findings; 2) outline the practical implications and limitations of this work; 3) discuss the contributions of this study; 4) present directions for future research; 5) and sketch realistic reflections from my own experience in teaching for critical practice.

8.1 Main findings

This case study sought to respond to the following research questions:

RQ1: How do students view the self and imagined other?

RQ2: How is critical consciousness developed through dialogue?

- How do students construct more complex understandings of identity?
- How do students critically engage with stereotypes of self and imagined other?
- In what other ways can critical consciousness manifest itself in dialogue?

RQ3: How does the teacher contribute to the promotion of critical consciousness in the classroom?
8.1.1 Research Question 1: How Do Students View the Self and Imagined Other?

As previously mentioned, I embarked on this study with the assumption that the notion of interculturality, if seen and taught from an essentialist/nationalist perspective which dichotomises products, practices and perspectives could lead to false representations and stereotypes (Baker, 2017; Holliday, 2018). With this assumption, the first aim of this intervention was to explore what type of discourses were prevailing in the learners’ minds with regard to various representations of cultural/ethnic groups and practices. Analysis of data has shown that when students were encouraged to generate their beliefs and expectations of particular cultural or ethnic groups, they constructed generalised and categorical assumptions that overlooked the multiplicity and heterogeneity of these group members. The stereotypical images or perceptions of the imagined other, such as the Asians, British or Americans were overly simplistic, positive, and sometimes idealising; whilst perceptions of the self as Algerian, Muslim and Southern were seen as excluded and marginalised. The data also suggested that students constructed unitary identities for the majority of ethnic groups in Algeria; these descriptions varied between positive and negative evaluations, though the latter were significantly more present in comparison to their assumptions of Anglophone and/or Asian communities. Importantly, it was also concluded, that in the case of student participants, it was difficult to define the distinctiveness by which students identify themselves as self/other or as in/out-group members. This finding supports Dervin’s (2013) concept of mixed intersubjectivity which point out the inconsistency and fluidity of individuals’ identifications and belongingness.

8.1.2 Research Question 2: How is Critical Consciousness Developed Through Dialogue?

Drawing on the theoretical concepts of Freire (1993), Mezirow (1978) and Bakhtin (1986), the study aimed to explore how students develop their CC through classroom interaction and
reflection on constructs of identity, ethnicity, and stereotypes. I highlight the specific aspects of students’ development of CC through interaction below.

8.1.2.1 How Do Students Construct More Complex Understandings of Identity?

According to the available data, it was found that students were able to recognise the intersectionality and fluidity of their multiple identities. In light of this, the personal/social identity activity proved as a useful platform for challenging students’ understanding of identity beyond its simplistic framework, further broadening their comprehension that one’s multiple identity repertoires, such as ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality are always intersecting. Moreover, reflecting on these identities in the context of a facilitated dialogic group stimulated personal reflection around how individuals defined themselves to others across different situations and contextual conditions. This coming together of multiple voices enabled students to gain new insights and understandings about other cultural identities as well as their own. These findings suggest that adopting a parallel framework of engagement can contribute much to EFL students’ understanding of diversity, allowing them to approach and question barriers of inclusion, and engage with the complexities inherent in the concepts of identity development and group identification. As argued before, without exploration of the multi-dimensional aspects of identity, intercultural learning may increase the likelihood of essentialism and stereotypes (Baker, 2015).

Furthermore, through exchanging information about their personal and social identities, students had the opportunity to be exposed to various perspectives. This exposure increased attention to within-group differences and allowed students to see the differences and similarities shared with their classmates. Thus, increasing respect, awareness of oneself and others, and understanding of difference (Carter, 2008).
8.1.2.2 How Do Students Critically Engage with Stereotypes of Self and Imagined Other?

The findings of the present study revealed that critical pedagogical interventions created openings for critical reflection, dialogue and conscientization. However, this important aspect of learning has mainly been related to engagement with ethnic, religious, regional, and gendered stereotypes. When prompted to reflect on the stereotypes they constructed of the British, American, and Asian populations, students showed patterns of reluctance and switched to talking about stereotypes in their local context. While it is not very clear why such poor patterns of engagement occurred, one possible reason could relate to students’ lack of interest in these groups.

In the present study, the students’ dialogic engagements were broadly understood through the Bakhtinian notions of polyphony and heteroglossia (1986). Accordingly, I have taken the view that dialogue is not limited to the mere exchange of isolated linguistic entities, rather dialogue represents an exchange of words and utterances which carry with them a multiplicity of references to other cultural, historical, and social meanings. These multiplicities of references co-exist together and bring a variety of perspectives and points of view that belong to the sociocultural context in which they were constructed (Bakhtin, ibid). Through the processes of exchanging, explaining, questioning, and commenting on these perspectives, students are brought to new and arguably more critical understandings and interpretations of the phenomenon under study (Alexander, 2008).

On a general level, the data suggested that, in sites of contention and difficult dialogue, students began to exercise and develop critical consciousness by 1) questioning, interrogating, and challenging each other’s commonsensical knowledge; 2) developing an introspective attitude towards the construction of stereotypes; 3) coming to understand how much of what they knew is shaped by oppressive forces, that is developing awareness of the powerful and hegemonic
forces at play in their social world and of the ways in which these forces have come to create unequal categorial positionings of self and otherness.

Particularly relevant to our understanding of these processes of critical learning are Bakhtin’s (1986) notions of heteroglossia and polyphony. First, heteroglossia allowed us to understand how students were drawing on a number of social and cultural discourses to bring in new perspectives to the dialogic interplay, sometimes for the purposes of justifying stereotypes (e.g., accounts of personal experience), challenging or affirming existing ones. Whereas the notion of polyphony illustrated how the many, oppositional and multiple ideological standpoints, emerging from the participants’ experiences as well as the texts and materials used in class, held the potential for re-examining what has been taken for granted, deconstructing the perception of a group as a single entity, realising that individual realities are diverse, complex and should not be homogenised, and reflecting on stereotypes as products of wider ideologies and systems of oppression (Freire, 1993). Moreover, Mezirow’s (1978) concept of disorienting dilemma was found particularly useful in creating a type of disequilibrium in thinking, which in turn, gave impetus for the critical re-examination of previously accepted or unquestioned beliefs and frames of reference.

8.1.2.3 In What Other Ways Can Critical Consciousness Manifest Itself in Dialogue?

In addition to developing awareness of the complex and dynamic nature of their identities as well as reflecting on stereotypes as ideological constructs, students also manifested their CC through a critique of some aspects of discrimination and exclusion in their own lives and society at large. These included issues of regional stereotyping, religious othering, and gender discrimination, among other things. In class, students showed awareness of the social, political, and religious conditions which shape, and place constraints on their social lives. They shared personal experiences with social judgements and bullying related to attire, religious practices, and physical appearances. These shared anecdotes acted as a springboard for increasing their
awareness and interrogation of unequal social and racial practices in their contexts. In these dialogic spaces, students were able to link this critical understanding of their own lives to larger issues related to oppression and inequality. Jones (2006) maintains that critical dialogues which allow students to safely share perspectives and critiques of mainstream discourses of inequality in their contexts are likely to increase their socio-political consciousnesses and provoke their agency to produce social change.

Another relevant dimension in the students’ development of CC which this study has shown is that critical learning should not always be assumed as a straightforward process. Indeed, some learners may show signs of resistance or avoidance to question their previously held beliefs and they may show reluctance to grapple with the other voices which challenge their thinking (i.e., peers or teachers). In a sense, there could be a number of reasons as to why some students resist pedagogies that disrupt mainstream discourses of inequality, one potential motive that this study has highlighted could be related to the need to affirm agency, develop voice and independent thinking (McLaren, 1994).

Overall, this whole process of critical consciousness was found to be messy, non-linear, and not always ‘productive’, that is to say, that students were not all the time found to engage in critical dialogue. In fact, at times, they were only building on each other’s ideas in a cumulative manner (Mercer, 2000). Relatedly the findings have also revealed that students do not just jump immediately to critical dialogue; they wander through it, revisiting personal experiences, downgrading certain groups, and privileging others, constructing and de-constructing group hierarchies, resisting, jockeying, and making superficial connections as they try to work their ways through the conversation.
8.1.3 Research Question 3: How Does the Teacher Contribute to The Promotion of Critical Consciousness in The Classroom?

Related to the earlier findings, it was found that my facilitation of the course played an important part in the promotion of critical consciousness. First, breaking the traditional authoritarian model of the teacher as the dominant transmitter of knowledge and replacing it with a two-way communication process where both myself and my students play an active part in the construction of knowledge. This dialogical approach presents teachers and students as equal partners in dialogue and provides an opportunity for students to increase their autonomy and independence in learning (Shih, 2018). In class, I attempted to reposition my students as valuable sources of knowledge; to achieve this, I involved them in the construction of the syllabus and acknowledged them as co-creators in the process of curriculum construction (Thiessen, 2006). The analysis of data indicated that students preferred to discuss issues related to racism, prejudice, and political aspects in contemporary Algeria. Accordingly, I aimed to develop materials and learning activities which built on these interests and provided a platform for students to voice their concerns, and promote their development of CC.

Second, my role in scaffolding reflection has proved especially helpful in extending the dialogic interactions in class and opening new spaces for conscientization, especially when the discussion at times did not seem to move forward. As a teacher, I tried to actively listen to the students’ contributions in dialogue and ask them to attend to the interpretations and meanings made by their discussion peers. As a clarifier/prober, I sought clarifications and prompted students to extend their ideas, which, for example, helped in eliciting contextual knowledge on the social construction of stereotypes in Algeria. I also attempted to identify points of conflict and contradictions to get them to think about the accuracy of their judgements and open up to complexity.
Thirdly, creating a safe environment for learning was also found valuable for creating spaces for conscientization and critical reflection. As shown in the previous findings, dialoguing about issues of stereotypes, prejudice and inequality can be a daunting challenge for both educators and students. As students ‘wrestle’ with new concepts and perspectives that challenge the dominant ideologies, they may experience a sense of volatility and vulnerability (Henry, 1994). During these tension-filled moments, students need to feel safe and empowered to share their voices without fear of judgement or criticism. One strategy that I used in class was establishing a set of discussion rules which emphasised active listening, and interrogation of perspectives in a respectful manner (Hyde & Ruth, 2002). Offering emotional support and creating a physical space that promotes inclusion and belonging (e.g., circular seating arrangements) were also found useful in aiding students to feel safe and share their unique insights with one another. As previously argued in this study, moments of difficult dialogue are necessary for cultivating a space for encountering unfamiliar perspectives and deconstructing social myths (Tomoka, 2009; Holly & Steiner, 2005). For this to take place, students need to feel safe enough to take risks and openly voice their personal viewpoints and feel empowered to change those of others (Gayle et al., 2013).

### 8.2 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study add to a limited but growing body of knowledge exploring the possibilities for critical pedagogical approaches. The study constitutes one of the first pieces of research in Algerian EFL contexts, about the use of critical intercultural pedagogy to stimulate the process of critical consciousness as constructed in classroom discourse. The present study offers some important implications which can be used to inform the work of those who are concerned with implementing critical intercultural pedagogies in their classrooms, not only at the place where this study was conducted but also in other educational and cultural contexts.
Findings revealed that pedagogical strategies that use the experience of dissonance, dialogue, and reflection can help learners develop the ability to analyse and reflect on issues of identity, stereotypes, inequity, and marginalisation. For the classroom experience to be more meaningful and engaging for students, teachers should move from a banking method of education to a problem-posing one (Freire, 1993). As I wrote earlier (see chapter 2), a problem-posing approach can happen in different ways and through various classroom practices; it could be done by activating dialogue, making learning relevant by drawing on the students’ backgrounds and experiences, sharing authority in class, fostering opportunities for critical reflection, making the learning more engaging through the use of media and technologies, and giving voice to students to express their unique realities, cultures and identities.

As indicated previously, one of the main aims of this study was to unpack some of the complexities of critical consciousness, its tensions, contradictions, and possibilities in the natural context of the classroom. While it is my hope that the planning, scaffolding, and implementation of this coursework might prove useful to other educators who seek to implement critical pedagogies in their classrooms, I do not intend to present this form of teaching as inherently free of emotional and/or ethical complexities. However, rather than abandoning such emancipatory pedagogies, this study recommends Bolar & Zembylas’ (2014) approach to creating a pedagogy of compassion which aims at creating a balance between discomfort and care through careful and facilitative engagement.

Moreover, I have stated earlier that adopting a non-essentialist approach to intercultural learning can help students to explore and understand identity and belonging as multidimensional and complex. Here again, the use of problematisation and dialogue can expose students to the notion of culture, not as static and given, but as ongoing, transforming and in constant flux. In fact, this is where the EFL instructional programs in Algeria could invest a little more. Instead of devoting energy to developing materials that exclusivize the
improvement of linguistic competence, and present the English language as the exclusive property of Anglophone populations (Douidi, 2021; Rabehi, 2021; Bouslama & Benaissi, 2018), critical intercultural teaching can combine a focus on language with instructional content that offers students opportunities to identify, challenge and reflect upon essentialist constructions of otherness, and inspire them to look at culture from a more fluid and dynamic perspective.

In addition to encouraging students to reflect on the multiplicity of cultural and ethnic identities and decentre from their taken-for-granted assumptions, the findings have broadly shed light on the usefulness of journaling in creating personal spaces for students to reflect upon, and work through the feelings they experienced in response to the materials, topics, and discussions they had with others in class, including feelings of unrest, confusion, appreciation, or discomfort. However, the study also reported on the practical difficulties of getting students to complete their journal entries and reflect further on the issues they had seen in class. Although it was not always clear why students in this study were reluctant to provide journaling insights, one possible reason could have been their lack of time given their busy study schedules. Indeed, journal writing can be conceived as laborious and time-consuming. Anggraini (2018) suggests that strategies such as keeping a diary writing schedule and using awards can increase the students’ motivation to write in their journals and promote reflective learning. By the same token, teachers can also invite their learners to pose anonymous questions or comments that they wish to address to their teacher or discussion buddies. The aim of this strategy is to improve the pedagogical practice while also ensuring that any difficult or troubled knowledge does not become counterproductive to students’ wellbeing and learning experiences.

Finally, this study also has implications with regard to curriculum negotiation and classroom authority. An attempt to dominate the classroom climate with my own ideas and perspectives as the only legitimate form of knowledge would have been both undemocratic and limiting.
with regard to the possibilities and educational experience that me and my students would have been able to co-create. This is especially important for the context of Algerian schooling, which embraces the traditional authoritarian approaches to education and limits consideration of students’ perspectives and cultural experiences (Berriche & Merrouche, 2021). As argued earlier in chapter two, by monopolising power in the classroom, teachers run the risk of obstructing the creative load that students may offer from their rich cultural background and/or life experiences. In fact, negotiating curricular contents can be a way of avoiding what McLaren (1998) called ‘framing’; that is avoiding imposing certain views and ways of perceiving reality as commonsensical and creating opportunities for a range of perspectives to be recognised and negotiated by students in the classroom space. By allowing students to take centre stage by choosing thematic interests, working in groups, using their first language, and sharing their work with everyone, I opened spaces for both dialogue and conscientization in the classroom.

8.3 Limitations of the Study

This study set out to examine the nature of implementing critical intercultural pedagogies in an Algerian EFL classroom. While this offers practical contributions to the field of critical language teaching/learning in Algeria and elsewhere, a number of important limitations need to be acknowledged.

First, making the decision to include references to national, religious, and ethnic groups, such as British, Muslim, or Chaouis may have had a counter-effect on what I aimed to achieve in this intervention. Though my intention was to problematise narratives which construct these groups as homogenous and look for ways that de-essentialise them, I acknowledge that using these labels may have entailed the risk of reinforcing these constructs as static and limiting. However, as I explained earlier, the main reason for using these terms was that no other terminologies were linguistically available.
Second, the scope of this study was also limited by its exclusive focus on my own practice inside the classroom. As part of my doctoral studies, this research has been an individual endeavour. As such, it has not extended efforts to the whole educational institution. Even though working with eight students over a period of eight weeks has yielded valuable insights, the study could have been more advantageous had I had the opportunity to work with a larger number of students or co-plan with other teachers to create more educational opportunities for CP and dialogue. Future attempts could include a collaborative effort to support changes in the institutional culture. The benefits of collaborative action research have been found to improve both policy and practice as well as students’ learning and well-being (McNiff et al., 2003).

Moreover, a limitation characteristic of case study research is that it does not allow space for generalisations (Yin, 2014). This study had a very specific scope; it examined a specific number of students within a specific context. Findings could have been dissimilar if the intervention had been taken in a different type of university, or in an area located in the Northern contexts of Algeria. Although in this study, students’ background as language learners or their gender did not affect the openings for criticality, it is possible that dissimilar findings could have been deduced had the syllabus been implemented in other educational disciplines or in single-sex institutions.

Managing my dual role as a researcher and teacher in this study has also been limiting in the sense that it has restricted my ability to facilitate the sessions and do research at the same time. Because I had to divide my efforts between teaching and researching, I may have missed opportunities during the teaching to create more openings for criticality and/or address issues of silence and dominant voices in the classroom. Failure to extend on different perspectives was a shortcoming that I believe could have had a role in reinforcing stereotypes instead of challenging them. For instance, in lesson two, when Alia commented ‘backward’ ‘lifestyle is rubbish’ (see section 6.1.1, extract 6.2, Chapter 6). Instead of urging everyone to move on to
the next ethnic group, perhaps the discussion would have been more effective if I had taken up on this emergent observation about the Chaouis and their way of life and generated a set of decoding questions such as, is what Alia is saying represents the truth? Is it a fact or a personal opinion? Whose understanding of reality does it convey? Who decides what is real/truthful in this context? How do you think Alia came to construct this assumption? Is it biased or neutral? Furthermore, it might have been more advantageous for students if I had opened up room for exploration, reflexivity, and analytical thinking on the role of personal experience/social media in the construction and dissemination of these assumptions.

Moreover, throughout my teaching, I sometimes failed to properly interpret/address the silences that pervaded my classroom. Perhaps the silences were due to a lack of confidence in speaking openly or a reluctance to offer uncommon perspectives. In a sense, it is difficult to delineate the exact reasons behind these silences because there was no directed attention to them at the moment. Perhaps, I could have taken more time to address this issue in my classroom and focus my energy on locating pedagogical approaches which could more convincingly interrupt these silences.

One final limitation in this study relates to the analysis and reporting of post-course interviews. As previously mentioned in chapter three, students were once again interviewed after the intervention had taken place to elicit reflective data about their experience in the course overall. However, during the analysis of this data, I had concerns about the kind of language I used with my students when interviewing them. For example, when asking them ‘which part of the course challenged their thinking?’ or ‘if they noticed any kind of growth in their thinking in relation to identity and stereotypes?’, I often found myself (inadvertently) ‘throwing’ evaluative lines such as ‘that’s good to hear’, ‘good’, ‘very good’, ‘yes, that sounds like a fair conclusion’ in my interaction with them. In discussing these outcomes with my supervisor, I was brought to the awareness that such evaluative language could have impacted my students’
responses by conveying misleading approval for responses. At the time, I was not aware of the risk of expressing personal opinions or feedback that indicates approval. Thus, at the risk of compromising the validity of my data, I decided to exclude the findings of post-course interviews. To avoid similar pitfalls in the future, (Knott, 2008) recommends interviewers to practice interviewer neutrality, which can be accomplished by using a ‘normal tone of voice throughout the interview process’ (p.2) and avoiding the expressing of our personal opinions.

8.4 Contributions of the Study

Based on the data presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, this qualitative case study makes a number of theoretical and didactic contributions to the existing literature. First, the study contributes to a significantly less explored realm in the field of intercultural education in Algeria. Although a number of studies have been conducted to investigate the promotion of intercultural learning in the English classroom, little appears to be done to trace the realisations of critical intercultural learning in these settings. The thesis also adds to the growing body of research exploring the possibilities of critical approaches in the deconstruction of stereotypes (Houghton et al, 2013; Yulita, 2012). Theoretically, the study clarifies the affordances for critical intercultural learning and provides a contextualised description for the use of critical and dialogic pedagogies in the management of cultural and ethnic stereotypes in the intercultural classroom. The integration of dialogic theory with elements from Mezirow’s (1978) transformative theory and Freire’s (1993) critical pedagogy has offered a unique way of identifying how students engage in interactional work and create a dialogic space where previous frames of reference are questioned, and discourses of otherness are problematised. On a more specific level, the discourse analytic approach that I took to analyse sequences of students’ talks was really valuable precisely because it reflected the way in which students responded to reflective prompts, elaborated on previous contributions, and critically assessed underlying assumptions following the disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, ibid). Herein, creating
a state of dissonance in the students’ minds allowed them to re-examine their commonsensical knowledge leading to the discussion on the construction of stereotypes and their deeper socio-cultural roots. It was through this dynamic ‘give-and-take’ process that spaces for conscientization were opened, and higher levels of reasoning were reached. The tracing of such interactional work in this study also contributes to current studies looking to enact critical and reflective practices in their classrooms. This study has empirically shown the complex nature of developing students’ critical consciousness; this development did not happen in a linear sequence as students fluctuated between passivity and criticality at different points of their learning. Overall, this study has provided a practical example of critical and dialogic pedagogies in the language classroom; the findings add scholarly knowledge to the growing body of research tracing the realisation of criticality in the modern/foreign language classroom and illuminating the role that language educators can play in the creation of socially responsible and critically aware citizens of the world (Guilherme, 2002; Byram, 2008, 2014).

8.5 Directions for Future Research

The emergent findings of this study suggest several directions for future research. First, as stated in the review of literature, previous studies which investigated the status of intercultural learning in Algerian EFL curricula have shown that much pedagogical attention and learning is focused on developing the learners’ communicative competence and knowledge of native speaker speech communities. It would be interesting to conduct future studies which investigate the factors behind the delay in moving towards a critical cosmopolitan orientation of culture and language (e.g., attention to the international speakership of English, ELF) (Baker, 2009). Future research might also explore the pedagogical potential of computer-mediated communication (CMC) between Algerian EFL students and individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including but not limited to native speakers of English. As
shown in this study, students especially tended to construct positive and grossly homogenous discourses of native speaker populations. Perhaps, future CMC learning interventions can help support the development of a more complex and fluid conceptualisation of identity and membership. In fact, a number of studies have reported on the educational benefits of CMC in increasing language students’ critical intercultural awareness and reducing cultural stereotypes (Liaw & English, 2017; Tavakoli et al, 2010; Wach, 2015).

What would also be desirable in future research is to investigate the use of critical pedagogies in disrupting stereotypical views via a longitudinal study, and/or possibly, ethnographic research. As seen in this study, the class met for eight weeks only and even though the data showed that students were able to discursively problematise the boundaries enclosed around constructions of identity and culture, it does not mean that this will have a long-lasting effect. As argued before, developing critical consciousness is an ongoing, complex, and contradictory process; students were not always engaged in critical dialogue. In fact, at times they were reconstructing stereotypes that they had deconstructed in earlier talks. It is possible, therefore, that they may draw on essentialist categorisations or assumptions of others in other situations and contexts. Thus, future ethnographic work in this domain may help generate a more nuanced understanding of the complex and messy process of critical dialogue and consciousness.

As identified in chapter two, Freire (1993)’s notion of conscientization involves a dialectical relationship between action and reflection. In this study, I have solely attempted to shed light on the students’ development of critical abilities through dialogue. Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct a study which examines the dual aims of developing the students’ critical learning and ability to provoke transformative praxis in their context. Relatedly, it would also be interesting for future research to investigate the role of students’ emotional investment in fostering conscientization. In fact, several CP authors have underscored the importance of
emotions in the process of conscientization (Bolton, 1979; Horton & Freire, 1990; McLaren, 1988; Tinning, 2002).

8.6 Teacher Reflections and Concluding Remarks

As I noted in chapter three of this dissertation, CP was not central to the planning or delivery of this coursework. It may seem inconceivable but in wanting to encourage my students to develop a questioning attitude towards fixed constructs of self and other, I was stepping foot towards critical pedagogy. As I embarked on this pedagogical journey, which has also been my very first teaching experience, I focused my energies on locating pedagogical tools that could help bring out the very real and all-too pervasive assumptions which underpin much of our view of the cultural and/or ethnic other. I selected materials which, to my mind, could help elicit reflection and critical deconstruction of the, albeit complex and sometimes ambiguous systems of oppression that have/or still continue to marginalise certain groups and ensure privilege for others in society. During the implementation of the syllabus, I tried to create pedagogical conditions that utilise more learner-centred approaches, autonomy, and dialogue. Although I link these decisions to the theoretical notions of CP now, I cannot claim that CP was part of my pedagogical vision during the planning stage of this intervention. In fact, it would be more candid to say that insights gained from my research data, personal reflections, and further literature readings enriched my understanding of the pedagogical practice I conducted in this study, which I now recognise as very much CP-oriented.

When I began my teaching, I had the desire to cultivate spaces for critical dialogue, reflection, and inquiry on issues of identity and stereotypes. Having internalised a managerial or at times, controlled form of teaching, surely stemming from my own socialisation with traditional schooling, I did not expect that my classroom could at times transform into a space of rising tensions, particularly when exploring contentious issues such as gender roles, traditions, and
religious regulations (like in lesson one, for example). Not aware of experiencing critical consciousness myself or even the discomfort and ambiguity associated with critical learning, I sometimes felt plagued by my own fears to lose control. I began to wonder if, in fact, my decision to dwell on these complexities was worth this emotional messiness. Not only that I became anxious that at any point of these tensions, one of my students could leave the classroom with a baggage of discomfort, unsettled anger, or fragility, but I also had fears that some of them might leave the classroom as research participants. This was an idea that seemed incredibly jeopardising at the time. As I look back now, I realise that while such pedagogies may have a transformative potential, they also carry a certain degree of discomfort, especially when it relates to engaging in critical self-discovery, challenging prevailing beliefs and practices, and working through difficult conversations regarding social inequity and discrimination (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). Not only does this require due care from the teacher’s side, but it also necessitates a high degree of emotional labour from all engaging parties. As revealed in this study, the course content and heated discussions regarding ethnic stereotyping, diversity and racism in Algeria have sometimes contributed to feelings of discomfort, anger, or frustration among the students, especially when it came to sharing hard truths or troubling experiences of racism. To effectively support my students’ emotional ambivalence to such challenging situations, it proved productive to build a trusting, inclusive and especially compassionate learning environment. Here, I was intentional about giving my students time to process their feelings and reflect on the discomfort they were sensing and its impact on their learning and identity, sometimes during side talk (private) briefings, or through our online chatting groups. Perhaps most importantly, the facilitative actions of active listening, demonstrating empathy and positive non-verbal communication (e.g., eye contact), normalising emotions and discussing behaviours without shaming as well as giving direct
feedback on how we can reflect on our past experiences were all found effective in transcending these barriers and increasing students' participation.

Additionally, as I was going through the layered texts of my data, I often asked myself if there would have been more value in my teaching had I adopted a less neutral stance in relation to the issues discussed in class. Surely, my previous experiences with authoritarian schooling, and perhaps my position as a novice teacher, both account for my neutrality which on several occasions made me fear conflict or potential discomfort with my students. During my data analysis, I, sometimes, was not able to comfortably embrace my tendency toward neutrality. However, what I did not know at the time was that adopting a neutral stance did help minimise any potential risks for indoctrination. Not being cautious about instilling my personal beliefs could have, first compromised my attempts to create a democratic space for my students, probably resulting in yet another issue of power and hierarchy in the classroom. And second, it could have posed significant challenges in working constructively with these students given the fact that they all had different political, social, and moral perspectives which sometimes clashed with my own. Pedagogically speaking, however, it can be argued that my approach to teaching must have had a specific ideological position to adopt in the first place. As argued by Giroux (2007) ‘teacher authority can never be neutral...It is always broadly political and interventionist in terms of the knowledge-effects it produces, the classroom experiences it organizes, and the future it presupposes’ (p.2). Given this perspective, I needed to examine my work and question my own choices in this project. As the instructor/designer of the course, what did it really mean for me to educate for criticality? And if the critical dialogues I hoped to elicit in the classroom had any particular moral or political agenda to promote? Within this process of making the implicit explicit, I came to recognise that one of my main objectives in this project was to address real inequalities of power at the social level, which were/ still continue to be demonstrated through stereotyping and discrimination. Herein, I wanted my
students to learn about stereotypes as products of inequality in society and I wanted them to develop a critique of oppression in their world. In the process of doing so, I was aware of the way power relations may play out in my class. It was, thus, vital for me not to prescribe any explicit epistemological frames of reference. Importantly, the aim was to enter into critical dialogue with the students rather than to impart knowledge in an authoritarian manner. In this form of pedagogy, students needed to be treated as critical agents; therefore, in many of the activities I designed, I aimed to expose them to as many knowledge claims, perspectives and critiques as possible; this I thought could help develop their capacity to critically evaluate perspectives and develop a healthy scepticism towards power while drawing attention to the injustices of the status quo and inequality in their world (Friere, 1993; Jennings et al. 2010). I also found it rewarding to avoid asking leading questions that would perhaps push my students to respond in a particular way. Additionally, dialogue and involvement with my academic supervisor- taking the role of a critical friend- was particularly useful in the regulation of bias, further helping me to identify any un-acknowledged worldviews or beliefs which could have influenced my design of the course or teaching practices in the classroom (Coghlan & Miller, 2014). It is therefore essential to acknowledge the role that my ideological positioning played in the construction and delivery of this intervention. This ongoing self-reflection and questioning of my position in class continues to feed my consciousness towards my role as a teacher educator, prompting me to question my role and responsibilities towards the implementation of critical intercultural learning in Algeria

This study sought to report on the growing body of work exploring the nexus between intercultural learning and criticality. In this thesis, I highlighted some of the complexities and possibilities of dialogic interaction in cultivating a sphere of critical learning and reflection on issues of identity, stereotypes, and culture. It is hoped that the findings of this study would
contribute to research and practice on the implementation of critical intercultural pedagogy in EFL settings.
References


Books.


Rassawi, R., & Degenardo, W. (2017). I don’t want to be imported or exported: Critical pedagogy and the English writing and research course in the UAE. International journal of critical pedagogy, 8(1), 60-84


APPENDICES

Appendix A – The Personal and Social Identity Wheel(s)

The Personal Identity Wheel

Three Adjectives to Describe Yourself

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________

Name
The Social Identity Wheel

1. Identities you think about most often
2. Identities you think about least often
3. Your own identities you would like to learn more about
4. Identities that have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself
5. Identities that have the greatest effect on how others perceive you

This lesson was Adopted and modified for use by the Program on Intergroup Relations and the Spectrum Centre, University of Michigan. Resource hosted by LSA Inclusive Teaching Initiative, University of Michigan (http://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/).
Appendix B – Reading Text 1: Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination

A person does not need to consciously realize that a social classification has occurred in order for psychological consequences to follow. Typically, even when a person does not consciously realize it, his or her mind classifies people by their gender, racial and ethnic group, and age. Other frequently used categories are perceived socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and religion. Additionally, when more information is known about a person, the categories can become more refined. For instance, the children above could be classified into "the class clown," "the Brainiac," "the bully." It is important to note that though your mind categorizes individuals into social groups, these categorizations may not always be correct. Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination exist because of the social category an individual is perceived to belong to, which may or may not correspond with an individual's own classification. So, Jeff thinks that vegetarians like sitar music. He has a picture in his head about what a vegetarian is like, and sitar music is included in it. A belief about a certain group of people is called a stereotype. Stereotypes can be positive or negative but are usually an exaggerated idea of what a group is like. For example, Jeff thinks that vegetarians are healthy and peace-loving. Those are positive stereotypes because they reflect well on the group. On the other hand, he also thinks that vegetarians are pedantic and holier-than-thou, which are negative stereotypes. Eddie thinks that meat eaters are all strong, due to all the protein they eat - that's a positive stereotype. But he also thinks that they don't care about the environment, which is a negative stereotype. Both positive and negative stereotypes can have a negative effect on a person. For example, one racial stereotype is that Asian students are really good at math. This is a positive stereotype, but it can make an Asian student feel pressure and feel like a failure if he isn't good at math, which is a negative outcome.

Stereotypes are exaggerated beliefs about a group of people. But what happens when someone takes it a step further and applies the stereotype to a specific person? Prejudice is a feeling towards a person based on their affiliation with a group. For example, Eddie thinks that meat eaters don't care about the environment, which is (as we've already seen) a stereotype. But if he decides that he doesn't like Jeff just based on the fact that Jeff eats meat, then he is being prejudiced. His feeling of dislike, which springs from his belief in a negative stereotype, is prejudiced. As with stereotypes, prejudices can be either positive or negative. For example, Jeff can decide that he really likes vegetarians, or he can decide that he really doesn't like vegetarians. If he likes them, it is a positive prejudice, whereas if he doesn't like them, it is a negative prejudice. The activated stereotypes and prejudices can, but not necessarily will, influence discrimination against individuals and groups. Discrimination is treating people in a particular way because of their group membership.

Text Adopted from Vladimir Gjorgjevski “Erasmus+ Training course: “Teaching methods in intercultural mixed areas”
Appendix C – Reading Text 2: Religious Conflicts in Algeria

From a historical point of view, during France’s occupation of Algeria, France has deliberately tried to influence the local Muslim population while maintaining a quasi-apartheid rule that disadvantages local Muslims who opposed assimilation culturally and religiously. Several laws sought to define multiple classes of citizenry based on religion: Napoleon’s (1965) law and the (1870) Décret Crémieux both set limits on the rights of Algerians based on religion. These laws denied Algerians fully citizenship unless they denounced their Muslim religion while granting local Christians and Jews full citizenship.

Algerians wrote and fought relentlessly against these laws. The famous Algerian scholar and head of the Association of Algerian Scholars Abdelhamid Bin Badis wrote that accepting the French Citizenship amounts to treason. He then issued his famous poem; whose first lines assert the Muslim and Arab dimensions of the local population. An Amazigh himself, he regarded Islam and the Arab language as a force that would unite Algerians and assert their indigenous identity whatever their ethnic background. During that war, the Kabyle region played a central role in the resistance movement in the Djurdjura mountains. The French attempted to break this resistance militarily and by exploiting the stereotypical Amazigh-Arab conflict (This practice of exploiting tribal conflicts had netted the French fruits in some parts of the country, such as in Arris, Batna). They also attempted to break the lines of the Algerian revolution, and worse, establish a separate Kabyle political entity that would break the Algerian soil into two easily manageable halves west and south-east of the Kabyle region. Since then, Algerians developed what could be called as simply, frankly, a phobia towards the Christian religion especially in the Kabyle region. Far from the typical view held outside Algeria and sometimes inside Algeria outside Kabylia (The Kabyle are believed to be potentially assimilable to French civilization by virtue of the democratic nature of their society, their superficial Islamicization, and the higher status of Kabyle women” (Burke, 2014, p.33). On the contrary, the Kabyle region harbours in its mountainous ranges some of the most devout Muslims in Algeria. Béjaïa is fondly remembered as a centre for Islamic scholarship and political influence during the Hammadid dynasty and the Islamic School of Tizi-Ouzou produces a considerable number of Imams for mosques all over the country.

Glossary of words:
Quasi: Partly or almost.
Apartheid: A policy of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race.
Relentlessly: In an unceasingly intense or harsh way.
Treason: The crime of betraying one's country.
Dynasty: A line of hereditary rulers of a country.

Appendix D – Consent Form

Participant ID:

Project Title: Critically Engaging with an Intercultural Language Course: An Exploratory Study in an Algerian EFL University Context.

Investigator(s): Abir DRISSAT

Please tick as appropriate

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet (27/09/2018) provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my medical, social care, education, or legal rights being affected.

3. I consent to the interview – Recap and class discussions to be audio-recorded

4. I consent to the use of anonymised verbatim quotations in future study publications

5. I understand that my data will be securely stored for a minimum of 10 years, in line with the University of Warwick’s Research Data Management Policy.

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

_________________________  _____________  ______________

Name of Participant      Date     Signature
Appendix E– Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: Critically Engaging with an Intercultural Language Course: An Exploratory Study in an Algerian EFL University Context.

Investigator(s): Abir DRISSAT

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

(Part 1 tells you the purpose of the study and what will happen to you if you take part. Part 2 gives you more detailed information about the conduct of the study).

Please ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

PART 1

What is the study about?

This study aims to improve our understanding of culture and language learning in the EFL classroom. We seek to implement a new language and culture course that aims to take students’ English language experience beyond the traditional language learning that they are used to receive. To simplify, this course does not aim to teach you the grammatical aspects of language, rather, it encourages you to think deeply about your language and culture learning and helps you achieve an awareness of who you are? Your own culture and provides opportunities for a better understanding of the foreign culture.

Do I have to take part?

Participating in this study is voluntary. The researcher will describe the study and go through this information sheet, which she will give you to keep. If you choose to participate, she will ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you have agreed to take part (if part of this study is an online or postal questionnaire/survey, by returning a completed questionnaire/survey, you are giving your consent for the information that you have supplied to be used in this study and formal signed consent will not be collected where postal or online
questionnaires/surveys are concerned). You will be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and this will not affect you or your circumstances in any way.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

Contributing to this study will involve attending a preliminary 30-minute interview, followed by a completion of 4 main sessions that will take place during 8 weeks of study. In the first two weeks, you will be asked to take part in two different sessions which could last from 2-4 hours/ your time preferences will highly be taken into consideration. During these sessions, you will have a set of interactive and fun activities to share with your classmates; you will be invited to participate in group discussions which will be recorded on an individual machine recorder. After these sessions, you will be asked to express your views and comments via Recap (which is a web tool that helps you document your own reflective thoughts, ideas, etc. You will be asked to answer specific questions and shown how to use this application). In the third and fourth weeks, you will be given enough time to construct a small project/ presentation to showcase your understanding of the themes tackled in the first two sessions. The same procedure will take place in the other four remaining weeks, two weeks for attending two different sessions (2-4 hours per session- recorded group discussions + Recap) and the rest two weeks will be dedicated to the final project.

**What are the possible disadvantages, side effects, risks, and/or discomforts of taking part in this study?**

It is highly improbable that you would be harmed in any way by taking part in this research. I can foresee no risks for your participation in the study which would only involve you to critically engage with language and culture learning in the classroom. At times, certain issues discussed in the classroom might appear to be sensitive. But I assure you that your feelings will be prioritized; you will only be asked to share what you feel comfortable with; you will have all the support you need, and if at any stage you feel uncomfortable, you can immediately stop and withdraw from the study.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?**

Data collected from students’ experiences with the language and culture course- this means your thoughts-opinions-feelings (expressed in the initial interviews, class discussions and Recap recordings) can help us understand how through English language learning experience, you can as a student learn about culture and language and more importantly how you develop an awareness of yourself, your own culture, and the foreign culture. Furthermore, the data you provide will also help us understand how through using your reflective skills, you are able to identify cultural biases (the tendency to judge others based on your own cultural standards) and stereotypes (i.e. oversimplified opinions/ uncritical judgements). You might find it interesting to develop an awareness of yourself and your own culture and then through group discussions and follow up readings develop an understanding and respect to the foreign culture. Taking part in this study means that your voice will be heard and your contributions will inform good practice in EFL learning and teaching.

**Expenses and payments**

No expenses or payments are to be paid.
What will happen when the study ends?

Your interviews/ classroom discussions and Recap journals will be audio recorded using a digital voice recorder. With your consent, the researcher will then start typing them into a transcript. Afterwards, she will start analysing those transcripts and writing them in the final report of her PhD thesis. She may also write papers and deliver presentations in seminars/ conferences. However, the PhD report and presentations will have nothing to do with your identifying information (name, age, etc.), it will only contain anonymous extracts and quotes from the interviews/recordings. If you wish, you can be granted a summary of the findings once the study is complete.

Following the University guidelines, the minimum period of retaining research data is ten years from the date of collection. If at any point you choose to cease participation, all information obtained from your input will be disposed securely and all your identifying credentials will remain completely confidential at all times. You will not appear in any findings, reports, or published research.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Yes. The researcher will follow strict ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence. Further details are included in Part 2.

What if there is a problem?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm that you might suffer will be addressed. Detailed information is given in Part 2.

If the information in Part 1 has interested you and you are considering participation, please read the additional information in Part 2 before making any decision.

PART 2

Who is organising and funding the study?

This study is part of my own PhD project in Warwick University. The funding bodies are the Algerian Government- Ministry of Higher Education and the Consulate of Algeria.

What will happen if I don’t want to carry on being part of the study?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not affect you in any way. If you decide to take part in the study, you will need to sign a consent form, which states that you have given your consent to participate.

If you agree to participate, you may nevertheless withdraw from the study at any time without affecting you in any way.

You have the right to withdraw from the study completely and decline any further contact by the researcher after you withdraw.
If at any point of the study, you choose to cease your participation, your grades or position on the course will not be affected in any way. You can leave the study without having to justify your decision. You will be asked if you would be happy for us to use the information obtained from you up to that point. If you are not, then everything you have shared with us will entirely be destroyed and you will not be contacted by us again.

**Who should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?**

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to the person below, who is a senior University of Warwick official entirely independent of this study.

Head of Research Governance  
Research and Impact Services  
University House  
University of Warwick  
Coventry  
CV4 8UW  
Email: researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk  
Tel: 024 76 522746

**Will my taking part be kept confidential?**

Your interviews/recordings will all be anonymised and given pseudonyms (fictitious names) known only to the researcher. Electronic data will be held on a password protected computer accessed only by the researcher. Hard paper/ taped data will be stored in a secure locked filing cabinet in a university office. Access to data will only be available to the researcher.

**What will happen to the results of the study?**

Once the study is complete, you will receive a copy of the findings. The study results are likely to be published in academic journals. In the consent form, you will be asked if you would allow the researcher to analyse your written/verbal contributions and subsequently publish them as anonymous extracts (all identifying data will be anonymised).

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the University of Warwick’s Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC).

What if I want more information about the study?  
If you have any questions about any aspect of the study, or your participation in it, not answered by this participant information sheet, please contact:
Thank you for your time.
Appendix F– Interview Questions

Pre-Course Interview Questions

1. What is your understanding of the word culture?
2. Have you ever had any interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds? These could be English-speaking populations or other contexts. / Have you ever experienced any communication problems with these speakers? What factors do you think have discouraged or helped your interaction?
3. If you had the opportunity to establish intercultural contact, what are some of the factors that you think may reinforce/hinder your cross-cultural encounters?
4. What perceptions do you have of people in the UK?
5. What perceptions do you have of people in the USA?
6. What perceptions do you have about your own culture? What aspects do you like most/least about it?

Post-Course Interview Questions

1. Which part of the course content deeply challenged your thinking? how did that happen?
2. Do you think taking part in the course has somehow helped you develop your critical thinking skills? If so, in what aspects?
3. Could you think of a time when you used what you learned in the course to make sense of an issue you have seen on TV, social media, or personal life?
   3.1. Have you recently encountered a stereotype, or discriminatory practice and questioned it?
   3.2. Have you seen a cultural difference and compared it to your own culture?
4. Would you consider using knowledge learned from the course in your future life as an EFL teacher, parent, or probable cross-cultural encounters? How?
5. What other topics do you think learners in the EFL classroom should learn/ discuss to develop intercultural understanding?
Appendix G – Samples of Student Interviews

Interview with Deena, November 2018.

Abir: Okay. So, let's start with the first question. What is your understanding of the word culture?
Deena: I guess culture can be a lifestyle… culture can be a belief…culture can be habits…I mean like things that you do usually, I guess that's it.
Abir: Good, tell me, have you ever had any interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds? These could be English-speaking populations or other contexts.
Deena: Yes, most of my online friends are foreigners, and they have different cultures, different religious views, uh, some of them are atheists and some of them are Christians, some of them are Jewish.
Abir: That's good.
Deena: Uh…yeah, and they have different cultures, different beliefs as I said before. And they are from different cultures like Europe and Australia.
Abir: So, in these interactions, have you ever experienced any kind of misunderstanding in your interactions? For example, do you remember any particular experience when you had a communication breakdown?
Deena: Yes, I remember I once had some contact with someone from the Netherlands, he was 29 but we didn't get along with any kind of conversation.
Abir: Why do you think that happened?
Deena: I guess...like in here you can talk to someone who's 29 in a silly conversation, but for him, it was weird to talk about silly things. Also, we have different views. I mean like in here we can talk about a lot of things, but for them they don't share a lot of information about their personal life. They don't share a lot of things about their families, and they are not interested in those things. Sometimes they think that it's weird that you have family meetings or traditions, which they believe that it's an old-fashioned belief and at other times, the conversation gets too short that you think the other person is not comfortable talking to you.
Abir: Yes, aha…
Deena: Yeah. So, it was kind of a communication breakdown.
Abir: Okay...Could you think of one factor that led to that communication breakdown?
Deena: Um...I guess cultural and age differences...Look if we were like stuck to our beliefs and we think that we are superior and we don't accept other differences. I think we cannot communicate; we cannot understand each other…the most important thing is acceptance.
Abir: That’s really interesting, Deena. What perceptions do you have of people in the UK?
Deena: British people are academic, and they are kind of ...they are prestigious and respectful...and there is social, how to say...hierarchy. Also, their language is kind of the language of the elites.
Abir: Okay, what about people from the USA?
Deena: I think they are friendly and respectful people.
Abir: Good, let’s turn to the next question. What perceptions do you have about your own culture? What aspects do you like most/least about it?
Deena: Aspects to me or the society?
Abir: To you… From your own perspective
Deena: To me, there are some positive aspects that I admire, I guess religion and family, the components of family, traditional family. That's it, I guess.
Abir: Is there anything that you don’t like about it?
Deena: I would say judgment. Here, they judge people a lot. I think we should all mind our business.
Interview with Adam, November 2018.

Abir: If I ask what is your understanding of the word culture, what comes to your mind?
Adam: Culture! Let's say traditions, beliefs, and the way of living. I don't have a specific definition for it, sorry!
Abir: No problem. Tell me, have you ever had any experiences interacting with other people from other cultural backgrounds?
Adam: Yeah. Actually, I'm an online gamer.
Abir: Okay.
Adam: I use online games a lot... let's see... I talked to people from Malaysia, Canada, the USA, the United Kingdom... let's say Russia too... Korean people - a lot of them...
Abir: That's very interesting...
Adam: And I meet a lot of players from all around the world and we share these things about culture and religion.
Abir: What kind of topics have you talked about?
Adam: Um... Sometimes we talk about their traditions... sometimes we compare our life to their life. Sometimes we talk like how they live, their daily life. Like, um... I mean, how do they deal with each other? How living in their country differs from living in Algeria.
Abir: Yeah, that sounds interesting... Um, did you ever experience any kind of communication problems with any of them?
Adam: Yeah, once I was talking to a friend who was Christian, and he started talking about his religion and I started feeling like he is trying to drive me to that religion, but I tried to stop that conversation (laughs)...
Abir: Yeah. And what did you do?
Adam: Ah... I just said that Islam is good too and we have to accept each other the way we are.
Abir: Yeah, that's a good point. Can you briefly describe your perceptions about someone who comes from the UK or the USA? How would you describe them?
Adam: I don't have much information... I just like the United Kingdom and I would like to know more about its culture. I am really looking forward to going there one day.
Abir: I get you, yes. If I ask, how do you view your culture? What aspects do you like the most or least about it?
Adam: Everything! But importantly our Islamic culture and values.
Abir: Could you think of one aspect of these values? Take your time...
Adam: I don't have the word in English...
Abir: You can use Arabic if you like.
Adam: Well. Tunisia is not like Algeria... we have here (El 7orma) as they say... [modesty-translated to English]
Abir: Aha, okay...
Adam: It's one of our most important traditions... Let's say we're not allowed to reach... uh... others. I mean like daughters, and you know... we don't... we don't have the right to pass the limits. Even if I am your best friend, even if we were close to each other, we still don't have the right to reach each other because that's forbidden... you know!
Abir: Yes. I get what you mean. It has a lot to do with religion.
Adam: Religion, yes. It has strong links with our religious beliefs.
Appendix H– Permission to Conduct Research

October 21, 2018

[Name redacted]

Head of the division of English

Subject: Requesting Permission to Conduct Research

Dear [Name redacted],

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your institution—University—as part of fulfilling my PhD research project entitled: Critically Engaging with an Intercultural Language Course: An Exploratory Study in An Algerian EFL University Context.

In line with this, I would like to ask for your good permission to recruit 10-12 EFL learners majoring in Sciences of the Language and/or Literature (MA and/or preferably 3rd year students) to complete an eight weeks long language and culture course. In this study, we would only recruit students who voluntarily choose to take part in the project; they will be given consent forms and information sheets to be signed and sent back to the primary researcher.

I would highly appreciate if I could be granted permission to initiate my data collection and conduct my interviews and course delivery in your vicinity. Trust that all data gathered from students' output would highly be kept confidential and would only be used for academic purposes.

Please find attached copies of ethical clearance provided by the Research Ethics Board in Warwick University and consent forms to be given to student participants.

I would be happy answer any questions or concerns that you may have about the study.

Your approval to conduct this study will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely Yours,

Abir Driissi
PhD Candidate
Centre for Applied Linguistics
University of Warwick
+44 (0) 7 508 13 39 34
+213 (0) 55 8488 729
a.driissi@warwick.ac.uk

Approved by:

[Signature redacted]
Appendix I – Ethical Approval

Centre for Applied Linguistics
Application for Ethical Approval
MPhil/PhD Students

A Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of student:</th>
<th>Abir Drissat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of registration:</td>
<td>03/10/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title:</td>
<td>Critically Engaging with an Intercultural Language Course: An Exploratory Study in an Algerian EFL University Context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor:</td>
<td>Troy McConahey/ Annamaria Pinter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRB Clearance:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B Texts

If your research does not include any textual data, please confirm this below and go to Section C.

My research does not include any textual data.

If all or some of your texts are not in the public domain, please explain what steps you have taken to obtain relevant permission for their collection and use. Please also complete any relevant parts of Sections C and D.

If some or all of your texts are in the public domain, give details of this and explain what steps you have taken to obtain any relevant permissions. When these permission have been obtained, please pass a copy the Research Secretary to be added to your file. (You may not need to complete Sections C and D.)

C Participants

Details

Please describe the participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. as a result of learning disability.

Participants taking part in this study are third year university students of English Language majoring in Linguistics; 12 learners aged between 21-24 years old. As
young adults, the participants are not identified as vulnerable.

Respect for participants’ rights and dignity

How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

During the data collection phase, I will make sure that the fundamental rights and dignity of participants are respected and prioritized. I will maintain sensitivity to cultural and social differences and avoid any unfair or prejudiced practice against participants. Also, during the interviews, I will avoid any overly sensitive or personal questions.

In terms of interview locations, I will attempt to interview participants in settings that would respect their cultural and religious norms while at the same time ensure as much privacy as possible.

As for confidentiality, I will ensure the separation of data from identifiable individuals; I will not disclose issues arising from an individual’s interviews unless I obtain clear, unambiguous informed consent. I will make sure that data collected from individuals are appropriately anonymized to protect their identity.

In the information sheet, I will explain to the participants that if they are feeling uncomfortable to answer a specific question, or wish not to take part in the study or even withdraw after their initial involvement, they can directly address their concerns to the researcher and their wish would both be prioritized and respected.

Also, I will provide participants with appropriate access to the interview transcripts to be included in the data analysis. I will also explain that they have the right to eliminate any parts that they do not wish to appear in the data.

Privacy and Confidentiality

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

To ensure confidentiality, all participants will be assigned pseudonyms and I will explain to them that their personal data will be handled with high confidentiality and will not be exposed or shared with anyone except the researcher herself.

All the recordings and transcripts will be stored safely in a secured location and will not be accessed by anyone but the researcher herself. Recordings can separately be sent to participants upon request.

In the consent form, participants will be informed that their recorded data will only be used for the research project and will not be shared in future publications and/or presentations unless they personally make an informed consent to that.

D Consent

Will prior informed consent be obtained?
— From participants YES/NO (students)
Will participants be told they have the option to withdraw from the study without penalty?

Yes. Participants will be assured that they are free to withdraw at any time they wish without having to offer a reason and that any decision not to participate will not affect their academic progress.

Attach a copy of all consent forms to be used in the study.

Copies attached.

E Security and protection

Data storage

Where will data be stored and what measures will be taken to ensure security?

All data collected will be stored securely. Hard copy data such as interview notes and/or prints will be kept away in a locked filing cabinet that can only be accessed by the researcher. Similarly, electronic data will be kept away in password protected file space on my personal laptop or on encrypted electronic devices on the University server.

For how long after the completion will the data be stored? (All data must be kept at least until the examination process is complete.)

I intend to keep data securely stored for 10 years from the collection process. Data will be needed for purposes of completing my PhD writing and any future publications/presentations (participant consent obtained).

F Protection

Describe the nature and degree of any risk (psychological as well as physical) to participants and the steps that will be taken to deal with this.

To ensure that my participants do not suffer from psychological harm, I will debrief the participants and make sure that I provide ample opportunities for them to obtain information about the nature, results and conclusions of the study. I will continuously ensure that all of their questions are honestly answered to avoid any uncertainties and/or anxieties.

Where the study involves any sharing of experiences or behaviors that participants may regard as personal and private, I will ensure to them that they only need to share what they are most comfortable with. They will also be reminded that they can leave the study at any time they wish and that they also have the right to withdraw their data.
Will participants be told they have the option to withdraw from the study without penalty?

Yes. Participants will be assured that they are free to withdraw at any time they wish without having to offer a reason and that any decision not to participate will not affect their academic progress.

Attach a copy of all consent forms to be used in the study.

Copies attached.

E  Security and protection

Data storage

Where will data be stored and what measures will be taken to ensure security?

All data collected will be stored securely. Hard copy data such as interview notes and/or prints will be kept away in a locked filing cabinet that can only be accessed by the researcher. Similarly, electronic data will be kept away in password protected file space on my personal laptop or on encrypted electronic devices on the University server.

For how long after the completion will the data be stored? (All data must be kept at least until the examination process is complete.)

I intend to keep data securely stored for 10 years from the collection process. Data will be needed for purposes of completing my PhD writing and any future publications/presentations (participant consent obtained).

F  Protection

Describe the nature and degree of any risk (psychological as well as physical) to participants and the steps that will be taken to deal with this.

To ensure that my participants do not suffer from psychological harm, I will debrief the participants and make sure that I provide ample opportunities for them to obtain information about the nature, results and conclusions of the study. I will continuously ensure that all of their questions are honestly answered to avoid any uncertainties and/or anxieties.

Where the study involves any sharing of experiences or behaviors that participants may regard as personal and private, I will ensure to them that they only need to share what they are most comfortable with. They will also be reminded that they can leave the study at any time they wish and that they also have the right to withdraw their data.
**Will participants be told they have the option to withdraw from the study without penalty?**

Yes. Participants will be assured that they are free to withdraw at any time they wish without having to offer a reason and that any decision not to participate will not affect their academic progress.

*Attach a copy of all consent forms to be used in the study.*

Copies attached.

**E Security and protection**

**Data storage**

*Where will data be stored and what measures will be taken to ensure security?*

All data collected will be stored securely. Hard copy data such as interview notes and/or prints will be kept away in a locked filing cabinet that can only be accessed by the researcher. Similarly, electronic data will be kept away in password protected file space on my personal laptop or on encrypted electronic devices on the University server.

*For how long after the completion will the data be stored? (All data must be kept at least until the examination process is complete.)*

I intend to keep data securely stored for 10 years from the collection process. Data will be needed for purposes of completing my PhD writing and any future publications/presentations (participant consent obtained).

**F Protection**

*Describe the nature and degree of any risk (psychological as well as physical) to participants and the steps that will be taken to deal with this.*

To ensure that my participants do not suffer from psychological harm, I will debrief the participants and make sure that I provide ample opportunities for them to obtain information about the nature, results and conclusions of the study. I will continually ensure that all of their questions are honestly answered to avoid any uncertainties and/or anxieties.

Where the study involves any sharing of experiences or behaviors that participants may regard as personal and private, I will ensure to them that they only need to share what they are most comfortable with. They will also be reminded that they can leave the study at any time they wish and that they also have the right to withdraw their data.
How will you ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

Printed and electronic data will only be accessed by the researcher. Participants will also be granted access to their data if they want to. My supervisors will have access only for supervision purposes. Data will not be used for purposes other than writing my PhD or taking part in academic publications. Participants will have freedom to withdraw any pieces of information they do not wish to appear in the publications.

G Ethical dilemmas

How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research? Please give details of the protocol agreed with your supervisor for reporting and action.

The only ethical issue I am concerned about is how to maintain as much as possible the confidentiality of my participants. I will make sure that all aspects of their communication is held in the strictest confidence. All data and personal identities of my participants will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be given and any other identifying information will be changed.

I would attempt to contact my supervisor if I see any rising ethical issues and I will always prioritize my participants’ needs over any other research-related issues.

H Authorship

Have you and your supervisor discussed and agreed the basis for determining authorship of published work other than your thesis? Give brief details of this.

I will be the sole author of my PhD thesis and I will acknowledge authorship for joint publications and presentations.

I other issues

Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.

N/A.

J Signatures

Research student  Abir DDRSAT  Date  27/09/2018
Supervisor (s)
Troy McConachy- Annamaria Pinter

K Action

Action taken

X Approved

☐ Approved with modification or conditions – see Notes below
☐ Action deferred – see Notes below
☐ [Where applicable] CRB clearance reported to HSSREC

Name Date
Angermuller 03/10/18

Signature

Notes of Action

Date of Approval by Graduate Progress Committee
### Extract 6.7 (Taken from Lesson Tow) | Coded For
---|---
Abir: (To the class as a whole): Now that you have had some time to closely look at these images, can you share what you understand from it? | Probing answers and eliciting thinking.
Nayra: Kabyle people drink alcohol, wow! | Potential reinforcement of stereotypes.
Alia: YES, they do. Mine says ‘Beni- Mzab’ are very stingy and unwilling to spend, YES...Oran is a city of alcohol and nightlife, YES! | Resisting the content of images.
Celia: You know something, Alia? If a person from ‘Beni Mzab’ was present here with us today and caught you talking about them this way, he would have some serious talking to do with you. | Invitation to Alia to reconsider her views.
Abir: (To the class as a whole) Okay, let’s start with picture one. Read what’s written on top and let’s try to analyse it together. | Guiding learning.
Saba: Okay, I will start. The idea behind this picture is that unlike what is commonly known about Kabyle people always consuming alcohol, skipping fasting during Ramadan, etc. These people are also known for being respected scientists and scholars. | Breaking the link between Kabyles and Alcohol consumption. Reconsidering alternative views.
Abir: historically speaking, the majority of religious scholars were Kabyles. | Backing up the author’s voice.
Alia: So, what should we do, ignore such an idea? | A critical moment of questioning; potential state of dilemma in Alia’s thinking (following disorienting text)
Abir (To the class as a whole): What do you think? | Scaffolding/aiding group thinking/reflection. Avoid giving personal views.
Alia: I think that we shouldn’t be thinking about what happened in the past; we need to construct our views and perceptions based on what is happening nowadays. | Resisting/ challenging material content.
<p>| Nayra: Your history defines you, if you know your past, you can find your way to the future. | Nayra challenges Alia’s idea. |
| Celia: We could interpret the picture in the sense that seeing Kabyle people drinking alcohol and missing religious obligations does not negate the fact that there are also Kabyle people who are religiously committed, who try to follow the rules of their religion and do what’s morally right for themselves and others. | Eliciting complex interpretations of the content seen in class: potential emergence of CC. |
| Alia: you know that for some people, drinking wine is a pleasuring activity in itself. | Omit. |
| Farah: did you guys hear about ‘halal bears? | Omit. |
| Saba: Look, the point of this picture is to make you accept the idea that immoral and dishonest acts in society do not only exist within one specific cultural group like Kabyles or Beni-Mzabs because you could simply find any of these negative qualities in any other person who belongs to any other group. Unfortunately, this idea is very pervasive in our country, we keep saying that Kabyles are not religiously committed and stuff but in reality, you could find this quality in any other group. | Saba is deconstructing the stereotype about Kabyles/Beni-Mzabs. CC: deconstruction of group entitativity. Showing awareness of one’s context. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 6.11 (Taken from Lesson Two)</th>
<th>Coded For</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abir: (To the class as a whole) What do you notice or deduce from the information presented in the text?</td>
<td>Eliciting reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zain: Kabyle is a great place! (laughter)!</td>
<td>Statement could imply a need to say what I wanted to hear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abir: no, listen! The purpose of this course is not to oblige you to change your opinions! It only aims to stir up discussions that would leave you with some sort of a new stream of thinking and in the end, it is up to you to build your own conclusion.</td>
<td>Helping students build agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah: Well, this is like a slap in the face! It’s strange how a person can hold on to a set of ideas about something or someone, then reads very basic counterarguments that are like truly transformative.</td>
<td>A potential shift in perspective (following exposure to disorienting text).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celia: I’m not with or against these arguments! You can’t judge a group of people when you know so little about them or about their background. So, in the end, I cannot judge a whole group just because I have seen two members doing something that is socially/morally unacceptable or whatever!</td>
<td>Awareness that generalisations should not occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celia: yeah, it becomes a belief, but all of these conceptualizations are remnants of the French colonization!</td>
<td>Potential CC: seeing stereotypes as part of a wider system of inequality. Connecting stereotypes to historical and colonial practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zain: But even though! there are some people who would not change their stereotypes even if they were presented with evidence; for example, if you bring them a social experiment about Kabyle people that denies those facts, they would disproof it and hold on to their generalisations.</td>
<td>Zain articulating new thoughts and perspectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Saba: I mean with regards to the text; I think that these represent dependable facts about how Kabyle people helped in the resistance against the French colonizer. In fact, maybe Kabyle people had better patriotic values than the other groups in Algeria, but maybe the idea behind this stereotype about Kabyle people originated from the fact that many of the Kabyle old generations migrated to France in the colonial times; that’s why people may think they are more prone to living as Europeans.

Saba reconsidering the stereotype put earlier about Kabyles as religiously inadequate people and assimilative of Europeans. Saba is reconstruing an alternative perspective about why such a stereotype might have been formed.
Appendix K– The Poster Activity (Lesson Two- Ethnic Stereotypes) – Students’ Worksheets