



*Dissecting Intercultural Competence: The Case of the New Headway
"Intermediate" Fourth Edition Textbook*

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Abstract:

Intercultural Competence has become an important component of 21st century global profile. It can be promoted in general English teaching/learning, which is taught within the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) using the New Headway 4th edition textbook at the Centre of Languages Intensive Teaching (CEIL), Tebessa. This exploratory study dissects the intercultural in the sample textbook, using qualitative content analysis. The findings reveal the focus on both culturally-based linguistic input and language skills (98,85%). Besides, textbook content involves reflection, responsibility and social interaction activities that familiarise students with intercultural settings. This research recommends implementing the textbook more effectively and efficiently as it helps in generating intercultural speakers and mediators.

Keywords: Intercultural Competence; Intercultural Language Teaching; New Headway; textbook analysis

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I. INTRODUCTION

These days, intercultural communication is a major concern, particularly with the prevalence and ease of availability of mobility and information and communication technologies (ICTs). Since intercultural competencies are a necessary component of the 21st century profile, it is crucial to give students the tools they need to interact (locally or globally) with people from diverse cultural backgrounds in an appropriate and successful manner. Integrating the intercultural dimension into curriculum procedures (objectives, teaching technique, syllabi, and assessment) is one strategy to accomplish such a long-term goal. In an experiment, Mizab (2020) gave first-year university students instruction in oral expression in an intercultural manner. The sample had a high degree of openness, curiosity, empathy, and self- and other-awareness—qualities that are fundamental to intercultural communicative competence (ICC), and the results were shockingly unexpected. Since Mizab (2020) worked with students from various local cultures in Algeria for her study, students' local cultural competence has been developed as a requirement for global communication, which may be explored through the use of ICTs to link students from other nations.

This article, however, describes an exploratory study that looked into how much interculturality is included in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). The study's contribution to EFL teaching and learning while selecting textbooks is very significant. Furthermore, this research's key goal is to comprehend how interculturality is constructed in EFL materials since it promotes the adoption of interculturally-integrated teaching methods and tactics.

1. Statement of the Problem

EFL learners frequently believe that learning a language equates to mastering its linguistic competencies. In fact, students place less value on intercultural and cultural competence, which is consistent with their education in middle and secondary schools, where language acquisition and proficiency account for the majority of the curriculum. The lack of IC components in middle and secondary EFL textbooks written in Algeria has been verified by numerous research (Amziane, 2020; Benzekri & Bouhabel, 2019; Chaibi & Bareche, 2015). The New Headway textbook is used by CEILs at Algerian colleges, albeit it's unclear how much interculturality is ingrained in it.

2. Research Questions

This study grapples to answer this research question: How well are IC components referred to in the four skills in the New Headway "intermediate" (4th ed.) textbook?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Intercultural Competence

Humans now need to be proficient in intercultural communications in addition to social and interpersonal abilities, since the significance of cultural contexts has grown. Byram and Zarate (1996) first used the term "intercultural" to describe intercultural speakers, which is a fundamental idea in interculturality. The cultural/linguistic and intercultural skills that define native speakers are mediated by intercultural speakers. In fact, the capacity to "act as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly, typically speakers of different languages" (p. 87) is how the Council of Europe (2001 as stated in Clouet, 2008) characterizes such a process. Intercultural speakers must, therefore, distinguish between serving as a mediator between their peoples and living in two cultures with disparate cultural and linguistic settings. Intercultural communication does, in fact, involve intercultural abilities in regard to other people's perspectives and worldviews, going beyond language competence.

Corbett (2003) asserts that because intercultural speakers are connected to the social lives and cultural experiences of others, they should be aware of the numerous cultural opportunities that could facilitate proper communication. Intercultural speakers may possess a number of skills, as illustrated by Byram's (1997) IC model. These skills include the capacity and willingness to engage in culturally-distant social interactions as well as participation in their customs and traditions. Intercultural speakers, for instance, are capable of recognizing the paralinguistic

qualities of others and of resolving misunderstandings, misconceptions, preconceptions, and prejudices in everyday interactions.

Actually, IC has been defined in a variety of ways by numerous academics. A key component of the definition of intercultural competency (IC) is the capacity for appropriate and successful intercultural interaction and communication (Byram, 1997; Crichton et al, 2004). "The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on ones' intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 247) is a reasonable definition of intercultural competency (IC) given by Deardorff (2006).

The framework for this study is Byram's (1997) model, which consists of five "savoirs":

1. Byram and Zarate (1996) define *savoir* (knowledge) as "cultural references" (p. 242) that are unique to a certain society and its values.

2. *Savoir être* (attitudes): According to Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey (2002), it is composed of affective and cognitive competencies such as openness, curiosity, and "readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (p. 12).

3. The capacity to understand writings and documents from a different culture and relate them to one's own cultural background is known as *savoir comprendre*, or interpreting and relating skills (Deardorff, 2009).

4. *Savoir faire* or interpersonal skills: This competency integrates the three types mentioned above. It suggests the ability to use information, perspectives, and abilities within non-academic limitations. It is the capacity to discern between meanings from other cultures and notions that are current or local. Notably, Deardorff (2009) notes that this skill is contingent and depends on cultural ties.

5. Critically analyzing one's own ideas, attitudes, and behaviors and contrasting them with those of other cultures is the essence of *savoir engager*, or critical culture awareness (Deardorff, 2009).

This model highlights how important cultural integration is to FLT. In fact, the model confirms that it is the best framework for characterizing intercultural communication (IC) since it identifies the fundamental elements and abilities that learners in intercultural pedagogy need to possess as well as those that intercultural speakers ought to possess.

2. Intercultural Pedagogy

Understanding oneself and others in terms of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as participating in the processes of comprehending, discriminating, comparing, and respecting cultures, are central to the goals of Foreign Language Teaching (FLT). Sellami (2000) asserts that there is insufficient adherence to the FLT principle that supports the inseparability of language and its culture because communicating in the target language is more important than emphasizing culture (Liddicoat, 2004). Interestingly, Byram and Zarate (1996) defined Intercultural Language Teaching (IcLT) as an approach that explicitly links language and culture, despite the widespread belief that language skills already implicitly absorb culture.

Numerous academic fields, including linguistic anthropology, ethnography, sociolinguistics, genre analysis, critical discourse analysis, literary media, and cultural studies, support this strategy (Corbett, 2003). These principles clarify the underlying principles that form the multicultural component of education and influence how it is conceptualized as a method of instruction.

2.1. Principles of Intercultural Language Teaching

IcLT places a strong emphasis on cultural sensitivity and makes an effort to impart cultural knowledge and skills alongside language proficiency. As a result, IcLT promotes a set of pedagogical ideas for teaching culture (Liddicoat, 2004). First and foremost, active construction involves students actively creating meaning and thinking critically about themselves and one another in a variety of communicative circumstances. Second, classroom culture and language skills foster links between existing and emerging information, cultures, and languages. Constructing intercultural "knowing" as a "social action" is the third premise, which is social interaction (Crichton & Scarino, 2007, p. 12). They suggested that learners' knowledge, values, and beliefs are influenced by their particular linguistic and cultural origins rather than being independent. Moreover, according to Liddicoat (2004), this enables students to discuss various

perspectives and worldviews as well as observe cultural disparities. The capacity to consider and acknowledge cultural differences is the fourth principle, reflection. Students who thoroughly comprehend and are in control of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds are the only ones who can take advantage of this opportunity (Crichton & Scarino, 2007). The final tenet is accountability. Liddicoat (2004) asserts that in order for students to engage with the speech community in a successful manner, they need to grow in their understanding of both their own and other people's languages, cultures, and speech patterns. In order to create an intercultural exploratory language teaching and learning experience, teachers, students, and material designers can build on these guiding principles, which form the basis of the entire method.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY DESIGN

1. Nature of Research

This research is exploratory in nature, utilizing both the qualitative method and the inductive approach for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The New Headway "intermediate" (4th ed.) textbook used for instruction at Tebessa University's CEIL is analyzed using document analysis.

2. Sample

The main source of information is the New Headway textbook. In non-probability sampling, appropriate samples are chosen by applying arbitrary methods that align with the objectives of the research (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Both the chosen textbook and the CEIL are appropriate for the study's goal when using purposive sampling. In fact, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has officially recognized the CEIL as a setting. After completing an exit test, students receive certificates in numerous foreign languages that they have learned. In addition, the fourth edition of the New Headway textbook is selected because the CEIL has adopted it. It comes with a workbook, an audio CD, a video CD, and a teacher handbook in addition to its twelve units. Learning skills and linguistic input are covered in the textbook. Because it is the advanced level at the CEIL, the intermediate level was especially selected. However, because the study is primarily interested in the intercultural component, the language itself is not the emphasis.

3. Data Collection Tools

Institutional papers are the primary source of data for archive research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Accordingly, document analysis is used to study the New Headway textbook in order to understand it and create a knowledge base (Bowen, 2009). Finding, choosing, evaluating, and synthesizing data are all part of the analytical process in document analysis (Bowen, 2009, p. 28). Consequently, a textbook analysis framework is employed to apply content analysis to the sample textbook (Gaidi & Bouberrada, 2022). The latter relies on language skills as the cornerstone of language learning and is based on Byram's model of IC in the form of codes to be represented in the units of analysis. The three IC tenets (knowledge, abilities, and attitudes) are included in the preset codes.

4. Data analysis Procedures

The goals of this study dictate the data analysis processes. Quantitative data analysis, on the one hand, refers to the process of measuring, adding up, and summarizing the findings from document analysis using percentages and frequencies. However, qualitative data analysis complements the interpretive character of the study. By summarizing and reporting the important data components, qualitative content analysis is used to analyze qualitative content (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The current study interprets the New Headway textbook's analytical units in light of IC constituents and IcLT principles.

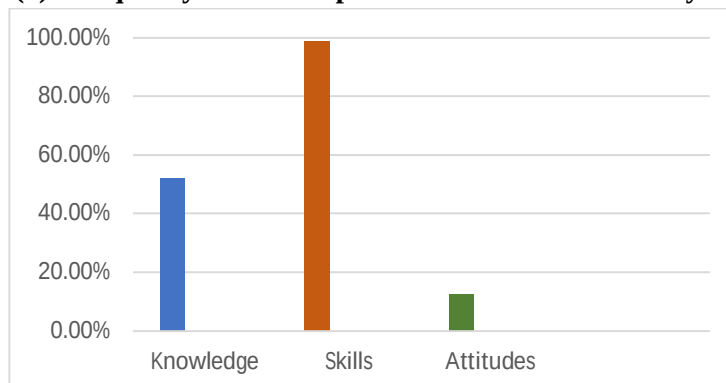
IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The outcomes of the sample textbook analysis are examined in this section. Additionally, it analyzes and explores the integration of IC within the competencies covered in the New Headway "intermediate" (4th ed.) curriculum.

3. Textbook Analysis

Textbook analysis is predicated on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that make up IC. Their frequency of occurrence is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure (1). Frequency of IC Components in the New Headway Textbook



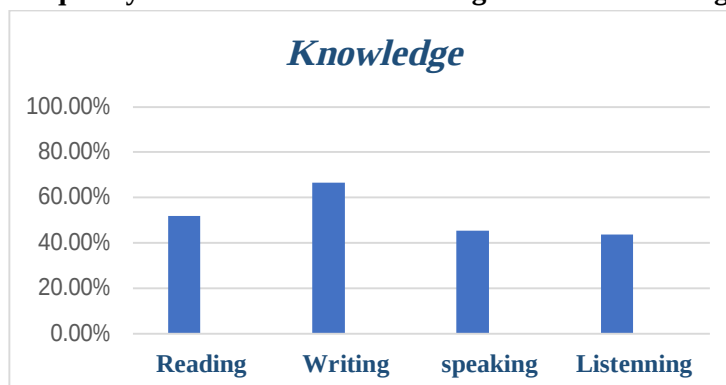
Source. Gaidi & Bouberdaa (2022, p. 52)

The textbook is obviously skill-oriented (98,85%). Just 12.53 percent of textbook content is made up of attitudes, compared to 51.81 percent of knowledge.

3.1. Knowledge

The sample textbook's emphasis on cultural content, particularly on understanding of diverse cultural origins (33.42%), is demonstrated by half of the intercultural material (51.81%). (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Frequency of Intercultural 'Knowledge' in the Four Language Skills



Source. Gaidi & Bouberdaa (2022, p. 53)

These results demonstrate how the textbook increases students' interest in relating to, and contrasting, the two cultures, as well as their cultural awareness. Improving comprehension and problem-solving skills is typically achieved through these means. It is insufficient for students to understand the opinions and identities of social groups; in order to be mature and to learn how to handle and treat this quantity of knowledge responsibly, students need to interact with others and get real-world experience.

3.2. Skills

Different percentages of each IC skill—reading 40.38%, speaking 25.06%, listening 17.82%, and writing 15.59%—are successfully used through each language skill (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Frequency of Intercultural ‘Skills’ in the Four Language Skills



Source. Gaidi & Bouberrdaa (2022, p. 54)

The results show that the textbook is a useful tool for EFL students due to its high percentage of different intercultural abilities. IC skills include the ability to discover and interact as well as relate and interpret. The second skill has the largest frequency (76.01%), while the first skill is less common (22.84%). These abilities are included into a variety of talks and instructions that are evenly spaced throughout the textbook. They take the shape of distinct learning patterns (group/pair assignments) and teacher/learner directions.

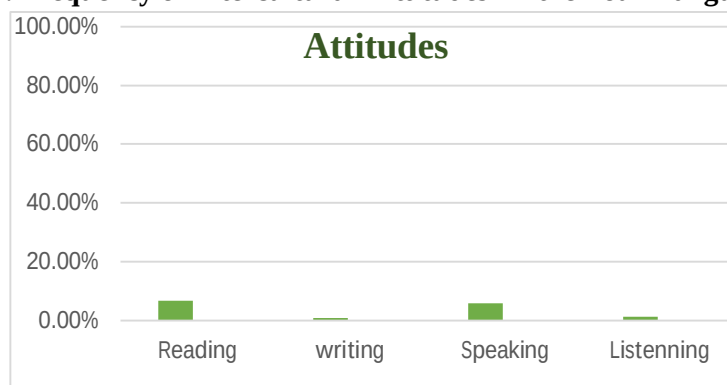
Additionally, by comparing cultures and reflecting on their own experiences, the skill-based assignments help learners get a better knowledge of other cultures and increase their competency in resolving cross-cultural conflicts and clearing up misconceptions. The textbook is filled with instructions and activities that not only improve students' interpretations but also provide insight into a range of cultural factors. The textbook uses a range of activities, such as dialogues, interviews, and articles, through reading and speaking assignments, allowing students to voice their viewpoints, develop conclusions, and provide justifications.

In order to cultivate an intercultural speaker capable of handling knowledge, students require real-world experiences and interactions in order to mature and pick up on taboos, stereotypes, and interactional barriers. The many interesting instructions in the textbook subtly impart these skills.

3.3. Attitudes

With a percentage of 12.53 percent, attitudes—which comprise openness, curiosity, and the capacity for decentre—make up the third element of the textbook analysis framework (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Frequency of Intercultural ‘Attitudes’ in the Four Language Skills



Source. Gaidi & Bouberrdaa (2022, p. 58)

In certain circumstances, attitudes are suggested when educators encourage students to voice their thoughts with enthusiasm, conduct additional research, and honestly discuss their worldviews in order to help them adjust to equality and cultural inclusivity. For example, in the speaking skill, students can say whether they agree or disagree with psychologists' opinions on

love, or with people's opinions on roles in life. Through these kinds of discussions, they can also get used to respecting and accepting the equality of cultures. Learners would get a deep understanding of other people's problems, avoiding assumptions and oversimplifications. As a result, a positive outlook and a degree of cultural knowledge would increase, along with appreciation for the local way of life.

4. Discussion of Results from Textbook Analysis

The results of the example textbook demonstrate that, notwithstanding their uneven integration within the four language skills, the discursive practice was rich in implicitly incorporating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are fundamentally important components of IC. The primary goal of the textbook, however, was the explicit development of language abilities. According to Byram et al. (2002), IC also supports learners in reinforcing cultural comparisons and an understanding of common meanings, which leads to changes in attitudes and interaction skills. It is possible to have appropriate multicultural attitudes and to accept the opinions of others without straying from one's own convictions, which are the only natural ones. It's interesting to note that Britain's representational repertory, which fosters an international identity while satisfying worldliness, does not revolve around the characters of texts and interviews or the subjects and features of exercises.

The New Headway textbook covers the key intercultural elements even if it places a strong emphasis on linguistic competency. Nonetheless, authors of textbooks must give pupils chances to demonstrate intercultural dispositions like openness and curiosity. Knowledge of different cultures should be prioritized more than only learners' own specific cultural backgrounds.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The New Headway "intermediate" (4th ed.) offers a wealth of intercultural resources that help students serve as intermediaries between their own and other people's cultural backgrounds, making it a useful tool for intercultural education for educators as well as students. The following conclusions address the study topic and are based on the findings from the textbook analysis: To what extent are the four abilities of New Headway "intermediate" (4th ed.) IC components mentioned?

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes are examples of IC components included in the New Headway "intermediate" (4th ed.) textbook. No matter how often these things happen, the fact that they are part of language skills and that there are a range of exercises and instructions available provide opportunities for intercultural speakers to grow.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The following are some recommendations for EFL textbooks that address interculturality. The use of the New Headway "Intermediate" (4th ed.) textbook and its supplemental materials, which include films and cultural quizzes, in EFL instruction is mandated by the need to develop intercultural speakers and mediators rather than native-like speakers. In fact, teaching learners in this manner would ensure that they comprehend intercultural knowledge better. In addition, the textbook provides a range of exercises and assignments that let students experience different points of view, open up to one another, and grow in mutual respect and feeling of community.

The pedagogical implications of this research can be advantageous for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. When selecting the New Headway intermediate textbook for language input, skill development, and interculturality, policymakers should be aware that the textbook is designed for use in EFL classrooms and that teacher training programs should complement it. The study looks into interculturality in the New Headway textbook, concentrating on how often it is and how IcLT principles are applied by teachers. Additionally, it recommends using the IC characteristics as a checklist for intercultural evaluation. The article recommends that educators enhance their intercultural training and that content creators concentrate on useful principles. Administrators must manage their time carefully because time limits make consistent textbook use challenging. Examining the intercultural components of New Headway textbooks, including student book, workbooks, and audio/video resources, is the aim of this study. It also looks into the difficulties teachers have when using New Headway in the classroom and the

perceptions of the students. Each of these goals advances theory and helps guide future research choices.

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